

Document # I-08	Title: Use of Radio Communication Devices	Print Date: 9/13/16
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Policy: Use of Radio Communication Devices

Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to describe the standards for the use of radio devices by IPFO officials so “on-field” communications can be improved during a game.

Scope: All Officials, Technical Advisors

Definitions: Radio – Retevis H-777; 16 Channel Two-Way Radio
 Earpiece – Retevis Covert Air Acoustic Tubing PTT Earpiece
 Push to Talk (PTT) – Term used for initiating communication between radio devices using a single button. The outgoing communication can only be achieved while the button is depressed.
 Open Frequency – Radio airwave in which communications between devices can be detected and heard by the general public.
 Crew - 5-man / 7-man “on-field” officiating crew. The crew does not include the clock operator for purposes of this policy.

Procedures:

1.0 COMMUNICATION DEVICE & ISSUANCE

The IPFO uses a Retevis Radio with a PTT earpiece. All radios and earpieces will be funded by the Association and provided to the officials and Technical Advisors. If an official wants to substitute his earpiece with one of his own, it must meet the minimum standards of the Retevis earpiece that’s provided and it shall not be conspicuous in appearance.

Five radios will be issued to each varsity referee before the season begins. Clock Operators are not to be issued radios. Radio communication is to be limited to the crew that’s on the field of play. If a Referee is assigned to a 7-man crew, he will be given extra radios by the Regional Supervisor of Officials (RSO) for use in that game(s). Radios that malfunction or broken will be replaced. The Referee is responsible for notifying the RSO that a replacement is needed..

The Referee shall be responsible for all radios that are used by his crew during the season. Responsibilities include the following:

1. Providing radios to the crew prior to the pregame conference.
2. Collecting radios from the crew after the game.
3. Insuring that all radios are operable and fully charged prior to departing for the game.
4. Requesting replacement radios from the RSO if necessary.

Officials shall be issued an earpiece for their personal use. It shall be carried with them from game to game. The earpiece shall be used by the official in subsequent seasons following the initial issuance. Reasonable replacement of an earpiece is expected through wear and tear. However, if an official fails to properly maintain his earpiece due to his own neglect, he will receive a one-game suspension. Earpiece replacement requests shall be directed to the RSO.

Technical Advisors (TA) shall be issued a radio and earpiece for the purpose of monitoring communications during the game. The TA shall deal directly with the RSO if there is an equipment problem.

2.0 RADIO INFORMATION & SECURITY

The Retevis H-777 is an open frequency device. The general public has the ability to eavesdrop and interfere with the communication of a crew during a game. In today's society where social media outlets can destroy a person or company's reputation, it's imperative that the use these radios is strictly adhered to. Disciplined usage by our officials is mandatory. **Comments must be limited to football related content on-the-field only.** Any off handed remarks, profanity, insults, sarcasm, or similar verbiage can be overheard and jeopardize the radio program if placed on social media outlets. **Members of the crew must police themselves for content and remind each other of unauthorized language.** This cannot be overstated enough.

Each radio has 16 channels, so if outside interference is discovered, the crew can easily switch to another frequency. Prior to the game, the crew shall test the radios and shall begin the game at frequency #5. It's recommended for the crew to remain on that frequency throughout the game unless eavesdropping or interference is discovered. If the frequency is compromised, the Referee shall use hand signals to identify a new frequency to use. The importance of keeping the frequency from the public is the primary goal. The crew may get together during a time out to confirm a new frequency. Do not call an official's time out for the sole purpose of changing frequencies.

There may be times when the crew must alter their use of the radios due to technical difficulties during the game. (Dead battery, broken antennae, broken earpiece.) In those cases, decisions can be made by the crew on how to proceed with fewer radios based on position need. Again, do not call time out for the sole purpose of changing out units among yourselves, use a team time out or during the one-minute interval after a score or period change.

There are two instances when use of the radio system is to be aborted during the game.

1. The entire radio frequency spectrum is compromised or experiences interference.
2. The use of the equipment is having a negative effect on the tempo of the game.

If either of these situations occur, please notify the RSO so an investigation can be made into the cause.

