



American Contract  
Bridge League

## Alert Procedures

### Introduction

The objective of the Alert system is for both pairs at the table to have equal access to all information contained in any auction. In order to meet this goal, it is necessary that all players understand and practice the principles of Full Disclosure and Active Ethics. Ethical bridge players will recognize the obligation to give complete explanations. They will accept the fact that any such information is entirely for the benefit of the opponents, and may not be used to assist their own partnership.

This procedure uses the admittedly "fuzzy" terminology of "highly unusual and unexpected" as the best practical solution to simplifying the Alert Procedure. "Highly unusual and unexpected" should be determined in light of historical usage rather than local geographical usage. To ensure full disclosure, however, at the end of the auction and before the opening lead declarers are encouraged to volunteer to explain the auction (including available inferences).

According to the Laws of Duplicate Contract Bridge: Law 40.B. Concealed Partnership Understandings Prohibited

*A player may not make a call or play based on a special partnership understanding unless an opposing pair may reasonably be expected to understand its meaning or unless his side discloses the use of such call or play in accordance with the regulations of the sponsoring organization.*

- ♠ Bridge is not a game of secret messages; the auction belongs to everyone at the table.
- ♠ Remember that the opponents are entitled to know the agreed meaning of all calls.
- ♠ The bidding side has an obligation to disclose its agreements according to the procedures established by ACBL.
- ♠ When asked, the bidding side must give a full explanation of the agreement. Stating the common or popular name of the convention is not sufficient.
- ♠ The opponents need not ask exactly the "right" question.
- ♠ Any request for information should be the trigger. Opponents need only indicate the desire for information - all relevant disclosure should be given automatically.

- ♠ The proper way to ask for information is "please explain."
- ♠ Players who remember that a call requires an Alert but cannot remember the meaning must still Alert.
- ♠ In all Alert situations, Tournament Directors should rule with the spirit of the Alert procedure in mind and not simply by the letter of the law.
- ♠ Players who, by experience or expertise, recognize that their opponents have neglected to Alert a special agreement will be expected to protect themselves.
- ♠ Adjustments for violations are not automatic. There must have been misinformation.
- ♠ An adjustment will be made only when the misinformation was a direct cause of the damage.
- ♠ An opponent who actually knows or suspects what is happening, even though not properly informed, may not be entitled to redress if he or she chooses to proceed without clarifying the situation.
- ♠ When an Alert is given, ASK, do not ASSUME.

## Announcements

An announcement is one word or a short phrase which tells the opponents directly the meaning of partner's call. When bidding boxes are used, the "Alert" strip is tapped also. Announcements are required in the following instances:

- After a natural 1NT opening bid

**Example:** A 15-17 1NT opening bid is made. The partner of the bidder will say aloud, "fifteen to seventeen."

- After a ♦ or ♥ transfer response at any level to any level natural notrump opening, overcall or rebid.

An Announcement also is used for those methods that initially treat the bid as a transfer even though rarely the bidder will have a strong hand without the next higher suit. When the message is sent that the transfer was not a transfer, just the first step in showing another type of game-going hand, the call that sends that message must be Alerted.

**Examples:** 1NT-P-2♦ and 1♦-1NT-2♦-4♥  
The 1NT bidder will say aloud, "Transfer."

- After a 1NT forcing or semi-forcing response to a 1♥ or 1♠ opening bid with no interference.

**Example:** 1♥-P-1NT

The opening bidder will say aloud, "Forcing" or "Semi-forcing," if there was no other meaning attached to the agreement (such as showing four or more spades).

- After a non-forcing opening 1♣ or 1♦ for which the opener could have fewer than three cards in the suit opened.

After the opening bid, the opening bidder's partner says, "May be short."

## How to Alert

Using spoken bidding, the partner of the player making an Alertable call says "Alert."

Using bidding boxes, an Alert is made by tapping an Alert card on the table or by tapping the Alert strip on the side of the bid box. In addition, the Alerter must say "Alert."

Using screens, all Alerts are immediate - there are no delayed Alerts. All Announcements become Alerts.

## How to Announce

When Bid Boxes are not in use, the partner says aloud the required spoken statement.

When Bid Boxes are being used, the Alert strip is tapped and the appropriate spoken statement is made.

**It is the responsibility of the Alerter or Announcer to ensure that the opponents are aware that an Alert has been made. When in doubt whether to Alert or not, Alert!**

## Failure to Alert or Announce

If partner fails to Alert or Announce, a player may not make any indication during the auction. Showing surprise or discomfort may awaken partner to the error and would be a violation of Law. In addition, a player may not make allowances for partner's error. The auction must continue as if partner had acted properly.

