

2005 Miami Tropical Marathon Communications Guide

AID STATION COMMUNICATIONS GUIDE

Welcome to the 3rd running of the Miami Tropical Marathon. An incredible amount of information must be communicated around the course, both for logistics as well as for medical and other needs. Good communications are a critical element in the success of our marathon and for the safety of our participants and volunteers. The following is a brief guide explaining the communications resources available to us.

Each Aid Station will have an Amateur Radio Operator (“Ham”). His/Her primary job is to **be on the radio**, available to the **Logistics Net Control**, at all times. They are volunteers like you, have their own equipment, and have training in communications and emergency services.

He/She will work with the you, medical personnel, and race officials to make sure things go well and communicate for all.

Some of the information that follows is a compilation of the questions asked by hams and other volunteers over the past 26 years, and was kindly provided by Steve Mendelsohn, W2ML, Communications Director of the New York City Marathon, also Assistant Director of the Miami.

The Job of the Aid Station Radio Operator

The aid station radio operator is the PRIMARY communicator at your aid station. Walkie-talkies are the primary means of communications. For the marathon this year, we will be using 2 main repeaters (logistics and medical), as well as a backup repeater.

Their primary job must be to communicate for the Aid Station captain and medical personnel. As much as they would like to, assisting with non-communications tasks would distract from their main function. Their job **is to act as communicators**. **They are the only people licensed to handle radio equipment**.

Brevity of communications is critical. Before asking the radio operator to send a message, collect your thoughts and get all information ready. Key points are:

1. To whom do we need to send a message to ?
2. Nature of the message
3. Priority (routine, priority, emergency)

There is a tremendous volume of traffic transmitted during the event and a long series of Uhhs and Ummms followed by "now where did I put that paper" slows things down. And always remember that thousands of people are listening to what you are saying.

COMMERCIAL VS. NON-COMMERCIAL COMMUNICATIONS

Amateur Radio operators may handle only non-commercial, public service related communications. For example, they may not transmit information for a commercial sponsor or any type of “for-profit” messages. The main communications purposes are:

Logistics-reporting on setup items, supply needs, teardown, etc

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Medical-emergency and non-emergency medical communications between aid station personnel and race staff.

Runner Status-lead runners, drop outs

OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

In addition to the amateur radio operators, there will be a commercial repeater and walkie talkies for use by race officials and others involved in race operations. The central point for communications between these two different systems will be through the Net Control Station (NCS), located in the command trailer. The operator at your aid station will be able to send a message through NCS, who in turn will relay that message to its destination or to police or other emergency services personnel.

EMERGENCIES

In the event that we need to communicate something of an emergency or sensitive nature, the marathon has developed a code system. This will ensure that the message gets to race officials promptly and accurately. Any emergency communication will get IMMEDIATE attention. Each radio operator has a copy of this code system and the appropriate procedures to follow.

WE LIVE AND DIE BY THESE THINGS

All communications are directed to, and by, Net Control. The only exception to this rule is when the race director requires and assumes net control of the net. When this occurs **ALL STATIONS MUST STAND BY UNLESS YOUR STATION IS HANDLING LIFE AND DEATH TRAFFIC.**

Brevity; Keep all messages short and to the point. Speak clearly and concisely. Please do not get upset if the net control sounds abrupt with you or asks you to repeat something. This usually means that he is very busy with several people talking to him locally. There are several different nets being handled in the same control area and traffic gets quite hectic.

Finally.....

Thank you for taking on one of the most complex jobs in this event and working to make this a success.

If you have ANY questions, please call me at:

Work: (305) 899-0900 Cell: (305) 439-7190 email: bnemser@nemal.com

See you on January 30th

Ben Nemser, WA4DZS
Miami Tropical Marathon Communications Coordinator