

## June Caring Reliably Tool of the Month Communicate Clearly with Phonetic/Numeric Clarification

The word communication comes from the word commune – to be as one, as in “one in thought.”

Consider how often you need to spell out your name on the phone, and how much more important it is to get the correct information to your team at work, and you’ll see the need to adopt this tool.

### How should we use this tool?

Numeric clarification is even easier and saves more lives. The best times to use numeric clarifications are **room number, dose, rate, and result**. When using numeric clarification – **say the number and then say the digits**.

#### Numeric Clarification

For 15 say “15, that’s one – five”

For 50 say “50, that’s five – zero”

For 0.9 say “0.9 that’s zero-point-nine”

For 3-4 say “the range of three to four”

The three best times to use phonetic clarification are **patient name, drug name, and procedure name**.

Phonetic clarification was developed by military organizations for high reliability when communicating under difficult conditions. Until 1957 each US military service had their own phonetic alphabet. Now, each service uses the alphabet inset below. When using phonetic clarification – say the name, then spell the name by saying the letter and the phonetic clarification for that letter.

#### The least you should know

- Complete and accurate communication is a practice habit that ensures that we understand the patient we are asked to care for and/or the task we are asked to do. This understanding is called *situational awareness*.

Understanding gives context to the choices we make. Since patient safety is our first priority, we will be clarifying letters by saying a word that starts with that letter. And we will be clarifying numbers by saying the number and then saying the digits.

#### Phonetic Alphabet

<b>A</b>	Alpha	<b>N</b>	November
<b>B</b>	Bravo	<b>O</b>	Oscar
<b>C</b>	Charlie	<b>P</b>	Papa
<b>D</b>	Delta	<b>Q</b>	Quebec
<b>E</b>	Echo	<b>R</b>	Romeo
<b>F</b>	Foxtrot	<b>S</b>	Sierra
<b>G</b>	Golf	<b>T</b>	Tango
<b>H</b>	Hotel	<b>U</b>	Uniform
<b>I</b>	India	<b>V</b>	Victor
<b>J</b>	Juliet	<b>W</b>	Whiskey
<b>K</b>	Kilo	<b>X</b>	X-Ray
<b>L</b>	Lima	<b>Y</b>	Yankee
<b>M</b>	Mike	<b>Z</b>	Zulu

## Safety Story

### Communicating Clearly with Phonetic/Numeric Clarification

Two patients with similar last names were on the same unit.

Mr Simpson was admitted for cardiac problems and Mr Sampson for pneumonia.

Imaging tests, including Xrays and CT scans, were ordered for Mr Sampson.

The transporter came to the unit and picked up Mr Simpson in error.

The mistake was caught when they arrived in the Imaging department, and so luckily was a near-miss event.

When the patient's RN and the transporter debriefed they realized the error stemmed from a communication gap, as the patient's name was not spelled out by either of them.

If you are interested in learning more about the Caring Reliably program please go to the [Caring Reliably Sharepoint page](#) to learn more.