



Chapter 11-1

ON AIR

ACMA Foundation Syllabus 2 and 8.7 – 8.9

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Limits

As a foundation licensee, know your frequency and power limits. Ensure the previous chapter on regulations is understood.

Setting Up

Your radio is on and connected to the antenna. The SWR is as low as you can make it. The Foundation band you chose is open and you can hear other contacts. You are ready to make your first contact since getting your licence with the call sign VK3JFP.

The following steps are important and starting with good procedures will ensure you have a consistent application to communications for future contacts.

- Listen to see if anyone is on the frequency.
- If nothing is heard, continue. If the frequency is in use, move to another frequency.
- Key the microphone and announce, “**This is VK3JFP, is this frequency in use?**”
- If there is no answer you are free to make a call.

These steps are repeated each time you want to transmit on a new frequency. This etiquette ensures you don’t transmit over weaker stations.

Making Contact

Calling a station

You have a prearranged sked (In the context of amateur radio a sked is a pre-arranged or scheduled contact between ham radio operators.) and the time for the meeting is now.

First follow the steps listed in “Setting Up” when operating on a new frequency.

If nothing is heard, then make the call.

“VKxxx VKxxx VKxxx this is VK3JFP, VK3JFP, VK3JFP over.”

Station called.

Station calling

Note: VKxxx is not a recognized call sign and is only used here as an example.

For a HF call, you announce the call signs three times. If the call is on VHF or UHF, you only need to announce the call signs once. Once the call is established on HF, the call signs need only be used once.

“Thanks Greg that’s great, VKxxx this is VK3JFP over.”

The use of the term “over” is not necessary but common practice.

Call signs must be used at the following times, even when conducting tests.

- At the beginning of a transmission
- At the end of the transmission
- Every 10 minutes during a transmission

General Calls

A general call on HF to anyone anywhere is called a "CQ" call.

The code "CQ" originated in telegraphy to mean "seeking you" or "seek you" and they are listening and available to talk.

CQ CQ CQ this is VK3JFP, VK3JFP, VK3JFP over."

Calling anyone.

Station calling

On VHF and UHF, for a CQ call, just announce your call sign and just say listening as the communications on these bands is localised.

"This is VK3JFP listening".

Or

"This is VK3JFP listening on the Geelong repeater".

Long Distance

We know calling CQ is for anyone, but if you want to contact someone outside VK (Australia), you use the term **DX**. (Distant)

"CQ DX CQ DX CQ DX this is VKyyyy VKyyyy VKyyyy over."

Calling anyone outside VK.

Station calling

Specific country

If you wish to make contact with anyone in a particular country like Japan, you will use the following call.

"CQ Japan CQ Japan CQ Japan this is VKyyyy VKyyyy VKyyyy over."

Calling anyone in Japan.

Station calling

Instead of using the country name, some operators use the country prefix.

"CQ JA CQ JA CQ JA this is VKyyyy VKyyyy VKyyyy over."

Calling anyone in Japan.

Station calling

Contact Hints and Etiquette

1. Leave a short pause between overs to allow other stations to call in.
2. Plan your message to prevent using filler words ("um," "ah").
3. Pause for one full second after pressing the PTT button before speaking. This prevents you from clipping the first part of your message.
4. When speaking on air for the first time, people tend to speak quickly. Slow your speech down and speak clearly as the receiver may not hear you as clearly as you hear yourself. Clarity, Brevity, and Simplicity.
5. Learn to set the microphone a consistent distance from your mouth. Don't let the microphone drift away as you speak.

6. Use the phonetic alphabet for your name, other difficult words and numbers. Remember your contact may not be proficient in English.
7. Say "**Over**" when you have finished speaking and are waiting for a reply. Say "**Out**" to indicate the conversation is finished and no reply is expected.
8. Use "Roger", "Copy" or preferably "QSL" to confirm you have received and understood a message.
9. To avoid confusion, use "Affirmative" for yes and "Negative" for no, as they are clearer over the air.
10. If you did not understand, ask the user to "Say again," rather than "Repeat" (which has a different meaning in military contexts).
11. If you cannot respond immediately, say "Standby" to acknowledge the call without requiring immediate action.