When the auction is over, the declaring side **must** reveal to the defenders, after first calling the Tournament Director, any errors of explanation (including Alerts or Announcements that were omitted) before the opening lead is faced. A defender **must** reveal any of his partner's errors but may **not** do so until after the play has been completed. A defender (or any other player) who becomes aware of **his own** error or

omission **should correct it immediately**. Again, in either case the Tournament Director should be called first.

To ensure full disclosure, at the end of the auction and before the opening lead, declarer is encouraged to volunteer to explain the auction (including available inferences).

Keep in mind also that as systems and treatments evolve and become more widespread in their use, what the ACBL determines to be Alertable also can change. Many previously Alertable calls no longer require an Alert. However, when in doubt – Alert. There is no penalty for Alerting unnecessarily but there may be one for failing to Alert when one is required.

## **Alert Definitions**

The Alert procedure includes a number of definitions whose purpose is to clarify important concepts and create standard terminology. This procedure uses the admittedly "fuzzy" terminology of "highly unusual and unexpected" as the best practical solution to simplifying the Alert Procedure. The "highly unusual and unexpected" should be determined in light of historical usage rather than local geographical usage.

**Alert:** A manner specified by the sponsoring organization by which opponents are notified of your special agreements. These may be given aloud, in writing and/or by using an Alert card or strip.

**Announcement:** One word or a short phrase which tells the opponents directly the meaning of partner's call.

**Control Bid:** A bid, not intended as a place to play, which denotes a control (usually first or second round). The control need not be in the denomination named, These bids are used to investigate slam

**Convention:** A bid which, by partnership agreement, conveys a meaning not necessarily related to the denomination named or, in the case of a pass, double, or redouble, the last denomination named. In addition, a pass which promises more than a specified amount of strength, or artificially promises or denies values other than in the last suit named.

**Cuebid:** A bid in a suit which an opponent has either bid naturally or in which he has shown four or more cards.

**Delayed Alert (or Post-Alert):** Alerts given after the auction is completed for Alertable bids above the level of 3NT starting with the opening bidder's second turn to call. The dummy or declarer Alerts the defenders before the opening lead. The defenders Alert after the opening lead has been made but before it is faced. See below under "Types of Alerts."

**Doubles:**

- **Competitive:** Shows a desire to compete further; partner usually bids.
- **Optional:** Shows extra high-card values; offers partner a choice between bidding or passing.
- **Penalty:** Partner is requested to pass.
- **Penalty-oriented:** Partner normally passes but occasionally bids.
- **Takeout:** Partner is requested to bid.

**Pre-Alert:** Alerts given before the auction period begins on the first board of a round. Pre-Alerts are designed to act as an early warning of any unusual methods for which the opponents may need to prepare. Things that need to be pre-Alerted include:

- ♠ Two-system methods (e.g. strong club when equal or favorable vulnerability; a natural two-over-one when not).
- ♠ Systems based on very light openings or other highly aggressive methods or preempts.
- ♠ Systems which may be unfamiliar to opponents, such as Canapé, Superchart or Mid-chart methods.
- ♠ Leading low from a doubleton.

Additionally, a pre-Alert is required when playing methods permitted by the ACBL Mid-Chart or SuperChart in an event conducted using that chart. Pre-Alerts are given aloud by saying what the systems or methods are. See below under "Types of Alerts."

**Puppet:** A bid which requires partner to make a specific bid (e.g. a 2NT bid which requires partner to bid 3♣).

**Relay:** A bid which does not guarantee any specific suit; partner is requested to make the next-step bid (usually) or make another descriptive bid if appropriate (e.g. a diamond bid which usually shows hearts but may not have hearts in some cases).

**Transfer:** A bid of a suit to show another specific suit (e.g. a diamond bid showing hearts).

**Treatment:** A natural call that carries a specific message about the suit bid or the general strength of the hand. For example, agreeing to open five-card majors is a

treatment - when you open 1-of-a-major, partner "knows" you have five or more. This is indeed a message but not an unexpected one, so no Alert is required.

## Types of Alerts

### Pre-Alerts

Pre-Alerts are designed to act as an early warning system of any unusual methods for which the opponents may need to prepare. Pre-Alerts must be given before the auction period begins on the first board of a round or match. Types of agreements, treatments, etc., that must be pre-Alerted include:

#### “Two-System” Methods

Some pairs vary their system by position, by vulnerability, or a combination of the two. While this is legal, it is also something the opponents may need to know ahead of time. One example of this is agreeing to play a forcing-club system not vulnerable and “two over one” vulnerable.

Minor variations such as varying notrump range or jump overcall strength by vulnerability do not require a pre-Alert. These methods still require normal Announcements (notrump ranges; transfers) or Alerts (forcing Stayman over some notrump ranges) when appropriate.

**Note:** It is not legal to vary your system during a session for subjective reasons, such as the skill level of the opponents which you happen to be playing at the time or which member of the partnership is making the call. You may, of course, alter your defenses in response to the opponents’ methods.