3.0 COMMUNICATION PROTOCOL

The use of radios during a game can be a tremendous benefit for the officiating crew. The ability to converse with each other across the football field can also benefit the coaching staffs on the sideline. It should be understood that this equipment is not a substitute for the NFHS Officials Manual. The NFHS / IPFO mechanics will remain the same. The expectation for radio use is that everyone's communication will improve.

Avoid airwave clutter when using the device. Be precise with your comment, avoid a lengthy dialog. Allow one official to complete his comment before making yours. The radio has a "busy channel lockout" that will prevent multiple talking on a single channel. Only state facts, not speculation. Strict verbal discipline is required and expected. Here is the list of approved radio communication discussions that can be used by officials during dead ball intervals.

Pre-Kick - Officiating Crew

1. Confirmation of official's readiness signal prior to a free kick.

Pre-Snap – Officiating Crew

1. Player count confirmation while using signal.
2. Substitution verification prior to the snap.
3. Down, distance and clock status confirmation.
4. Clock management, both game and 25 second clocks.
5. Formation verification prior to the snap.
6. Delay of game notification to Referee by the Back Judge. (Only penalty that can be reported to the Referee via radio.)
7. Confirmation of "time out's remaining" for both teams.
8. PAT status, kick or scrimmage play.

Dead Ball Interval, After Play Concludes – Officiating Crew

1. Notification that a penalty flag has been thrown.
2. Out-of-bounds scrimmage kick assistance.
3. Ball / clock status on plays near the sideline between officials.
4. Chain crew management.
5. Confirmation of a completed period by Referee before holding ball overhead.
6. Relay player conduct tip to nearest official. (Example: H tells U to have DE back up a bit out of the NZ when lining up.)
7. Penalty administration verification to Umpire before the mark-off.

Head Coach Options or Requests to Officiating Crew

1. Out-of-bounds free kick options from head coach on sideline.
2. First down ball placement option from head coach on sideline after a successful fair catch.
3. Penalty information, accept / decline decision from head coach on sideline.
4. Head coach request to call time out at a specific time on the game / 25 second clock.
5. Request a referee / coach's conference.

Head Coach Notifications from Officiating Crew

1. Player injury notification to head coach on sideline.
2. Ball / clock status information to head coach on sideline.
3. Player conduct information to head coach on sideline.
4. Player number & foul information to head coach on sideline.
5. Player removal information to head coach on sideline, non-disqualifying. (Chin strap broken, helmet off during down, illegal equipment, etc.)
6. Time outs remaining confirmation to head coach on sideline.

Miscellaneous Use

1. Discussions with the Technical Advisor during halftime.
2. Relay game clock / play clock change to sideline for ECO.

Here is a list of communication items that are **not** to be discussed by officials on the radio under any circumstances.

1. Any communication during a live ball.
2. Reporting penalties to the Referee. (*Exception: Delay of Game)
3. Discussion of catch / no catch.
4. Disagreements between officials.
5. Complaints by coaches.
6. Speculation and not fact.
7. Non-football related communication. Includes but not limited to any reckless comments involving players, coaches, cheerleaders, school administrators, spectators, or school facilities.
8. Profanity, sarcasm, insults, racial slurs, or similar derogatory comments that would embarrass the crew, the IPFO or the NCHSAA.

Technical Advisors shall be equipped with a radio and will monitor the communications between officials during the course of the game as part of the evaluation process. Under no circumstances is a TA to interfere with, or give advice to, the crew during any quarter, nor shall he serve as an unofficial “replay official” during the course of the game. The TA may offer quick observations between quarters if time permits and only after the officials have completed their duties. At halftime, the TA may use the radio for first half critiques of the crew in lieu of going down on the field. Discretion should be used in these cases.

References:

- A. 2016 SAC Clinic PowerPoint Presentation – Radio Communications
- B. Retevis H-777 User’s Manual

Revision History:

Revision	Date	Description of changes	Completed By
0.0	9/11/16	Initial Release	WW Todd
1.0	11/5/16	Starting Frequency Addition; Discussion Additions	WW Todd
1.1	6/3/17	Changed radios assigned to crew to five.	WWTodd
1.2	6/23	Identified communication uses by situation; removed code word protocol and replaced with hand signal by Referee.	WWTodd