

# Hot Tips

*Good info for the new ham, and old stuff to refresh your memory*



## Announcing your call sign

In light of a long history of old traditions and habits, it's no surprise that many hams, especially newer ones, are a little confused about when it's appropriate to announce their call signs on the radio. It seems most of us are aware of the basic rules of saying it **at the end of the communication** and **every ten minutes**, but are there other times when it's a good idea, or even necessary? For clarity, your **assigned call sign** is the one that FCC has assigned you, if you're an American. A **vanity call sign** is also an assigned call sign, because it replaces your former assigned call sign. Here are some tips for American amateurs:

- It's a courtesy to announce your call sign at the start of your conversation, but not necessary
- It's a courtesy to announce other people's call signs, but again, not necessary, not even when calling for them
- If you do use both your call sign and the other person's call sign, the convention (not a rule) is to **say your own last**
- It's not necessary to wait until the repeater has completed announcing its ID, to announce your call sign (they're typically designed so that your transmission will override its ID announcement)
- It's not necessary to say "for ID" when announcing your call sign, since that's understood
- You must announce your call sign in English
- A **partial call sign** is not a call sign at all, but is a **tactical call sign**, which in fact does not need to resemble your assigned call sign, and so does not replace your assigned call sign
- When using phonetics to announce your call sign, using one or more letters from an alternate phonetic alphabet is perfectly acceptable, as long as you remember to slow down
- On a repeater, it's not necessary to announce your call sign using phonetics, unless you're not being heard well, or the net control operator asks you to do so
- Announcing your call sign with every transmission is unnecessary, and will likely only irritate others
- When you're operating in behalf of another station (during Field Day, special event, contest), be sure to announce your own assigned call sign **once every hour**
- When you announce your call sign at the end of your communication, it does not need to be the very last thing you say
- When you announce your call sign at the end of your communication, you don't even need to say it in your final transmission

This short checklist is by no means comprehensive, but it's a start into helping us decipher between rule and tradition. Are there other call sign tips you can think of?

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