#### Systems Based on Very Light Openings or Other Highly Aggressive Methods

If it is your partnership style to routinely open hands with fewer than 10 HCP, preempt with very weak (frequently worse than Qxxxxx) suits, and/or make overcalls with fewer than 6 HCP at the one-level or with fewer than 10 HCP and/or fewer than five cards in the suit named at the two-level, then the opponents must be pre-Alerted.

#### Systems that may be Fundamentally Unfamiliar to the Opponents

Players are expected to be prepared for the vast majority of systems that they may encounter at the bridge table. Common methods include either strong or weak notrumps with or without five-card majors. The forcing opening bid will most often be an artificial forcing opening of 1♣ or 2♣.

When you play a system structured along different agreements than these, you should draw the opponents' attention to your convention card before the round begins. In short, if you play a system that most players would not immediately recognize (such as a canapé system) or one the opponents may wish to discuss before the auction begins (a 10-12 1NT range with distributional requirements for minor-suit openings, for example), you are required to pre-Alert the opponents.

### **Leading Low from a Doubleton**

If your defensive opening lead agreement is that the opening leader will typically lead the smaller card from a holding of Xx, you are required to pre-Alert the opponents.

### **Immediate Alerts**

Immediate Alerts are given at the time partner makes a call which requires an Alert. These Alerts are given in the form described under "How to Alert" above.

### **Delayed Alerts (or Post-Alerts)**

Once the auction has progressed to the point that the opening bidder has had the opportunity to make a second call, conventional calls at the four level or higher are not Alerted until the auction is over.

These delayed Alerts are required to be made by the declaring side before the opening lead. The defenders are required to Alert declarer after the opening lead but before declarer makes a play from dummy (Alerting before the lead is turned face-up and the dummy is spread is best).

The declaring side must make their delayed Alerts before the opening lead. Defenders wait until they have made the opening lead before they explain calls requiring a Delayed Alert. As with normal Alerts, the partner of the person making the Alertable call is the person who makes the delayed Alert and explains the agreement.

**Example:** 1♥-P-1♠-P-4♦ (splinter)

There is no Alert at the time for the 4♦ bid.

After the auction, the 1♠ bidder must Alert and explain, as required, the meaning of the call.

**Example:** 1♣-P-1♥-P-2♥-P: 4♣, 4♦ or 4♠

If there was a conventional meaning attached to any of these calls—ace-asking, splinter or something else—the Alert takes place after the auction.

## Part 1 – Natural Calls

Most natural calls do not require Alerts. If the call promises about the expected strength and shape, no Alert is necessary. Treatments that show unusual strength or shape should be Alerted.

### Definition of expected length for natural bids for the Alert Procedure

#### Suit bids:

- ♠ Three or more in a minor suit

(Also: An opening bid of 1♣ is natural if, by agreement, it may be exactly 4=4=3=2 with two clubs, three diamonds, and four cards in each major.)

- ♠ Four or more in a major for opening bids, rebids and responses
- ♠ Four or more for an overcall at the one level, five or more for higher levels
- ♠ Five or more for a weak two-bid
- ♠ Six or more for a weak three-bid

#### Notrump openings and overcalls:

- ♠ A notrump opening or overcall if not unbalanced (generally, no singleton or void and only one or two doubletons) is considered natural.

### Common Natural Alertable Treatments

- Weak jump shifts with no competition are unexpected and therefore Alertable.

#### Example: 1♣-P-2♠

If the 2♠ bid promises a spade suit of five or more cards, it is a natural call. The treatment involves the strength that the bid promises. If the call is forcing to game, no Alert is required. If it is weak or invitational, then it must be Alerted.



◦ Natural bids that convey an unexpected meaning must be Alerted. This includes strong bids that sound weak, weak bids that sound strong, and all other bids that, by agreement, convey meanings different from, or in addition to, the expected meaning ascribed to them.

**Example: 1♠-P-2♣**

If 2♣ is natural and forcing, promising three or more clubs and 10 or more HCP (including those that are forcing to game), it requires no Alert. This is the expected strength and shape of such a bid. If 2♣ is non-forcing, it must be Alerted.

◦ In general, when the use of conventions leads to unexpected understandings about suit length by negative inference, a natural call becomes Alertable. Some such agreements have become expected and are fairly common, therefore no Alert is required.

**Example: 1♥-P-1♠**

If 1♠ promises a five-card suit (when playing an opening 2♦ bid as five hearts and four spades), no Alert is required.

◦ 1♣, 1♦, or 1♥-P-1NT, if the 1NT bidder could or could not have four cards in one or both majors, again no Alert.

◦ 1♣-P-1♥ or 1♠, if the major-suit bidder could be passing up a four-card or longer diamond suit, no Alert is required.

