

Alerts: What's New and How-to's

ACBL has adopted some new alert procedures, effective January 1, 2021. Most of the new rules will apply to face-to-face play where you alert partner's bids. In online play, where we alert and explain our own calls, these are just a few changes.

What's new for online play:

- ♦ When you make a transfer bid, explain by naming the suit you're showing.
Example: When responding 2D to 1NT, type "Hearts" instead of "Transfer".
- ♦ If your 1C or 1D opening might be fewer than 3 cards, explain by specifying the minimum length.
Example: Type "2+ diamonds" instead of "Could be short".
- ♦ Pre-alert if you play a system that includes a "short" 1C or 1D opening -- or any one-level bid that is artificial or forcing. This includes Montreal Relay, Kennedy, Precision and other forcing-club systems.
Example: At the beginning of the round, type "Our 1C is artificial and forcing".
- ♦ Alert if partner will bypass a 4-card major to respond 1NT. This will apply if you play Flannery 2D and have agreed that 1H by you - 1S by partner promises 5+ spades.
Example: When you open 1H and partner responds a forcing 1NT, type "Forcing, could have 4 spades".
- ♦ You must alert if your strong 2C opener could be weaker than "Very Strong" as defined by ACBL. To qualify as "Very Strong", your hand must have 20+ points *or* 14+ points and playing strength that's within one trick of game.
Example: When you open 2C, type "Could be 9+ tricks, any number of HCPs".



What has *not* changed:

- ♦ You are still required to announce your point range when opening 1NT.
- ♦ You must alert and explain if your new-suit response to partner's preempt is not forcing -- for example, 2H by partner - 2S, 3C or 3D by you. If these bids are forcing, no alert is required.
- ♦ Intermediate and strong jump overcalls require an alert and explanation -- for example, 1D by RHO - 2H, 2S or 3C by you. If you play that these jumps show 11 or more points, type an explanation. If they are weak jump overcalls, no alert is required.
- ♦ **Always aim for full disclosure -- and then some.** Provide an explanation for any call that has a meaning or an inference your opponents might not expect, whether or not it's technically alertable. There's never a problem with "over-alerting" in online play. Because only the opponents will see what you type, there's no possibility that your explanation will provide information to partner.

A summary of other new rules -- including calls that will no longer require alerts in face-to-face play -- is [here](#):

There are other changes that apply mainly to complex systems and unusual conventions. To read the full document, click [here](#).

Tips for alerting in online play

- ◆ Remember to alert and explain *your own* calls, not partner's. Your partner will not see your alerts or explanations.
- ◆ Click "Alert" in the bid box *before* you choose your bid. Type in the explanation, then click the bid.
- ◆ If you forget to alert, you can do it later. Just click your bid in the auction display to get a pop-up box and type a note that describes the bid.
- ◆ In your explanation, try to be specific about the meaning of your bid. Don't type just the name of the convention you're using.
Example: If partner opens 1H and you respond an artificial 3C, type "4+ hearts, 8-10 pts" instead of "Bergen raise".
- ◆ If an opponent asks a question about one of your calls, click that call in the auction box and type the explanation there. For other questions, reply with private chat.
- ◆ To ask a question about an opponent's call, click the call in the auction box and wait for the opponent to type a note there. You can also send your question in private chat to the opponent.
- ◆ You can still see all alerts and notes after the auction is over. If play has begun and you're trying to remember the meaning of an opponent's bid, click the box with the name of the contract (bottom corner of your table) to display the entire auction. Click any highlighted bid to see the explanations. Click again to close.

Here are two short videos that demonstrate the alert procedure on Bridgebase.com :

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y2UFOOVR5P8>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i5d7dBV1pmk>