

The Wilderness Protocol

National Simplex Frequency / National Calling Frequency - 146.520 MHz

The Wilderness Protocol is a dedicated effort to provide communications between hams who are hiking, backpacking, and camping in uninhabited areas. This ensures emergency communications help reaches areas beyond normal repeater coverage.

It is also used in events when local repeaters are off-the-air, and communications are needed during emergencies. The Wilderness Protocol is also important during times of unrest, disasters, and local emergencies.

The Wilderness Protocol recommends that amateur radio operators monitor the National Calling Frequency, at specific times of the day in case of emergency or priority calls.

Procedures for "Wilderness Protocol"

It is recommended amateur operators monitor the National Calling Frequency as the primary contact frequency, and also monitor your local simplex frequencies and local repeaters.

The National Calling Frequency should be known nation-wide. Monitoring this frequency provides support for travelers passing through your area. Adding and monitoring your local known frequencies provides support for family and friends.

MONITOR TIMING: Monitor the standard National Calling Frequency 146.520 MHz, and any local frequencies every three hours starting at 7:00 a.m., local time, on the hour and until five minutes past the hour, and repeat every three hours.

Ø 7:00 a.m.

Ø 10:00 a.m.

Ø 1:00 p.m.

Ø 4:00 p.m.

Ø 7:00 p.m.

Ø 10:00 p.m.

ALTERNATE TIMING: If you have plenty of battery power, monitor five minutes before the hour through five minutes after the hour, this allows for differences in individual time settings. You can always listen for longer if you want.

ENHANCED MONITORING: Fixed stations or portable stations with enough battery power could listen every hour.

CONTINUOUS MONITORING: Fixed stations or portable stations with fixed power could listen at all times that they are near their radio. It's recommend to use a scanner to monitor. This can be portable and move with you, saving battery power on a portable radio until you need to respond. Continuous monitoring is needed especially during local, regional, and national disasters.

MONITORING STANDARDS: During an emergency, Listen to the frequencies until four minutes past the hour. If there is no activity, then make a call letting others know you are monitoring and available. Remember to listen first and then call with a short transmission message.

For the Wilderness Protocol to work, radio operators need to be listening for calls.

If no one is listening, then there will be no one to help.

RESPONDING TO A CALL FOR HELP: When a call comes in, listen carefully.

When the caller is done broadcasting, respond and ask questions according to what has happened.

Ø What is the emergency?

Ø Is anyone hurt?

Ø Where are you located?

- Home address
- Road name with mile marker
- Lat & Long
- Trail name
- Campground name

Ø Is there someone I can contact for you?

If needed, contact 911 to report the incident. If you unable to call 911, you may be able to relay emergency information through another amateur operator who has better access to a repeater and/or 911.

MAKING AN EMERGENCY CALL:

Immediately: program the National Calling Frequency into your radio(s) 146.520 MHz, before you need it.

Whenever you can, try calling on the hour, as listed above.

When you need help, start by listening to the frequencies you have programmed in your radio. If you hear someone using a channel, ask to break in.

If no one is talking on the radio, pick a channel based on what you know of the area; for example, a local repeater. If you don't know the area, start by using the National Calling Frequency.

When you call out, always say the name of the channel you are on. Example: This is KC7*** on the National 52 with emergency traffic.

This helps when someone is scanning frequencies and only hears your message before the signal drops and goes back to scanning. This way, they heard what channel you are using and can respond on the same channel

Repeat as needed, and try other channels you have programmed in your radio

PRIORITY TONE SIGNALS: To help reach out when time is critical, this method is suggested for priority radio transmissions only.

Use the **LONG TONE ZERO (LTZ)**. Begin calls for assistance with about 10 seconds of tone. To do this, key up and hold down the zero button to continuously transmit the zero DTMF tone. Then proceed to make your emergency call. This should help those listening to recognize that an emergency or priority call is coming through.

*Monitoring the National Calling Frequency while traveling is a good idea. Amateur radio operators have found it a good way to help others or to get help when it's needed it.

*The protocol only becomes effective when many people use it.

*This program is not to replace anything a club or group is doing for Emergency Communications. It is a good starting point or something to add to your group that can help across this country.

*Finally, remind others of the protocol at your club meetings and on radio nets. It a good thing to know.