

# Vanity Call Signs Do's, Don'ts & How To

DRC Learning Net

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# Factoid:

- The Vanity Call Sign System was adopted primarily due to the efforts of a single amateur, Jim Wills, N5HCT of Tyler, Texas who wanted his previous WA5EHQ station call sign back. He convinced Congress that amateur radio operators would be willing to pay for a specific call sign and they added it to the legislation.

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Ref: <http://www.w5yi.org/page.php?id=154>

# Know The Call Sign Groups

- Group X: 2-letter prefixes WC, WK, WM WR, or WT
- Group D: 2x3 format beginning with the letter K, or W (excluding Group X)
- Group C: 1x3 format beginning with the letters K, N, or W
- Group B: 2x2 format beginning with the letters KA-KZ, NA-NZ, or WA-WZ (excluding Group X)
- Group A:
  - 1x2 format beginning with the letters K, N, or W
  - 2x1 format beginning with the letters AA-AL, KA-KZ, NA-NZ, or WA-WZ (excluding Group X)
  - 2x2 format beginning with the letters AA-AL

**Notes:** Prefixes are restricted to those assigned to the United States.  
Certain Prefixes are not available to mailing addresses in the 48-contiguous states.

# What Groups May You Use?

- Extra Class: Groups A, B, C and D
- Advanced Class: Groups B, C and D
- General Class: Group C and D
- Tech Plus and Technician Class: Group C and D
- Novice: Group D

Note: Tech Plus Class licenses still exist at this time but will be converted to Technician Class when renewed or modified.

# What are the Restrictions?

- Certain 2-letter prefixes are reserved for Amateurs with **mailing addresses** outside of the 48 contiguous states.
  - AH, KH, NH and WH prefixes are reserved for the Pacific Area (Hawaii, Guam, American Samoa and certain other small U.S. island possessions)
  - AL, KL, NL and WL prefixes are reserved for Alaska
  - KP, NP and WP prefixes are reserved for the Atlantic Area (U.S. Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico and certain other small U.S. Caribbean and South Atlantic island possessions.)

# Call Signs Not Available...

- KA2AA-KA9ZZ, KC4AAA-KC4AAF, KC4USA-KC4USZ, KG4AA-KG4ZZ, KC6AA-KC6ZZ, KL9KAA-KL9KHZ, KX6AA-KX6ZZ
- Call signs with the prefix AM-AZ (these prefixes are assigned to other countries by the ITU)
- Call signs having the letters SOS or QRA-QUZ as the suffix
- Any 2x3 format call sign having the letter X as the first letter of the suffix
- Any 2x3 call sign with the prefix AF, KF, NF, or WF and the suffix EMA (U.S. Government FEMA stations)
- 2x3 format call signs having the letters AA-AL as the prefix
- 2x3 format call signs having the letters NA-NZ as the prefix

# Call Signs Not Available... (cont.)

- 2x3 format call signs with the letters WC, WK, WM, WR, or WT as the prefix (Group X call signs)
- 2x3 format call signs having the letters KP, NP, or WP as the prefix and the number 0, 6,7,8, or 9
- 2x2 format call signs having the letters KP, NP, or WP as the prefix and the number 0, 6,7,8, or 9
- 2x1 format call signs having the letters KP, NP, or WP as the prefix and the number 0, 6,7,8, or 9
- Any 1x1 call sign with the letter K, N, or W as the prefix (reserved for special event call sign system)
  - Special Event call sign block contains (3\*25) 75 calls (no "X" suffixes)

# Eligible for Selection:

- U.S. Call Signs that have not been active for at least two years from the group(s) you are eligible to use in accordance with your mailing address. With the following noted exceptions:
  - This limitation does not apply to an applicant for the call sign as the spouse, child, grandchild, stepchild, parent, grandparent, stepparent, brother, sister, stepbrother, stepsister, aunt, uncle, niece, nephew, or in-law, of the former holder now deceased.
  - The license of the former holder now deceased must show a status of expired or cancelled in the licensee database. This is accomplished by submitting a signed request for license grant cancellation accompanied by a copy of an obituary or data from the Social Security Death Index that shows the date of death, or a death certificate, to:  
FCC  
1270 Fairfield Road  
Gettysburg, PA 17325-7245

# Key Criteria:

- You must hold an unexpired amateur operator/primary station license grant.
- To request a vanity call sign for a club station, you must also hold an unexpired club station license grant listing you as the license trustee.
- Your name and mailing address as shown on your current license grant must be correct. (Your mailing address will restrict you from requesting certain call signs.)

# Do Your Research:

- QRZ
  - <http://www.qrz.com/directory.cgi>
- WM7D
  - <http://www.wm7d.net/fcc/callsign.html>
- Sunnyvale VEC
  - <http://www.amateur-radio.org/vanity.htm>
- N4MC's Vanity HQ \*\*
  - <http://www.vanityhq.com>
- hamdata.com
  - <http://www.hamdata.com>
- AE7Q
  - <http://www.ae7q.com>

# Where to Apply:

- W5YI Get Your Own Vanity Call Sign (\$39.95 (\$12.30 to FCC))
  - <http://www.w5yi.org/page.php?id=269>
    - Know your ULS login Password
    - Have your list of 1 to 25 desired vanity call signs arranged in the order of your personal preference
    - Know your email address
      - W5YI completes all three FCC forms
        - FCC Form 605, FCC Form 605 Schedule D, and FCC Form 159
      - You'll receive an email confirmation of your application
      - You'll receive an email when your new call is granted

# Backup Data

# Call Sign Group X: History

- Group X: WC, WK, WM, WR, or WT
  - WC > Issued to RACES
  - WR > Issued to Repeaters
    - The FCC stopped issuing repeater call signs in 1983 and ceased renewing RACES licenses in 2000. After the current vanity program began in 1996, several ham clubs sought new and formerly held repeater and RACES-type call signs. When the Universal Licensing System came along in August 1999, however, the FCC encountered some licensing system programming shortcomings, including the anomalous assignments of WC and WR-prefix 2x3 call signs as acceptable formats. When the FCC implemented programming corrections that halted the issuance of Group X call signs in September 2003, it did not advise the amateur community until August of 2004.

# Call Sign Trivia W & K Boundary

- Originally W calls were assigned to stations in states bordering the Atlantic Coast / Gulf of Mexico and to the states directly north and east of Texas. K calls were assigned to the stations in states on the Pacific Coast and states west of Texas. In late January of 1923 the boundary was changed to the Mississippi River.