



TDD/TTY Etiquette

A Telecommunication Device for the Deaf (TTY) is a “Telephone meets Typewriter” piece of equipment that Deaf people use to make phone calls. Today’s Telecommunication Device for the Deaf (TDD) has its origins with Western Union telegram machines known as teletypewriters, and they are still commonly referred to within the deaf community as “TTY” machines. Even though these devices are still called TTYs, they no longer resemble telegram machines - they look like a laptop keyboard mated with a two-line screen (Both TTY and TDD are acceptable terms for these devices.) Typing speed varies by caller. Because only one caller can talk at a time, the conversation pace is slower. To speed up the conversation, many TTY callers will omit punctuation marks and type in fragmented sentences.

Number of Rings

The difference between Deaf and hearing callers is in how they know there is an incoming call. Flashing light systems alert Deaf people to a phone call. This means that if there is bright lighting, a call may go unnoticed by a Deaf person, even though the person may be in the same room as the flashing light. With TTY callers, it is common for the caller to hang up after 10 or more rings if there is not an answer.

Answering a TTY Call

With hearing people, introductions are often skipped because the voices are familiar. Because TTY callers cannot identify each other as easily, it is common for both callers to give their names right away. For business calls, it is helpful to add some information, such as company name and reason for calling.

Call Communication

To take turns during a conversation, a TTY caller will type “GA” for “go ahead,” prompting the recipient to take their turn. To hang up, the signal “SK” is used to mean “stop keying.” If a caller types SK twice, they are signing off. Repeated SK’s (four in a row or more) may mean anger or the equivalent of slamming down the phone.

To know more,
contact ACDHH directly.

The Arizona Commission for the
Deaf and the Hard of Hearing

1400 W. Washington, Room 126

Phoenix, Arizona 85007

602.542.3323 V

866.948.7035 VP

602.364.0990 TTY

800.352.8161 V/TTY (928 & 520)

602.542.3380 FAX

info@acdhh.az.gov

acdhh.org

Call for this document
in an alternative format.

Fact Sheet





COMMON TTY ABBREVIATIONS

GA	Go Ahead
Q GA	This is a question - go ahead
SK	Stop keying - I am finished
SK SK	Stop keying - I am finished too - good bye
U	You
UR	Your
URS	Yours
PLS HD	Please Hold
HLD/HD	Hold
TMW	Tomorrow
ABT	About
AM	Morning
ANS	Answer
BEC/CUZ	Because
CN	Can
HAND	Have a nice day
INFO	Information
LV	Leave
MIN	Minute
MSG	Message
N	And
NBR	Number
NP	No problem
OK	Okay
OIC	Oh I see
R	Are
PM	Afternoon
REC	Received
SND	Send
TNK	Thanks
THRU	Through
WD/WUD	Would
XXXX	Error
Q	Question
ASAP	As soon as possible
AMBL/AMBU	May mean ambulance
CD/GLD	Could
CLR	Clear
DR/DOC	Doctor
IMPT	Important
OPR	Operator
PLS	Please
SD/SLD	Should

Typing Errors

If there is a typo, a TTY caller often will backspace then retype. Sometimes the TTY caller will type a few x's then give the correct spelling or simply ignore the typo. An example acknowledging a typo is "Please order for xxx four pizzas for me." An example of not self-correcting is "Doyou have paper?"

Putting A Call On Hold

If you need to put someone on hold, simply type "HD." If you need to hold for longer than expected, it is appropriate to respond with another "HD". For example, typing "I'm looking, pls HD... (after two minutes) still looking, HD pls."

Interrupting

It is poor etiquette to interrupt while a TTY caller is typing because it interferes with the display of their message. It is better to wait for the other party to finish before proceeding. If a message is coming out garbled, you can try to interrupt so the other person doesn't go on for too long. Once you get the attention of the other person, tell them that the text came through garbled and you would like for them to repeat what was said from a particular point in the conversation.

Paper Printout

TTY callers usually keep a printout of their TTY conversations, and throw it away after a re-reading. Because TTY printouts can be easily falsified, they should not be treated as formal documentation.