

Arctic Comms



In the Arctic, the team relies on radios to communicate with the base, when they are out exploring and researching. We are going to look at two pieces of radio communications to help you stay safe in the Arctic. The radio signal is not always clear and so a separate language and alphabet is used to help make sure that all communications are understood clearly.

Standard phrases

There are some standard phrases used in radio communications. These help to guide the conversation.

Phrase	Use
“Go ahead”	When you are ready for someone to begin their message.
“Say again”	When you want someone to repeat what they just said.
“Stand by”	When you have received a call, but are not ready for the whole message.
“Copy that / Roger”	Confirms that you have received and understood a message.
“Affirmative”	Yes (avoid yes, yep, ok, etc.)
“Negative”	No (avoid no, nope, not really, etc.)
“Over”	When you have finished speaking and are waiting for a reply.
“Out”	When you have finished the conversation.

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Example conversation

Here is an example of a conversation that might be had between a field team (chat bubble blue, on the right) and the station (chat bubble green, on the left).

NERC Station, NERC Station, NERC Station.
This is glacier team calling. Over.

Start a conversation by repeating the name you are calling three times, and then yours once.

Glacier team, this is NERC Station receiving.
Over.

This reply confirms that the call has been received.

We think we saw a polar bear in the distance and fired banger flares to warn it off. We are returning to base immediately.
Over.

The field team can then relay the update or message.

Confirming, polar bear sighted, no immediate danger, and returning to base.
Over.

It is useful to repeat and confirm the main points.

Affirmative. Over.

Message confirmed...

Copy that. Over.

... by both teams.

See you soon. Out.

The conversation is ended...

Copy that. Out.

... by both teams.



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Call signs

In the Arctic, we have two call signs that we use most of the time. The research station simply uses 'NERC Station' as this is how it is known in the community. For research teams, they are known as 'Glacier team' if they are working on a glacier, or 'Teisten' the name of the small research boat if they are working at sea.

Come up with your own call sign...

The radio or phonetic alphabet contains a word for each letter. These words have been chosen so that they are not easy to confuse. The letters can be used to spell out words or for initials to make a call sign. If your school is called Excellence Academy, you might use the call sign 'Echo-Alfha'.

A	Alfha*	B	Bravo	C	Charlie
D	Delta	E	Echo	F	Foxtrot
G	Golf	H	Hotel	I	India
J	Juliett*	K	Kilo	L	Limo
M	Mike	N	November	O	Oscar
P	Papa	Q	Quebec	R	Romeo
S	Sierra	T	Tango	U	Uniform
V	Victor	W	Whisky	X	X-Ray
Y	Yankee	Z	Zulu		

** These two words are spelt differently from standard English. Alfha would normally be spelt Alpha, and Juliett would be spelt Juliet. These different spellings help people whose first language is not English to pronounce them correctly.*