

The role of the Communications is a complex and diverse role, requiring exceptional skill in both communication and coordination.

When operating alone, the role requires the Communications Officer to communicate and coordinate with all ships and stations within an area, including allies, neutrals and enemies, as well as maintain communications with the Command and Control operatives aboard the Division's command station.

Within a battle group, the effectiveness of the Communications Officer can be increased by sharing the responsibilities of communication and coordinate, allowing a much closer focus upon each element of the role by one Communications Officer.

Advanced Responsibilities

There are several additional responsibilities required of a Communications Officer.

- Communicating with other Communications Officers
- Communicating with Command and Control Officers
- Coordinating actions as part of a battle group
- Coordinating non-combat allies
- Coordinating single or multiple combat groups
- Relaying requests for assistance/support
- Managing Ordnance and Logistical support

Although Communications Officers maintain communications with one another between ships, communication between TSN ships* to coordinate attack patterns or positioning of battle groups is still handled by the battle group commanders and captains of TSN ships.

**TSN ships are main line vessels that form the TSN Divisions and include all Light Cruisers, Scouts, Battleships and Dreadnaughts.*

Maintaining Situations Awareness

It is important that a Communications Officer maintains full situations awareness. Using the Sector Map (//Captain's Map) the Communications Officer can maintain a view of the sector, positions of all allied ships, TSN ships and bases, as well as enemy ships and bases.

Communication and Coordination within a Battle Group

It is imperative that, when operating as part of a battle group, Communications Officers coordinate with one another in order to effectively organise allies within a sector.

Lead Communications Officer

When operating as part of a battle group, or as part as multiple battle groups, the highest ranking* Communications Officer assumes responsibility for coordinating the actions of all Communications Officers. They then become the 'Lead Communications Officer' for the period of the mission.

**The highest rank is primarily determined by the officer's actual rank. In the case that two officers hold the same rank, then the senior of the two is determined by who has held the particular rank the longest. Should these two officers hold the same rank for the same length, the command officers of the ships will determine who will take the lead.*

Maintaining an Open Communications

All Communications Officers must maintain an open channel with one another (//using TeamSpeak whisper keys and TeamSpeak Channel Commander) in order to quickly communicate their actions. The Lead Communications Officer will allocate instructions to the other Communications Officer regarding their key responsibilities, for example; coordinating a group of combat vessels, relaying information about non-combat vessels, or organising the logistical support of bases. Communications Officer will also relay information between one another to respond to situations (distress calls or calls for assistance) in order to coordinate responses, prioritising them and relaying information to specific TSN ships within the battle group.

Logistical Support in a Battle Group

When operating as a battle group, it is effective to have one Communications Officer in charge of managing ordnance and maintaining an awareness of station supplies. All other Communications Officers should then direct requests to this officer, as well as inform them when their own ship rendezvous with a particular base. This will ensure that the Communications Officer in charge of managing ordnance supplies can maintain a full awareness of supplies in the sector.

Requesting Ordnance Supplies

When a Communications Officer is required to find out which base has relevant supplies of ordnance, they should contact the Communications Officer in charge of managing ordnance supplies to request the information, rather than contacting the base directly. They will then receive instructions regarding which base to move to in order to pick up the required supplies.

Communications Officers who are not responsible for managing ordnance supplies should refrain from gathering information on those supplies and selecting stations to rendezvous with. Although on occasion, they may not be sent to the closest base with supplies, this will be for a specific reason, such as other ships in the area have already been directed there.

An element of trust must be placed in the decision made by the Communications Officer responsible for coordinating ordnance supplies, as the exact reason why a decision is made cannot always be communicated efficiently, particularly in more dynamic situations.

Combat Elements in a Battle Group

In a battle group situation, a Communications Officer can be given responsibility for all Combat capable allies, or for a small Combat Group. They would then be required to move the combat group/s to locations where they can most effectively be used.

Requesting Combat Assistance

When a Communications Officer is given responsibility for coordinating combat capable allies, or for a Combat Group, other Communications Officers should refrain from sending new instructions to those ships in order to avoid confusion. Should assistance be required from a combat group, then the Communications Officer responsible for the ships should be contacted directly.

As with the management of ordnance supplies, trust must be placed in the Communications Officer responsible for the ships.

Requests from other Communications Officers

In a battle group, other Communications Officers will submit requests for support or assistance. When they do so, information needs to be quickly gathered and transmitted to the officer. Responses need to be relatively concise, for example, if a ship requests ordnance supplies, they need only the information on which base to go to that has the relevant ordnance.

