



The Amateur in You, Part 1

What have you been pondering?



How to call out for help

When you're in real trouble, calling out for help could mean life or death for you or the people with you. And knowing how to get people's attention to obtain that help isn't always obvious.

Use your cell phone

Your phone will be your primary lifeline in most cases. When you find your life, health, or property in immediate danger, call 911. There are times when a phone call might not be available to help you, because many others are calling for help the same time as you. In that case, try texting for help; texts will often get through an overloaded cell tower when a call will not.

Use your radio

If your phone battery is dead, or cell service becomes unavailable, resort to radio. Hopefully you'll have your grab-and-go bag handy, and it'll contain your ham radio. And if you've managed to escape by car, hopefully you'll have a ham radio installed in your vehicle. Here are steps you can take to call for help by radio: (Except for the call sign, the following are not limited to *ham* radio, and so can be used on other radio types as well.)

- 1) Listen on your Area frequency (if you're near home), City frequency, and Emergency frequency, for a net or communication already in progress. (Your Area frequency is typically organized by your local religious body or geographic area of citizens. Your Emergency frequency is organized by your county ARES group, or dictated by the [Wilderness Protocol](#).)
- 2) At an appropriate moment, break into the ongoing net or conversation and announce that you have **a problem that needs to be addressed immediately**

- 3) If you don't hear anybody talking, set your radio to **scan** all the frequencies in memory. When the radio stops on a valid conversation, go back to Step 2.

- 4) If all else fails, change to your Area, City, or Emergency frequency, and say

This is K17ABC, and I need help right away.

or

This is K17ABC. Could somebody help me right away?

or

This is K17ABC. Could somebody get me an ambulance right away?

Avoid using the words "emergency" or "break"; by habit many equate these words with drills or simulated exercises.

Use any means

If you're experiencing a true emergency, you can do just about anything relatively safely to get the attention of others who can help you.

- Make a loud noise with these (three times, wait five seconds, then repeat)
 - * emergency whistle
 - * banging metal, such as pots
 - * shouting
 - * anything else to grab attention
- Post signs, ideally in large, red print
- Send a runner to get help
- If you're outdoors, clear the area, then set three fires spaced evenly apart in a line
- Smoke signals (do you know how? it has nothing to do with Morse code)
- Anything else? Use your creativity safely.

When deciding to use *any means available*, make sure you balance how much of a danger you're in, with reason. Use your head, and keep safety first in your mind, in spite of the adrenaline coursing through your veins.