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# Call Sign Policy and Special Event Prefixes

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## Forward

This new issue of Radio Information Circular 9, *Call Sign Policy and Special Event Prefixes*, (RIC-9) reflects recent modifications to the international *Radio Regulations* pertaining to the amateur service resulting from decisions made at the International Telecommunication Union World Radiocommunication Conference of 2003 (WRC-2003).

## Purpose

This circular outlines the policies and procedures as they relate to call signs and special events prefixes within the amateur radio service.

## Policy

### 1. Call Sign Assignment

#### 1.1 General

A Canadian call sign is issued to anyone, including a foreign national, who successfully writes the Canadian Basic Qualification examination and obtains an Amateur Radio Operator Certificate.

Individuals who are citizens of another country and are not the holders of a Canadian Amateur Radio Operator Certificate may be authorized to operate with their own call sign with an appropriate Canadian call sign area designator in accordance with Radiocommunication Information Circular 3, *Information on the Amateur Radio Service* (RIC-3) when a reciprocal operating agreement exists between Canada and the home country or the visitor is operating under a CEPT or IARP permit.

Call signs are assigned to individuals for a lifetime. However, there are cases when call signs become available for reassignment. In the case of an amateur requesting a replacement call sign, the unwanted call sign would be returned to the block of available call signs at the time of exchange.

In the case of a deceased amateur, Industry Canada policy allows for a member of the immediate family to apply for the call sign. Immediate family includes father, mother, step-parent, foster parent, guardian, brother, sister, spouse, child, grandchild, stepchild and adopted members of the family.

If no family member has applied for the call sign within one year of the death, it will be returned to the block of available call signs.

All call signs become available for reassignment when the current year equals the certificate holder's birthdate plus 125 years.

## 1.2 Call Sign Prefixes

When a Canadian applicant is qualified to install or operate an amateur radio station, a call sign will be issued using a prefix based on where the applicant resides. An amateur who subsequently changes his residence from one call sign prefix area to another shall apply for a change of call sign with the prefix allocated for this new area of operation.

A foreign national holding a Canadian Amateur Radio Operator Certificate does not need to be a resident in Canada, but must have a Canadian address at which the amateur radio operations in Canada will be based. The prefix for this call sign will be determined by the relevant Canadian address. Prefixes currently used for assignment are in accordance with the following table:

Prefix		Province/Territory
VE1	VA1	Nova Scotia
VE2	VA2	Quebec
VE3	VA3	Ontario
VE4	VA4	Manitoba
VE5	VA5	Saskatchewan
VE6	VA6	Alberta
VE7	VA7	British Columbia
VE8		Northwest Territories
VE9		New Brunswick
VE0*		International Waters
VO1		Newfoundland
VO2		Labrador
VY1		Yukon Territory
VY2		Prince Edward Island
VY0		Nunavut Territory

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\* VE0 call signs are only intended for use when the amateur radio station is operated from a vessel that make international voyages.

## 1.3 Call Sign Suffixes

### 1.3.1 Restricted Suffixes

In certain circumstances, the Amateur Radio Service Centre may decide not to issue certain suffixes. An example is the suffix SOS, which could result in confusion in a real emergency.

Suffixes for call signs issued on a permanent basis in accordance with Section 1.4, will consist of either two or three letters.

In conformity with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) *Radio Regulations*, call signs with three-letter suffixes and four-character alpha numeric suffixes will not be issued from block QOA to QUZ as these combinations are reserved for abbreviations to be used for radiocommunication services

(ITU - Article S19). Existing call signs will remain valid until the call sign is released.

### **1.3.2 Single-letter Suffixes and Four-character Alpha Numeric Suffixes**

Call signs with single-letter and four-character alpha numeric suffixes will only be issued as special event call signs for limited periods of time as described in Section 2.

### **1.3.3 Two-letter Suffixes**

In Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia the demand for two-letter suffixes exceeds the availability. In some areas, waiting lists for two-letter call signs have been held in district offices for many years. With the introduction of the centralized Amateur Radio Service Centre, two-letter call sign waiting lists have been discontinued. Applicants in the VE1 - VE7 and VO1 call sign areas who are qualified to install or operate an amateur radio station may apply for a two-letter call sign if they meet the following eligibility criteria:

- (a) the amateur has been the holder of a Canadian Amateur Radio Operator Certificate - Basic Qualification for a minimum of five years; or
- (b) the amateur is applying for the two-letter call sign of a deceased family member in accordance with Section 1.4.4 below.

Applicants in call sign prefix areas with very small amateur populations (VE8, VE9, VY1, VY2, VY0, and VO2) in which two-letter call signs are readily available, may apply for a two-letter call sign. Once the number of two-letter call signs issued in an area exceeds 80% of the total two-letter call sign combinations, the eligibility criteria in subsection (a) above will then apply to that area.