Coordinating Allies

Allies within a sector are organised into two broad categories; Combat and Non-combat. Both of these can be further sub-divided into Station and Ship categories. For example, a Command Station is categorised as a Combat Station, whereas a Civilian base is categorised as a Non-Combat Station.

Non-Combat Allies

Non-combat allies include civilian, industrial and research stations, as well as transport and cargo vessels, commercial liners and research vessels amongst others. Not all non-combat vessels will respond to instructions issued to them; however it is still necessary to ensure their safety. In a combat situation, the Communications Officer should aim to move all non-combat vessels to a safe area, away from main engagements, but also to a position that is easily defensible.

Combat Allies

Combat allies include Command bases and Deep Space stations, as well as Escort and Destroyer vessels.

Combat Groups

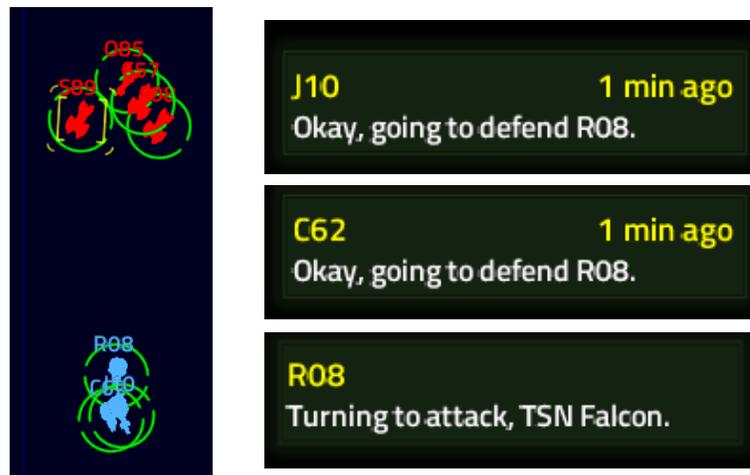
When coordinating combat ships, the most effective way is to form them into combat groups. These groups can consist of as few as two ships, to as many ships as there are available.

Forming a combat group is a simple process. First, the Communications Officer must determine which ship will be the lead within the group. Usually, this will be a destroyer. Once decided, it is a simple matter of instructing additional vessels to defend the lead vessel by issuing a “Go defend:” order to those vessels.



Escort ship Q62 is instructed to defend destroyer X78, the lead vessel in the combat group

From this point on, instructions can be issued to the lead vessel, from minor adjustments in course, to defending a particular base or attacking an enemy fleet.



Destroyer R08 leads an attack against a small Kralien fleet

Combat groups are extremely effective formations when used properly. Depending on their size and composition, they can be utilised both defensively and offensively to secure and hold particular areas.

Logistical Support

All types of allied bases have the capability to produce ordnance to support TSN vessels operating nearby. Although production capabilities vary depending on the type of base, all are able to manufacture any ordnance required. It is important that a Communications Officer is aware of current supplies, as well as requirements of their own ship, so that they can quickly communicate with their captain or other Communications Officers in order to direct TSN main ships to pick up supplies.

Communications Officers responsible for managing ordnance levels should maintain continual contact with allied bases in order to be fully aware of their current ordnance supplies. They also need to be aware of main TSN vessels and their position, so that a TSN vessel requiring certain ordnance is directed to the most convenient base for resupply.

Communicating with Command and Control

During a mission, it is important that the Lead Communications Officer maintains an open channel with Command and Control (//using TeamSpeak whisper keys).

Messages coming from Command and Control need to be relayed to the lead vessels within the battle groups operating in the mission in a similar way that messages from allied vessels are relayed to a captain.

Opening a Direct Channel

Should direct communication between a ship's captain and Command and Control officers be required, then this should be set up and handled by the Lead Communications Officer.

First, a request will come through from either the ship's captain, or from Command and Control. This request needs to be confirmed, and then directed to the relevant recipient. Once the recipient confirms, direct communications can be had between Command and Control and a ship's captain via open channel communication (//using TeamSpeak whisper keys to the ships Bridge and to the Command and Control channel).

Example:

Captain:	Communications, hail Command and Control and open a channel.
Communications:	[to bridge] Aye, sir.
Communications:	[to C&C only] Command and Control, this is TSN Falcon requesting and open channel.
C&C:	[to Communications Officer only] Confirmed Command and Control, channel open.

Communications: [to bridge] Channel open captain.

Captain: [to C&C and bridge] Command and Control, this is TSN Falcon ...

In this example, the communications to Command and Control are done via whisper keys by the Communications Officer. Officers on the bridge cannot here these messages.