

Working Communications on Car Rallies – In a Nutshell

Your basic duties are:

1. Help keep track of all vehicles, especially the rally cars.
2. Respond in the event of an emergency.
3. Blockage radios also keep the active stage roads closed to public travel.

HOW IT WORKS:

Rallies are time trials with multiple “stages” or speed sections connected by “transits” on public highways or other connecting roads. The rally vehicles run at one, two, or three minute intervals depending on the event and on dust conditions. Each car is counted down at the “Start Control” at the beginning of the stage. On “Go!” the driver races down the stage as fast as he or she can go until crossing the “Flying Finish” line at the end of the stage some six, ten or even more, miles later. The team then pulls up to the “Finish Control” and receives the stage time on their time card. Then they drive at street-legal speed to the next stage. Fastest cumulative stage times win!

Start Radio is at the Start Control and will call the car number of each rally vehicle as it begins to run the stage.

Blockage radios are positioned (with car and banner ribbon) to block side roads where motorized traffic or mountain bikes could get onto the stage. We can’t have that!

Some blockages are simply there to “divide up” a stage into smaller sections for the purpose of monitoring each rally car’s progress.

Typically blockage radios call out the car number and their location (“Car 11 past Block Three” as each car passes. On some stages the Communications Captain will set up limited calling out (if stages have a lot of blockages close to each other, for instance).

Usually all hams on a stage use logs to check off each car’s progress.

The **Finish Radio** announces when each car finishes.

POSSIBLE EMERGENCIES:

Finish Radio alerts the Finish Control crew to ask subsequent rally cars if they have seen a missing or out of sequence rally vehicle (say, changing a flat tire somewhere on the stage). When a car is missing, the usual procedure is for the Communications Captain to hold the cars at the start if three rally cars have NOT spotted any sign of the missing car in front of them. This is why tracking the cars across the stage is helpful – we know where to start looking.

If an injury accident occurs on the stage, a blockage radio will probably be the first one to hear about it when a rally car arrives to report it. Emergency procedures for calling in the medical personnel are detailed in a separate page.

AS YOU CAN SEE, YOUR JOB IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT TO THE SAFETY OF THE COMPETITORS. THANK YOU FOR HELPING!!