

IHSA Football Officials Communication Devices

The purpose of using communication devices is to improve crew communication on the field.

Football officiating crews are not required to use communication devices. Crews that choose to use communication devices are responsible for purchasing and maintaining their own communication equipment.

All communication devices must be two-way radios with individual earpieces. Officials must use the radios in the push-to-talk mode.

If the crew chooses to use communication devices, all officials must use a communication device during the game. If a substitute official is filling in on a crew, it is the Crew Chief's responsibility to ensure that the substitute official is properly equipped with a communication device.

During the pregame walkthrough, the crew must test their communication devices to ensure they don't interfere with any other radio frequencies at the game. If the crew's communication devices interfere with radio signals, coaches' headsets, the PA system, etc., the crew will not be able to use its communication devices during the game.

Crew communication devices may only be used while the ball is dead.

Examples of appropriate dead ball communication include, but are not limited to the following:

foul reporting	penalty enforcement	ball placement
clock management	timeout reminders	goal line reminders
substitution management	pre-snap keys	positions on a try
line to gain information	sideline control issues	player conduct issues
general game administration	unusual situations	coach conduct issues

Crews are not allowed to use their communication devices when the ball is live or when the snap or free kick is imminent.

Crew members should not use their communication devices while the referee is communicating or signaling to the press box or when the referee is communicating with a head coach or school administration.

All communication must be professional and appropriate. Communicate the facts of the game. Be brief and to the point.

Crew members must refrain from expressing their opinions and comments about coaches, players, spectators, or fellow crewmates while using the communication devices.

Crew communication devices shall not replace NFHS approved mechanics, crew communication signals, or other signals designated by the NFHS Game Officials Manual.

The Crew Chief is responsible for ensuring the communication devices are ready for each game. This involves charging the batteries, bringing extra batteries if necessary, and testing the radios and earpieces.

As of June, 2017, officials are allowed to use communication devices only in regular-season Varsity games. During the 2017 season, the IHSA office will survey coaches and officials to gauge the effectiveness of the communication devices and will then determine if crews will be allowed to use them during the playoffs.