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Walkie-talkie lingo cheat sheet

The phrases you will hear on a film set radio, and how to say them.

Film sets use short radio phrases so the crew can pass on one fact at a time. This sheet lists the phrases most crews use, what each one means, and how to talk without clogging the channel.

Before your first shift

- [ ] **Ask which channel is yours.**
  The first AD or the production office will say which channel is for what. Do not guess.
- [ ] **Learn the first four phrases.**
  Go ahead, copy, say again and standby cover most of the day.
- [ ] **Set your earpiece or speaker.**
  Check the volume before the first take, and turn it down.
- [ ] **Remember what copy means.**
  It means you heard. It does not mean yes.

My channel: _____

How to talk on the radio

1. Check your channel. Do not guess which one is for what.
2. Listen before you press. If someone is mid-message, wait.
3. Press, pause for a beat, then speak. Otherwise the first word is cut off.
4. Say who you are calling, then who you are. "Production office, this is Sam."
5. Wait for "go ahead", then give the message in one breath.
6. The receiver says "copy" when they have it. If they say "say again", repeat it more slowly.
7. Release the button. A stuck button blocks the channel for everyone.

The phrases

Tick	Phrase	What it means
☐	**Go ahead**	I am listening. Send your message.
☐	**Copy**	I heard you and understand.
☐	**Say again**	Repeat that. I did not catch it.
☐	**Standby**	Wait. Something is about to happen, or I need a moment.
☐	**Stand down**	Stop what you were preparing. It is no longer needed.
☐	**Rolling**	The camera is running. Keep quiet and still.
☐	**Cut**	The take is finished. You can move.
☐	**Going again**	We are repeating the take.
☐	**Back to one**	Return to the first positions.
☐	**Moving on**	The shot is done and we are going to the next.
☐	**Last looks**	Make-up, hair and costume have a final check before the take.

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Tick	Phrase	What it means
☐	**Wrap**	The day, or an element of it, is finished.
☐	**On my way**	I am heading to you now.
☐	**Go to a private**	Move to another channel to talk.
☐	**Eyes on**	I can see the person or thing in question.

Some of these are set calls, such as "rolling", which the first assistant director controls. Do not say them yourself unless you have been asked to.

Common mistakes

- **Talking over a take.** If you hear "rolling", stop transmitting unless it is urgent.
- **Long messages.** If it needs more than two sentences, ask the person to call you or go to a private channel.
- **Saying "copy" for a yes.** It means you heard, not that you agree.
- **Naming people or money on an open channel.** Anyone with a radio can listen, so keep private matters off it.
- **Leaving the radio loud in a quiet scene.** Use an earpiece, and turn it down before a take.

A short exchange, done well

You	Press, pause, then: "Floor, this is Sam."
Floor runner	"Go ahead."
You	"Make-up is ready for last looks, actor to set please."
Floor runner	"Copy, bringing them now."

Two clean exchanges and no chatter. The first assistant director has the information without hearing a long story. Crews differ, so treat this as a starting point and listen to how your own unit talks.

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