Only one two-letter call sign will be issued per amateur operator and the prefix will be issued in accordance with Section 1.2. No two-letter call sign will be issued to club stations. Existing two-letter call signs remain valid until the holder releases the call sign or becomes deceased.

## **1.4 Choosing a Call Sign**

### **1.4.1 Choosing a First Call Sign**

Applicants may request any unassigned two or three-letter suffix call sign using a prefix in accordance with Section 1.2. Applicants requesting a two-letter suffix call sign must meet the requirements of Section 1.3.3. A maximum of three choices in the order of preference will be considered. If none of the choices are available or no choice is indicated, the Amateur Radio Service Centre will assign a call sign.

Applicants are urged to check the availability of call signs at the Amateur Radio Operator Certificate Services website [www.ic.gc.ca/callsign](http://www.ic.gc.ca/callsign).

### **1.4.2 Additional Call Signs**

Amateurs may apply for any additional three-letter suffix call sign.

Amateurs who are not already holders of a two-letter suffix call sign may apply for an additional call sign with a two-letter suffix providing they meet the requirements of Section 1.3.3.

Please note that only one two-letter call sign is assigned per amateur operator and the prefix will be issued in accordance with Section 1.2.

### **1.4.3 Changing a Call Sign**

An amateur may request a change of call sign for a three-letter suffix. If the requested call sign is available, it will be issued, provided that the applicant's prefix remains in accordance with Section 1.2.

Applicants who request a change of call sign from a three-letter call sign to a two-letter call sign must meet the requirements of Section 1.3.3.

### **1.4.4 Transferring a Call Sign from a Deceased Amateur to an Immediate Family Member**

The call sign of a deceased amateur will not be returned to the Available Call Signs List until one year after the death. An immediate family member who is the holder of an Amateur Radio Operator Certificate may apply for the call sign within that year, provided that the applicant's province or territory call sign prefix matches the call sign of the deceased amateur's area of residence.

### **1.4.5 Call Sign Reservations**

Amateur radio service call signs cannot be reserved.

Applicants are urged to check the availability of call signs at the Amateur Radio Operator Certificate Services website at [www.ic.gc.ca/callsign](http://www.ic.gc.ca/callsign).

## **1.5 Club Stations**

1.5.1 Call signs for club stations will be issued with three-letter suffixes only. Existing two-letter club station call signs will remain valid until the club disbands or the call sign is released.

### **1.5.2 Sponsor Requirements**

The application for a call sign intended to be used by an amateur radio club station must be made by a holder of an Amateur Radio Operator Certificate with Advanced Qualification.

## **1.6 Automatic Repeater Stations**

1.6.1 The application for a call sign intended to be used for an amateur radio automatic radiotelephone communications repeater station operating above 30 MHz and within the same band must be made by a holder of an Amateur Radio Operator Certificate with Advanced Qualification.

1.6.2 The applicant must be the holder of an applicable Morse code qualification if the repeater is to transmit on frequencies below 30 MHz.

- 1.6.3 A holder of an Amateur Radio Operator Certificate with Basic Qualification may apply for a call sign intended to be used for an amateur radio digital repeater on frequencies above 30 MHz.

## 2. Call Signs for Special Events

### 2.1 Eligibility for Consideration

A special prefix assignment may be made to all amateurs in a geographical area for Canadian significant commemorative non-commercial anniversaries or Canadian significant events.

Request should be received at the Amateur Radio Service Centre at least 60 days before the beginning of the proposed event to provide ample time to process the request and allow the Centre to inform the amateur community at least 30 days before the event.

Special event prefixes and call signs are listed in Table 1.

### 2.2 Definitions

Special call signs and prefixes fall within one of the following categories:

#### Category I

- (a) National: Special prefixes for all provinces and territories for use by all Canadian amateurs not to exceed two months.  
e.g. All VE3's become CG3, all VE7 become CG7, etc.
- (b) Provincial or territorial: Special prefix for the applicable province/territory for use by Canadian amateurs residing within the applicable province/territory, not to exceed one month.  
e.g. All VE4's become CG4.
- (c) Municipal: Special prefix for the applicable municipality for use by Canadian amateurs residing within the applicable municipality, not to exceed two weeks.  
e.g. All VE1 within the municipality become CG1.
- (d) Organization: Special prefix or call sign for the use of the applicable organization, not to exceed one month.  
  
All members of the organization that are radio operators can use the special prefix.

