

ARES Los Angeles  
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Tactical Callsigns and Procedures  
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**What is a tactical callsign?** A tactical callsign is a radio identifier assigned to a specific team, function or location in connection with an incident, drill or ongoing operation.

**Can I use a tactical callsign in place of my FCC callsign?** If you're operating in the Amateur bands, you must use your FCC callsign to identify as required by Part 97. Tactical callsigns may be used any time during a transmission or series of transmissions but do not replace the required ID. When using other radio services, tactical callsigns may be sufficient identification.

**What is an example of a tactical callsign?** A tactical callsign may be descriptive (e.g., "Command", "Search 2", "Lassen Shelter", "Security North") or generic (e.g., "Unit Six", "Team Bravo"). If you are selecting tactical callsigns, you may wish to use calls that are meaningful to your team but not overly descriptive to casual listeners.

**How are tactical callsigns useful?** Tactical callsigns help identify the operational unit or location calling and being called and do not change when personnel are rotated into and out of assignments. They also facilitate the use of one communication channel by several operating units. To be effective, all parties must know which tactical callsigns are being used by which operating units.

**How should tactical callsigns be used?** Start all radio calls with the tactical callsign of the unit you are trying to reach, followed by your own tactical callsign, e.g., "Supply from Shelter Two", or "Search Three, this is Command". Wait for acknowledgement from the unit being called (if you are the caller) or reply with an acknowledgement if you are being called, e.g., "Shelter Two, Supply". Subsequent transmissions should start with at least the tactical callsign of the unit being called, e.g., "Supply, we need overnight kits for one hundred people by 1900 hours"; "Shelter Two, roger. Will advise ETA." "Supply, roger. Shelter Two clear." "Supply Clear."

If you're on the ham bands, give your FCC callsign at the end of this exchange. Doing so meets your station identification requirements under Part 97 and may be used in lieu of "clear" to indicate that you have finished this series of transmissions. If the exchange is lengthy (unlikely with tactical messages but possible with volumes of Welfare traffic, add your FCC callsign at least once every ten minutes.