

Etiquette Tips When Using a TTY

TTY is the acronym for Teletypewriter and is also referred to as a TDD, which is the acronym for Telecommunications Device for the Deaf.

TTY is currently preferred.

Do's

- Be sure your TTY is charged or plugged in before making a call
- Make sure the phone is placed correctly in the cradle
- Check the signal light when making a call
- When calling TTY users, let the phone ring at least 10 or more times before hanging up. Many deaf and hard of hearing TTY users rely on flashing lights to alert them to ringing phones. Flashers can take longer than sound to attract attention.
- Callers should identify themselves at the beginning of the call. Any other people who may be watching or listening to the conversation should also be identified.
- Use “GA” (Go Ahead) to end your turn speaking
- Use “SK” (Stop Keying) to end a conversation
- Always tell other party when calls are going to be put on “hold”
- When TTY users type, “Can you read me?” they want to know if the message is clear and without garbled letters or numbers. If the message is garbled, hit the space bar a few times. If this does not clear up the message, both parties should hang up and try the call again.
- Spell out numbers if necessary to avoid any confusion
- Be mindful to use proper spelling and punctuation when using a TTY so that your message is “business appropriate” and clear to the recipient.
- Recipients of a TTY message that are not customary users should be aware that abbreviated words are often used and/or misspellings found in an effort to speed communication. These should in no way be taken to represent the educational level or qualifications of the caller.

- Use abbreviations if they are clear in context:
 - Q GA Question Go Ahead
 - AM morning
 - ANS answer
 - CD or CUD could
 - CUZ because
 - HD or HLD hold
 - INFO information
 - LTR letter
 - MIN minute
 - MSG message
 - MTG meeting
 - NBR number
 - OK okay
 - PLS please
 - PM afternoon; evening
 - R are
 - RPT repeat
 - SHD or SHUD should
 - THRU through
 - THX thanks
 - TMW tomorrow
 - U you
 - UR your
 - WD or WUD would

DON'T

- Save the hard copy of the conversation without permission
- Eavesdrop or allow eavesdropping

Q & A's When Using a TTY

1. How do I know whether I am getting a TTY call?

When you pick up the phone and hear nothing or a series of electronic beeps, this may be a TTY call. Put the phone on the TTY coupler (usually the mouthpiece goes into the left acoustic coupler) and make sure it fits snugly into the acoustic coupler. Turn on the off/on switch. (Do not assume it is a prank call and hang up.)

2. After realizing it is a TTY call, what is my next step?

Type a short message identifying yourself and the place of work, if appropriate. It is considered polite to type your name immediately after you answer a TTY call. For example:

- **DO:** (type) HI THIS IS SUE GA or HELLO THIS IS SUE AT WML REF DESK GA
- **DON'T:** (type) GA or HELLO GA

3. Can I interrupt the person without getting the GA (Go Ahead)?

Interrupting is usually not appropriate nor is it possible when using a TTY because only one person can type at a time. You should wait until the other person types GA and respond with HLD (HOLD), which would indicate to them that you have concerns or a question.

4. What do I do when I make a typing error?

Just type XXX after the error and retype. It's too time consuming to use the backspace key to correct your error.

5. Why do TTY calls seem to be "business-like" and not so "social"?

TTY calls take longer than a voice call; therefore, more people who are deaf or hard of hearing prefer to keep their calls short and get right to the point, such as making or canceling an appointment.

6. How do I show my feelings when using a TTY?

Type "HAHAHA", "SMILE", "GREAAT", "SUPERRRR!", "SIGHHHH", "FROWN". Some email acronyms may also be used, like LOL (laugh-out-loud), if they are appropriate to the situation.

7. How Many SKs (Stop Keying) should I type at the end of my TTY conversation?

It is customary to type 2 or 3. More than 4 can appear rude. For example:

Person A: HAVE A GOOD DAY SEE U SOON GA OR SK

Person B: THX U HAVE A NICE DAY TOO BYE NOW GA TO SK

Person A: BYE SK SK

Person B: SK

8. What is the "Ping-Pong" closing?

Before you finish your conversation, it's polite to type GA or SK or GA TO SK to allow the person at the other end to close the conversation and make sure both parties have said everything they wanted to say. For example:

Person A: HAVE A NICE DAY GA OR SK

Person B: LKG FRWD TO SEEING U TMW TAKE CARE GA TO SK

Person A: BYE BYE SK

Person B: SKSK

9. What do the red signal lights mean on the TTY?

The lights let you know what's happening on the phone line:

- Steady glowing red flashes mean dial tone.
- Slow red blinking flashes mean phone is ringing.
- Fast red blinking flashes mean phone line is busy.
- Flickering red light means that a hearing person answered by voice. Press the space bar a few times to let him/her know that it's a TTY call.