

Break Tags

[Check this out, a great idea from Connecticut SEC Rod Lane, N1FNE

Some of our DEC's and other leadership are drilling their crews on a new method of getting attention on a net called "Break Tags."

When net communication gets heavy, someone may have a quick solution to a problem that is taking up too much valuable airtime for discussion, but can't break into the net to share it. We came up with "Break Tags" to deal with such a scenario.

There are currently seven one-word Break Tags. They are: "answer," "question," "info," "priority," "medical," "emergency" and your call sign. Most of these tags have been used with great success in large public/emergency services nets. Here is how they work: Instead of saying "break" between transmissions during a directed net, the operator uses the word specified as a Break Tag without a call sign. They are to be used only when the operator's traffic will be appreciated by net control and results in more efficient communication. They are to be used wisely, as net control is directed to stop and turn over the net to the breaker. The message that follows a break should be as short as possible. Definitions and use:

"Answer": To be used when you have the definitive answer to a question currently being discussed on the air.

"Question": To be used when the answer of a question can't wait; for example, when the mayor is standing next to you and requesting you to get information using your radio.

"Info": To be used when information needs to be transmitted rapidly but is not related to what is being said on the air; for example, if an event that net control needs to know about is going to happen in the next few seconds or if waiting for the end of an exchange will negate the value of the information.

"Priority": To be used to report an important but non-life threatening situation such as a fender-bender that just happened.

"Medical": To be used to report a minor medical incident that affects the operator in some way; for example, having to leave his/her post for a few minutes to walk someone with a minor cut over to a med tent.

"Emergency": Only to be used to report an ongoing life or property threatening or damaging incident.

"Your Call Sign": An indication that the operator has traffic that can wait and does not require the cessation of the ongoing exchange. This tag is an expectation to be put on hold and in queue for transmission.

"Break Tags" takes little training. Its use is contagious and comes very naturally. I hope that everyone adopts it. I would like to hear if other groups try it and how it works. It will be a part of our communications from here on in.-- Rod Lane, N1FNE, Section Emergency Coordinator, Connecticut Section <n1fne@arrl.net>