

ALERTS a reminder

In any bidding system, there will be bids that are ‘artificial’ or ‘conventional’; they carry a meaning that is different from their face value. A simple example would be an opening 2C bid that does not mean “I have a lot of clubs and want to play in Clubs”, but rather simply states that you hold a strong opening hand. If your partner makes an artificial bid, you **MUST ALERT** that bid; i.e. you are alerting the opposition to the fact that the call may need an explanation.

What bids need to be alerted?

- Any bid that means something other than “I want to play in this suit” is by definition a conventional bid and must be alerted.
- This includes bids that show the suit named plus another suit. So, for instance, if you play multi-2s, and an opening 2H bid shows hearts and another suit, that bid is conventional and must be alerted.
- It also includes bids that you are forced to make by convention; e.g. if you play the Lebensohl 2NT convention, a bid of 2NT (alerted) requires a response of 3C, and that response must be alerted.
- You must also alert any bid that has an unexpected point range – e.g. a bid of 2H in response to opener’s 1C, meaning “I have 6+ hearts and less than 6 HCP”; or an opening 2 of a suit where the HCP range may be less than 4 HCP.

Exceptions:

- Do not alert a 2C response to 1NT, whatever the meaning of 2C. The 2C bid is deemed to be self-alerting (opponents may of course ask what it means). Responses to 2C, however, should be alerted unless natural. (All responses to Extended Stayman carry extra meaning and need to be alerted.)

Note that this rule only applies in an **uncontested auction**. So, for instance, if the 1NT is an overcall then 2C must be alerted unless it shows a natural club suit.

- Do not alert any double or redouble. These bids are deemed to be self-alerting.
- If your partner opens 1C or 1NT, you immediately ‘announce’ the meaning of that bid. This takes the place of alerting for those bids.
- Do not alert cue bids; i.e. when your partner bids a suit already nominated by the opponents.
- Do not alert any bid above 3NT.

How to alert

- If your partner makes an alertable bid, you must indicate this immediately the bid is made.
- Alerts are made by audibly saying “Alert” **and** circling the bid on the bidding pad; just putting a circle on the pad is not sufficient.
- Do not explain your alerted calls unless specifically asked to do so.
- If you know that partner’s bid is alertable but you can’t remember what it means, you should nevertheless alert the bid. If asked what it means, explain that you can’t remember what it means. The Director should be called immediately, and will probably send you away from the table so that your partner can explain the meaning of the bid to the opponents.

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