**Category II**

(a) Individuals or club stations: Specific call signs using a special prefix and suffix to be issued to specific stations, not to exceed one month.

e.g. VE3ABC becomes CG3A or CG3DEF

**Category III**

(a) Individuals or club stations: Specific call signs to be issued for specific stations using the existing prefix and number but using a different suffix, not to exceed one month.

**Category IV**

(a) Individuals or club stations: Specific call signs to be issued for selected significant amateur events to specific stations using special prefix and/or suffix, not to exceed the event period.\*

\* Events are from time to time held in multiple phases. The authority granted under this category is valid for the duration of these separate phases and are not to exceed a total overall period of 60 calendar days.

**2.3 Issuance of Special Call Signs**

Requests falling within Categories I and II (special prefixes are involved) will be accommodated if they meet the following criteria:

Anniversaries must be a minimum of a '25<sup>th</sup>' or any 25<sup>th</sup> increment.

Significant events must be of a historical or cultural nature and not of a repetitive type. For example the annual local corn roast would not qualify and neither would the Canadian National Exhibition in Toronto, nor the Calgary Stampede. However, the Calgary Olympics or the opening of the Confederation Bridge between P.E.I. and New Brunswick would qualify.

Requests falling within Category III for significant events or anniversaries not covered under Categories I and II would be approved on request, provided the proposed suffix is available. For example, an amateur radio operator's birthday would not qualify, but the Calgary Stampede or similar events may qualify as Category III.

Certain annual amateur radio contests may be considered as significant events for which requests for special call signs under Category IV may be approved. Contests for which special event call signs are requested will be considered and their eligibility will be determined in consultation with the Canadian National Amateur Radio Society.

### 3.0 Fees

The radio authorization fee for the assignment of a call sign or prefix in the amateur radio service is \$60.00 for each occurrence of the following transactions:

1. changing an existing call sign (including changing to a two-letter call sign);
2. issuing a station call sign to a club or other organization;
3. issuing an additional station call sign to an individual; and
4. issuing a special event call sign or a special prefix.

There is no fee charged:

1. to issue the initial call sign with the Amateur Radio Operator Certificate with the Basic Qualification;
2. to issue a replacement certificate due to loss or damage;
3. to issue a replacement call sign with a new prefix, due to a change in address to a new province or territory; and
4. to issue a certificate as a result of an additional qualification such as 5 w.p.m., 12 w.p.m. or Advanced.

**Table I - Special Event Prefixes and Call Signs**

Prefixes Provinces and Territories	National, Regional and Municipal Special Event Prefixes				Special Call Signs with <u>Special</u> Prefix	Special Call Signs with <u>Normal</u> Prefix
<b>VE1 (NS)</b>	CG1	CK1	VX1	XM1	VC1	VE1
<b>VA1 (NS)</b>	CF1	CJ1	VG1	XL1	VB1	VA1
<b>VE2 (QC)</b>	CG2	CK2	VX2	XM2	VC2	VE2
<b>VA2 (QC)</b>	CF2	CJ2	VG2	XL2	VB2	VA2
<b>VE3 (ON)</b>	CG3	CK3	VX3	XM3	VC3	VE3
<b>VA3 (ON)</b>	CF3	CJ3	VG3	XL3	VB3	VA3
<b>VE4 (MB)</b>	CG4	CK4	VX4	XM4	VC4	VE4
<b>VA4 (MB)</b>	CF4	CJ4	VG4	XL4	VB4	VA4
<b>VE5 (SK)</b>	CG5	CK5	VX5	XM5	VC5	VE5
<b>VA5 (SK)</b>	CF5	CJ5	VG5	XL5	VB5	VA5
<b>VE6 (AB)</b>	CG6	CK6	VX6	XM6	VC6	VE6
<b>VA6 (AB)</b>	CF6	CJ6	VG6	XL6	VB6	VA6
<b>VE7 (BC)</b>	CG7	CK7	VX7	XM7	VC7	VE7
<b>VA7 (BC)</b>	CF7	CJ7	VG7	XL7	VB7	VA7
<b>VE8 (NT)</b>	CG8	CK8	VX8	XM8	VC8	VE8
<b>VE9 (NB)</b>	CG9	CK9	VX9	XM9	VC9	VE9
<b>VO1 (NF)</b>	CH1	CY1	XJ1	XN1	VD1	VO1
<b>VO2 (LAB)</b>	CH2	CY2	XJ2	XN2	VD2	VO2
<b>VY0 (NU)</b>	CI0	CZ0	XK0	XO0	VF0	VY0
<b>VY1 (YT)</b>	CI1	CZ1	XK1	XO1	VF1	VY1
<b>VY2 (PEI)</b>	CI2	CZ2	XK2	XO2	VF2	VY2
<b>CY0 SABLE IS</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>CY9 ST-PAUL IS</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A