

Race Communications

1. PURPOSE AND GENERAL PRINCIPLES

The Clerk of the Course is responsible for the proper conduct of the race meeting, and to enable them to carry out their function they must be kept aware of what is going on around the circuit, and must be able to communicate with each post and key official at all times.

Experience has shown that the best method of providing these facilities for the Clerk of the Course is that Race Control be the communication centre for the circuit, and to use several communications systems at all times during a race meeting

The following combination of systems is recommended as the ideal overall network for a race circuit:

1.1 TRACKSIDE OBSERVATION SYSTEMS

This is the major source of information from around the track. It should be by land-line connecting each marshal control post with Race Control. An open-line loop is preferred with each post able to speak to each other in an emergency, and able to hear all other communication with Race Control. Each post should use a handset equipped with microphone boom (which blocks out the background noise), and a push-to-talk button.

1.2 RACE CONTROL RADIO

This system gives Race Control direct communication with each key official and each emergency vehicle not always working from a fixed point. It is normally used to issue directions to officials or Drivers of emergency vehicles, to clarify information to and from Race Control, and to communicate with track emergency services during emergencies. Licensed, dedicated channel VHF or UHF radio is the most suitable for this purpose. Each official issued with a radio should have a handset equipped with a microphone boom if they are working where background noise could be a problem.

Except at the smallest circuits, two channels should be used: one for key officials, and one for the emergency channel. The emergency channel can be further divided into

- (a) First Emergency: MIV, ambulance, doctors, fire units; and
- (b) Second Emergency: tow trucks, shuttle buses, equipment teams etc

1.3 INTER-OFFICE TELEPHONE SYSTEM

This system facilitates the smooth running of a meeting by allowing a direct dial internal system connecting each track service centre such as the Secretary of the Meeting's office, paddock office, scrutiny bay, medical centre, and Race Control. External telephone lines should be available to Race Control, the Secretary of the Meeting's office, and the medical centre.

1.4 LOCATION AND STAFFING OF COMMUNICATION POINTS

The communications centre should be a part of (or close enough to) Race Control to allow direct communication with the Clerk of the Course, and ideally in a position where each communications official can see most of the course. It should be located in a structure which filters out most background noise, as the important calls tend to come when the noise is loudest.

The communications centre should have sufficient staff to allow each system to be individually monitored at all times, with reserve staff available on stand-by.

Each trackside communications post should be located so that the complete circuit is under observation.

Each communications post should be located so that the observers are back from the track itself, but close enough to communicate verbally with the Flag Marshals at each post.

Each post should be manned by two trained observers: one to remain in communication with Race Control at all times, the other able to attend an incident, to consult other officials to obtain further information, or to assist otherwise if needed.

2. GENERAL NOTES

Open phone lines and radio channels must be used with proper communications protocol at all times or the channel could become crowded and proper communication become impossible. With protocol being observed,

it should be possible for up to 40 radios to be used on one channel. With this level of usage, it helps if a spare channel is available for conversations and longer, non-urgent transmissions.

A good quality headset that provides noise attenuation is important; each official must wear them for hours at a time.

A log of all messages received on the trackside observers' system should be kept, so that the Clerk of the Course can refer to it at any time. Recording of the other communications system is also desirable, if possible.