Technician License Course
Chapters 7 and 8

Lesson Module 16 –
Call Signs, Control Operators,
Station Identification and
Third-Party Communications

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Call Signs – Your "Radio Name"

- All amateur call signs have a prefix and a suffix
  - Prefix – indicates country of license
  - Suffix – indicates a specific licensee
- Prefix – generally two or three letters and numbers assigned by the ITU
- Suffix – one or more letters

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Call Signs

- US call signs begin with: K, N, W, and AA–AL
- Ten US call sign districts indicated by 0–9 in prefix
- Pacific and Caribbean possessions have special prefixes

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Call Signs

- U.S. call sign types for amateurs
  - 1x1 (W1W); 1x2 (W1WW); 2x1 (WW1W); 2x2 (WW1WW); 1x3 (W1WWW); or 2x3 (WW1WWW)
  - Assigned by license class
- 1x1 ("one by one") is for special events
- Refer to the FCC sequential call sign system for a description of call sign groups

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Call Signs

- Indicators – added to the call sign following a slash (/) or a word such as "portable"
- Portable – operating away from primary station location
- Mobile, aeronautical mobile, maritime mobile
- Upgrade indicators "AG" or "AE" or "KT"

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Choosing Your Call Sign

- Vanity call signs – similar to vanity license plates
- Pick any call sign authorized for your license class
  - Technicians can have 2x3 (Group D) or 1x3 (Group C) calls
- www.arrl.org/vanity-call-signs

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Special Event and Club Calls

- Special event call signs: 1x1
- Reserved via administrators (www.arrl.org/special-event-call-signs)
- Club calls
  - Must have a valid club
  - Application by club's trustee
  - www.arrl.org/club-call-signs

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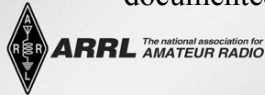
Control Operator

- Control operator – the amateur licensee responsible for making sure transmissions comply with FCC rules.
- The FCC requires that transmissions are made only under the control of a licensed operator.

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Control Operator

- Designated by the station licensee.
  - Must have a valid FCC-issued Amateur Radio license or have reciprocal operating permission.
  - Station must operate within the authorization of the control operator's license.
  - Control operator must be present at the control point of the station
  - Assumed to be the station licensee unless otherwise documented.

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Control Point

- Wherever the station controls are operated – not necessarily the physical transmitter
- The control operator must be able to assert control of the transmitter
- Control point can be at the transmitter, or linked to the transmitter
- Control by a circuit or computer is also allowed

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Guest Operations

- Non-licensed people can make transmissions but only when a control operator is present.
  - The control operator is solely responsible for station operation.
- For licensed guest operators, both the control operator and the guest ham are responsible for station operation.

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Station Identification (ID)

- All transmissions *must* be identified
  - State the call sign every 10 minutes during and at the end of the communication
  - Use phonetics on voice modes
- Use of "Tactical Calls"
- Licensed Guests

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Miscellaneous ID Rules

- Repeaters must also ID using the same 10 minute rule.
  - Can be voice or CW (at 20 WPM or less).
- Satellites and ISS have special rules.
- Special event calls.
  - Club call or control operator call given once per hour.

Third-Party Communications

- *Third-party communication* – transmissions on behalf of an unlicensed entity
  - Could mean actually speaking on the air
  - Could mean passing a message on behalf of third party
- Two situations – different rules
  - Within the US
  - Communication that crosses international borders

Third-Party within US

- No special rules.
- Just make sure the message is non-commercial in nature.

Third-Party Across Borders

- Third-party agreement with US must exist
  - Check for current third-party agreements from ARRL website or FCC sources if in doubt
  - Most agreements are within ITU Region II
  - This includes contest operation
- Identify with both stations' call signs