Radio Communication Protocols

v2026r1

For all radio users on any network.

General Radio Notes

- Marshals are normally within “shouting distance” (not more than 50 metres) of another marshal or senior with radio contact with Race Control. This means that all marshals can be alerted or instructed within seconds of an order being issued. Communication with Race Control and your team is key, please ensure information is shared with all marshals nearby.
- Depending on the event, different radio networks are used. Usually, trackside observers are on a “Loop” system (all users can share a conversation), whereas Sector/Seniors and other disciplines are on radios (one speaker at a time). In both cases, proper discipline must be used to prevent interference or missing calls.
- Calls between users on the ground should always go through Race Control.
- Radios and the Loop must only be used to transmit information necessary for the proper running of the event and not for “social chatter”.
- Incidents and accidents take precedence over other matters.
- Housekeeping calls should be kept to a minimum while cars are on track and held if an incident is evolving.
- With standard radios, once you press the transmit button, no one can interrupt or use the system. Be brief and to the point. Think maximum information, minimal words.
- Watch your buttons! Be careful not to accidentally have your radio or loop button pressed down by clothes or when leaning or sitting as this can disrupt the whole communication network.
- Prior to the event collect your radio from the Radio Shack or the pre-arranged team specific location.
- Depending on the event, Observer back up radios must be returned at the end of each day.
- For other radios, ensure that your battery/ies are returned at the end of the day for recharging.
- If you are allocated to a particular post/location, must arrive promptly to that location and be ready for the communications checks.
- Check the "Minute x Minute Schedule" each morning for the time of the communications check to ensure you are prepared and listening ready to transmit. This may be during a briefing for example, so ensure someone is always manning the communication equipment.
- Protect the radio from rain by placing it under your wet weather gear.
- Report radio/battery problems via the Loop, WhatsApp Seniors Groups or visit the Radio Shack.
- Any marshals feeling unwell or who wish to stand down must be reported to your Sector/Senior or Chief or Race Control. Do not just leave your post/location. Do not self report to the medical centre.

Radio Communication Channels

Race Control uses four main channels to communicate with Race Officials. Radios must be monitored during times listed on the Minute-by-Minute schedule. The main communication channels are:

1. Race Control Channel – for Sector Marshals, Senior Officials and key positions such as Course Car, Pit Exit, Clerk of Course.
2. Observer Loop – for Observers positioned at each Control Post.
3. Echo 1 - for medical, fire and rescue officials.
4. Echo 2 – for Recovery, equipment and boundary riders.

Making Calls

- Prior to transmission, look, listen, stop, think and then report.
- Allow the time an incident takes to evolve to prepare what you will say, what you saw and what you need.
- Once ready, press and hold the transmit button, pause briefly then say “Race Control this is (your call sign), eg. Post 1/Sector 1/Pit 1/Recovery 1/Fire 1” etc.
- Release the button and await acknowledgement from Race Control before proceeding with your message.
- Speak clearly but don't yell as this distorts your message.
- Hold the microphone close to your lips. Cup the microphone with your hand to reduce additional background noise.
- If reception is bad, try moving away from buildings and fences. When reporting reception levels, judge the standard of reception using the 1-5 strength/clarity scale, with one being poor, three considered normal/acceptable and five being loud and clear. **Don’t just say “loud and clear” if it is not the case.**

Enforced Radio Silence

- From the 3-minute signal before the start of any session or race, or when instructed, the radios should only be used for urgent messages and the control of the next session.

- Note minor incidents and report after the radio silence.
- Housekeeping matters should be handled over the Observer's Loop during breaks or using the WhatsApp Seniors Groups.

Protocol for Radio Calls and Call-signs

- Use official titles or location as call-signs, (e.g. Chief Marshal, Post 7, Grid 1, Pit Exit, Sector 6).
- Individual officials' names are **not** to be used.
- Do not use abbreviations. It is "Race Control", **not** "Control". "This is Post 10.5", not "10.5" or "ten-five".
- Vehicles units should use their exact location on the track with their call-sign, (e.g. Fire 1 at turn 2 left).
- Identify the intended recipient first (for example Race Control) and then identify yourself. (Eg. Race Control, this is Pit Entry).
- Wait for an acknowledgment before continuing. If you are asked to "hold" please be patient as other things may be going on that you are not aware of. Allow a reasonable time for a response, then if no reply you may transmit again.

Messages

- If you do not understand something, request a repeat of the message. A misunderstood message can be dangerous.
- Be calm, brief and to the point.
- Use car numbers for identification. If you are unable to identify the car number, consider using the car make and colour, for example Mercedes black. Do not use a driver's name.
- Give a clear, precise description. E.g. "100 metres before the apex of Turn 11 on driver's right". Or use barrier gate numbers etc.
- Advise what services may be needed, such as fire, recovery or medical services. Do not call for an ambulance. Call for medical assistance if that is what is required.
- During an incident, keep Race Control informed by providing periodic updates of the response actions, E.g. when medical/fire/recovery arrive/leave, driver status, car recovery progress.
- Confirm what flags are being shown during the incident.
- Post incident, notify when the track is clear.

Calls from Race Control

- If Race Control calls you, you will hear *"Race Control to _"*. You should respond with, *"Race Control, this is (*your call sign), eg. Post 1/Sector 1/Pit 1/Recovery 1/Fire 1" etc.
- Listen clearly to questions you are being asked. Only provide the information requested.
- Race Control may ask for a written report if required, e.g. vehicle contact, barrier contact, injuries, passing under yellow, crossing blend line etc or where further risks remain after an incident.

Key Reminders

THINK - Plan what you need to say

LISTEN - Check that radio network is free

ENSURE - Microphone is very close to your mouth (within touching distance)

PRESS AND HOLD TALK BUTTON

- Wait a short moment before speaking so as not to cut off the start of your message

DON'T SHOUT - Stay clam, take a breath before you talk, use your normal speaking voice

IDENTIFY - Address who you are calling first (ie. Race Control) and then who you are

MESSAGE - Wait for a response from Race Control before you send your message

ABC - Make sure your messages are; **A**CCURATE, **B**RIEF, **C**LEAR