# What happens to your radio call?

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There are many times that corner workers and other specialties wonder why "Control" is taking so long to respond to a call. Below I will try to explain how decisions are made in control to calls and with at least some of the factors that go into those decisions. I will use Pacific Raceways for the example, but many of these factors may apply to other tracks.

Call:

Station: "Control Turn 3 Waving."

Control: "Go Turn 3 Waving."

Station: "Car 73 Blue partially off track in front of our station, drivers left. Flat tow now!"

Control: "Copy. 76 Blue partially off in front of station drivers left, flat tow now."

This sequence takes 30 to 60 seconds.

If the steward is familiar with the track they will know this is in the line or very near the line. If it is a steward who is not as familiar with the track you may get some questions as to whether the car is in the line and/or in a hazardous position. Then, the evaluation by the steward on duty considers the following:

We have a car that is partially on track and needs a flat tow now.

Where is the nearest flat tow that can get to it safely?

The nearest flat tow will be either at the tower or at re-entry, with the tower being most likely. It will take 1 minute for the flat tow to get to the incident, but probably more with waiting for traffic to be able to enter the track safely.

How much time remains in the session?

A lap time at Pacific for most classes is about 1:30 to 1:40 average.

Is this a practice, qualifying or race?

Can it be reached safely under a local yellow or do we need to go full course?

If this is a practice or qualifying session, is a "black flag all" or early checker an option?

Either of these will still involve cars going by the incident again to some extent.

We will rarely, if ever, throw a "black flag all" during a race. The reason for this is if you do it without going to full-course caution first, and putting out the safety car, you will have to regrid all the cars as of the last full lap. This can take quite some time, enough time in fact that if you are running a 25- or even 30-minute

session you will have no time left in session to run a race.

Is it safe to have a tow on course? Depending on the type of cars currently on track, this can be a real safety consideration.

Remember that there is also the consideration of the E-crew safety. If only one E-truck is dispatched you have a situation where you have a car and the tow in front of it with one or more responders between the car and truck hooking up the tow strap. This means that if a car coming up on the incident hits the disabled car you wind up with a person as the meat in a steel sandwich.

So if there are only two or three minutes left in session the car may be left where it is. That means, at most, two laps (3-4 minutes) because it will take longer than the time remaining to respond the tow and get the car out of the area or even putting the cars under full course and under the safety car (if a race). You might also note that this is minimal radio traffic. If you make your calls longer you will delay the decision. If control has to extract information, it will delay the decision even more.

Things for corner workers to consider when an incident is happening on your turn, even four or five seconds are going to feel like minutes.

It takes on average, 1 minute 30 seconds or more for a complete lap at Pacific Raceways.

E-crews are normally stationed at the tower and at turn four, on occasion at re-entry. We cannot (per GCR) send a vehicle any distance reverse course on a hot track. We wouldn't anyway because it is unsafe.

In the case that an ambulance is required, it will be requested by the E-crew on scene as they are our first responders. Also note that medical information is never discussed on air for privacy reasons.

If the E-crew is on a different channel it is possible that the corners will not know instantly when they are dispatched.

Just as calls are discussed on the turns they are discussed in the tower so you will hear discussion in the background. That discussion is not necessarily critical but could be used for training, help understand and formulate, or even decide whether things should be done differently the next time.