

## **BASIC RADIO TECHNIQUES UNIT 3 – PHONETICS/NUMBERS**

### **PHONETIC ALPHABET**

The purpose of phonetically pronouncing words or names is to insure the reception of the correct information. It eliminates the chance of a misspelling, and is important for verification of information that is entered into a computer system such as ACCESS, DOL, NCIC or a records management system (RMS). The most common phonetic alphabet used by law enforcement agencies in Washington State is:

A – Adam	N – Nora
B – Boy	O – Ocean
C – Charles	P – Paul
D – David	Q – Queen
E – Edward	R – Robert
F – Frank	S – Sam
G – George	T – Tom
H – Henry	U – Union
I – Ida	V – Victor
J – John	W – William
K – King	X – X-ray
L – Lincoln	Y – Young
M – Mary	Z – Zebra

DO break up phonetic letters into *groups of three*. For example, spelling the word "MOTHER": MARY, OCEAN, TOM (slight pause), HENRY, EDWARD, ROBERT. This is especially important if someone is copying the information as you say it.

DO precede the phonetic spelling with a warning that you will be spelling. For example: "Last name spelling – SAM, MARY, IDA, TOM, HENRY". If you do not warn that the spelling is forthcoming, when you say, "Last name, SAM", the other person begins writing the last name as Sam.

DO NOT duplicate effort when pronouncing letters or spelling a name. It is not necessary to spell phonetically the word using the phrase "as in" for each letter. For example: "TOM" – T as in TOM, O as in OCEAN, M as in MARY. It is redundant to use both the letter and the phonetic designator.

**DO use a standardized method of broadcasting information every time.**

### **PHRASING NUMBERS**

When reading numbers, several methods are most useful, particularly when a responder has to write down the information. These are:

- **The number 0 is read as "zero"** and not O (oh) as in the letter.
- Numbers that sound alike (fifty and sixty, fifteen and sixteen), such as "thirteen" and "thirty", are sounded out by individual digit to avoid confusion. Example: "Thirteen- One Three- Street".

Adapted from the **WSCJTC Telcommunicator-2 Course Manual**

## **BASIC RADIO TECHNIQUES**

### **UNIT 3 – PHONETICS/NUMBERS**

- A and Eighth sound alike; when applicable (both a "A Street" and "Eighth Street" exist) clarify. Example: "A – Adam Street" or "The number eight street."
- When reading lengthy series of numbers and/or letters, such as vehicle identification numbers (VIN) or serial numbers, read the numbers and letters in groups of three. A *slight* pause after each 3 characters gives the person writing the information a chance to keep up and is easier to hear than a long string of letter/numbers quickly read off. **This is especially useful when transmitting license plate numbers.**
- **LICENSE PLATES** - A license plate of 123ABC is transmitted as "One, two, three (slight pause), Adam, Boy, Charles".
  - A plate of 67894W is read as "Six, seven, eight (slight pause), nine, four, William".
  - When a plate has 7 or more characters, there are a couple of ways it can be read. For example:
    - **A33146B** can be read: "Adam, three, three, (pause), one, four, six, (pause), Boy" or as: "Adam (pause), three, three, one, (pause), four, six, Boy".

### **NUMBERS IN ADDRESSES**

There is more than one proper way of broadcasting addresses. Normally, you will not pronounce the words "hundred" or "thousand" unless it is in terms of a block range or it is the specific address.

- Hundreds and thousands: For example, the address 10032 is probably not pronounced "One hundred, three two" or "One hundred thirty two" or "Ten thousand, thirty two". It may be pronounced as "one, zero, zero, three, two" (special note: some jurisdictions could pronounce it as "one hundred, thirty two" as Road 100 would be the cross street).
- Block ranges: For a block range, you may say the "One thousand block of Main Street" rather than "One, zero, zero, zero block of Main Street" or "Ten hundred block of Main Street".
- Numbered streets: Numbered streets can be tricky. One method of broadcasting is to drop the "th", "st", or "nth" designator from the numbers. For example: Fifth and sixth sound similar, but if you say "Five" Street or "Six" Street, it is very clear they are different. Consider using the pronounced number on the repeat of the address. Example: 132 5 St. as: "One thirty-two Fifth Street, and on the repeat, that's one thirty-two Five Street"
  - SINGLE digit addresses can be read as:
    - 5 Alder Boulevard = "Number 5, Alder Boulevard"
  - TWO digit addresses can be pronounced as one number:
    - 17 King Street = "Seventeen King Street"

**BASIC RADIO TECHNIQUES**  
**UNIT 3 – PHONETICS/NUMBERS**

- THREE digit numbers can be pronounced as either one number or separated:
  - 176<sup>th</sup> Street = “One Seventy Sixth Street” or “One Seven Six Street”
- FOUR digit addresses can be pronounced as two numbers run together or separated.
  - 1020 49<sup>th</sup> Court = “Ten Twenty (pause), Forty Nine Court
  - 7294 Slate Rd. = “Seven, two, nine, four Slate Rd”
- FIVE digit addresses can be divided into 2 and 3 digit segments. This is especially helpful if the numbers of an address indicate a cross street.
  - 23456 N. Glade Road: The cross street is 234<sup>th</sup> St. The address would be read as “two thirty four, fifty six, N. Glade Road”.
  - For the same address, the cross street might be Road 23. In this case, the address would be read as “Twenty three, four fifty six, N. Glade Road”.

Agency practices, particularly when addressing issues are involved, should prevail.

*In establishing the procedure for pronouncing numbers, use a method that is logical. The easiest to copy (groups of 3) or indicates a cross street or some type of address marker.*

**Consistency when broadcasting numbers and/or addresses will help listeners get it right, the first time.**