

AUSTRALIAN BRIDGE FEDERATION Regulations ON ALERTS

(This is presented here as an example of Alerts in Australia)

Alerting Regulations

The ABF Alerting Regulations were last revised 1st January 2004.

The following is a summary:-

Alerts are compulsory - you may not ask the opponents not to alert. The requirement to alert applies even though the convention or other agreement may be listed on the system card.

Calls are alerted during the auction by audibly saying "Alert" and by circling the alertable call on the bidding pad.

All conventional calls (other than self-alerting calls) must be alerted.

Note that an opening 1♣ or 1♦ bid that may hold less than 3 cards in the suit is conventional.

Note also that any call showing two suits is conventional, even where one of the suits is named, e.g. 2♥ showing hearts and a minor.

A natural call must be alerted if it is forcing or non-forcing in a way the opponents might not expect (e.g. inverted minor raises, preemptive jumps, negative free bids) or if its meaning is affected by other agreements (e.g. a 1♥ opening that denies 4+ spades).

Your policy should be to alert any call by partner (other than a self-alerting call) that the opponents could reasonably misunderstand.

There are four different types of **self-alerting calls**, viz doubles, redoubles, cue bids of an opponent's suit, and all calls at the four level or higher. These calls carry their own alert and should not be alerted during the auction, but may need to be alerted in the pre-alert or the delayed alert stage. Be aware that such calls by opponents may not mean what you assume, and ask if necessary.

For the purposes of these Regulations, a cue bid of the opponent's suit is defined as a bid of the suit bid by the opponent or of a suit shown by the opponent's bid. Example: If an opponent opens 1♦ showing spades, then 1♠ and 2♦ are both cue bids.

The Laws and Alert Regulations require full disclosure of your agreements. You should make active efforts to ensure the opponents are aware of your agreements. You do so by **pre-alerts** (before the auction), **alerts during the auction** and **delayed alerts** at the end of the auction.

The **pre-alert** is the stage where you warn opponents of any very unusual agreements. Pay special attention to calls that may surprise the opponents, (e.g. transfer pre-empts, canapé style bidding) and to any unusual agreements to which the opponents may need to devise a defence. Highly unusual carding (e.g. leading low from doubletons) should also be pre-alerted at this stage.

At the end of the auction, draw attention (**via a delayed alert**) to any unusual features of the auction, particularly any unusual self-alerting calls. Upon inquiry, your side must disclose fully, not only the specific meanings of all calls, but also any inferences they have drawn from the auction based on partnership experience (as distinct from general bridge knowledge). These explanations may occasionally need to include negative inferences, such as hand types partner probably does not have for his bidding.

When opponents make an alerted or self-alerted call, you are entitled to ask specifically about that call, but only at your first turn to call after the alert. Otherwise any questions should be directed at the whole auction, not a specific call; an appropriate method of asking would be "**Please explain the auction**".

When explaining, do not use the names of conventions; **give specific explanations**. For example, do not just say "Michaels", but explain the meaning of the bid by saying "At least 5-5 in hearts and a minor suit, any strength". Similarly, do not use the terms 'weak', 'strong', 'intermediate', 'natural' or 'standard' - without qualification. The opponents' views of these descriptive terms may differ from yours.

You may ask questions only at your turn to call or play. It is improper to ask questions for the benefit of partner