Phonetic Alphabet

The phonetic alphabet is a universal way of spelling a word. Your name is Bob, and you have a noisy contact with another operator, and your conversation may go as, "My name is Bob – Bravo Oscar Bravo".

Knowing and using the phonetic alphabet can help with your radio communications. **Learn these.** Practice by picking random words and using the phonetic alphabet to spell them out. Start with your full name.

Phonetic Alphabet

A - Alpha	N - November	. - Decimal
B - Bravo	O - Oscar	. - Stop
C - Charlie	P - Papa	
D - Delta	Q - Quebec	0 - Zero
E - Echo	R - Romeo	1 - Wun
F - Foxtrot	S - Sierra	2 - Two
G - Golf	T - Tango	3 - Tree
H - Hotel	U - Uniform	4 - Fower
I - India	V - Victor	5 - Fife
J - Juliet	W - Whiskey	6 - Six
K - Kilo	X - X-ray	7 - Seven
L - Lima	Y - Yankee	8 - Ait
M - Mike	Z - Zulu	9 - Niner

Pronunciation Notes: Some words have specific pronunciations to avoid misinterpretation, such as "Alfa" (al-fah), "Juliett" (jew-lee-ett), and "Xray" (ecks-ray).

Numbers: Digits are generally spoken as their English names, but with modified pronunciation for 3 (tree), 4 (fow-er), 5 (fife), and 9 (niner) to improve clarity.

Usage: It is used globally in aviation, military, maritime, and amateur radio, as well as by police for clear communication.

History: The modern, standardized version was adopted in 1956 following updates to earlier military spelling systems.

Q CODES

Q codes are abbreviations for some radio actions. The Q code was developed for morse code to reduce words to two or three letters. Q codes are prolific in aviation and maritime use outside the amateur world. Below is just a few of the most common Q codes you need to know.

The original Q-codes were created, circa 1909, by the British government and provided a common understanding including non-English speaking maritime radio operators.

There are many Q codes, and the selection below relates to amateur radio. Get to know these codes.

Code Used as a Question

QRK - What is the readability of my signals?

QRL - Are you busy?

QRM - Are you being interfered with?

QRN - Are you troubled by static?

QRO - Shall I increase transmitter power?

QRP - Shall I decrease transmitter power?

QRS - Shall I send more slowly?

QRT - Shall I stop sending?

QRZ - Who is calling me?

QRV - Are you ready?

QRX - I will be right back.

QSB - Are my signals fading?

QSL - Can you acknowledge receipt?

QSO - Can you communicate with ... direct?

QSY Shall I change frequency?

QTH - What is your location?

Used as an Answer or statement.

The readability of your signals is ...

I am busy.

I am being interfered with (M= manmade)

I am troubled by static (N=noise)

Increase transmitter power (O=output)

Decrease transmitter power (P=power)

Send more slowly (S=slow)

Stop sending (QRT=quiet)

You are being called by ...

I am ready.

Please QRX one.

Your signals are fading.

I am acknowledging receipt (L=letter)

I can communicate with ... direct.

Change to another frequency.

My location is (H=home)

Other abbreviations

Other common abbreviations, encountered in the amateur radio world, are listed below. Learn these abbreviations.

BK -	Signal used to interrupt a transmission on progress.
CQ -	General call to all stations
CW -	Continuous wave or Morse code
DE -	From. Used to separate the callsign of the station called from that of the calling station.
DX -	Distant
K -	Invitation to transmit
MSG -	Message
PSE -	Please
R -	Received
RX -	Receiver
TX -	Transmitter
UR -	Your

Learn these.

Go to Chapter 11-1 Questions.

Have fun and stay safe.