◦ 1♣, 1♦, or 1♥-P-1NT, if the 1NT bidder shows a hand of 10-12 HCP, for example, an Alert is required.

## Part 2 – Conventions

A convention is defined as any call which, by partnership agreement, conveys a meaning not necessarily related to the denomination named or, in the case of a pass, double or redouble, the last denomination named.

Examples of calls deemed to be conventional are:

- ♣ showing support for a previously bid suit and
- ♣ shortness in the bid suit (such as a splinter bid) and
- ♣ bidding your worst suit for takeout.

### **Almost all conventions must be Alerted.**

In general, conventional calls require an Alert. In ACBL-sponsored events, however, there are some common conventions that do not require an Alert during the auction. These include, but are not limited to:

1. Stayman
2. Strong artificial 2♣ openings and any 2♦ response thereto
3. Common ace-asking bids and expected responses thereto, such as Blackwood (4NT) and Gerber (4♣)
4. Most cuebids
5. Most conventional doubles, redoubles and passes. (see Part 3)
6. Most Unusual 2NT overcalls (see Part 4)
7. Conventional 2NT response to a natural opening two-level suit bid (See Part 5)

## **1. Stayman**

◦ No Alert is required for any bid of 2♣ over partner's 1NT opening or 3♣ over a 2NT opening if it requests opener to bid a four-card major, regardless of whether the Stayman bidder promises a four-card major. Likewise, a 2♦ response to Stayman (or a 3♦ response after 2NT-P-3♣ ) is not Alertable if it denies a four-card major.

**Example:** 1NT-P-2♣ and 2NT-P-3♣

◦ Partnerships do not need to Alert their Stayman bids in order to differentiate between those that promise a four-card major and those that don't. Opponents may assume that an immediate bid of clubs over a natural notrump opening is conventional, asking opener to bid a four-card major, with no guarantee that responder has a four-card major suit.

However, when it becomes evident that the Stayman bidder either does not have or tends not to have a four-card major, an Alert **is** required at that time.

**Example:** 1NT – P – 2♣ – P – 2(x) – P – 2NT

If the 2NT is or is most likely a raise in notrump without a four-card major, an Alert is required at the time of the 2NT bid.

◦ **Note:** A 2NT rebid after a response to a strong 2♣ opening is deemed to be a strong notrump opening for the purposes of this regulation, as is a 1NT or 2NT rebid after a strong, artificial 1♣ opening and response.

**Example:** 2♣-P-2♦-P- 2NT-P-3♣

Here, 3♣ is not Alertable if it asks opener to show a four- or five-card major.

◦ **Note:** If a pair uses a jump to 3♣ as Stayman after a 1NT opening, then that is Alertable.

◦ If a 2♣ call made after a 1NT rebid by opener is artificial and asking partner to show a four-card major, it requires an Alert.

**Example:** 1♣-P-1♦-P- 1NT-P-2♣

## 2. Strong, Artificial Two Clubs

Forcing 2♣ opening bids, either natural or artificial, do not require an Alert. Intermediate 2♣ openings, such as those used in Precision systems, must be Alerted.

After a strong, artificial 2♣ opening, no 2♦ response is Alertable.

## 3. Ace Asking Bids

4NT Blackwood (any variety over suits) and 4♣ Gerber (any variety over notrump) and expected responses thereto do not require an Alert of any kind. All other ace-asking bids and responses require an Alert, but some of these Alerts must be “delayed.”

Ace-asking bids at the level of 3NT or below and usages on the first round (other than Blackwood and Gerber as described above), require an Immediate Alert. Unusual ace-asking bids, such as Kickback, Minorwood, Redwood, Super Gerber etc., above the level of 3NT starting with opener’s second turn to call all require a Delayed Alert.

**Example:** 1♠-P-4♥-P- 4♠

If you have agreed to play 4♠ as an ace-asking bid, it requires a Delayed Alert. Furthermore, the responses to 4♠ and to subsequent asking bids require a Delayed Alert.

**Example:** 1♣-P-4♣

If this is Gerber or Minorwood, the 1♣ opener should say “Alert” immediately after the 4♣ bid.

**Example:** 1♥-P-4NT

If this 4NT is Blackwood, no Alert is required.

**Note:** The defenders also have the responsibility to make delayed Alerts.

## 4. Cuebids

Most cuebids are not Alertable. However, any cuebid which conveys a very unusual or unexpected meaning still requires an Alert.

**Example:** 1♠-2♥-P-2♠

If the 2♠ bid is a heart raise with values or some constructive hand, no Alert is required.  
If the 2♠ bid is a transfer to clubs, an Alert is required.

**Example:** 1♦-2♦

If the 2♦ bid shows the majors (Michaels), clubs and spades (top/bottom) or some other two-suiter (not including diamonds), no Alert is required.

### Cuebid Compilation:

- 1♥ - 2♥: Takeout, Alert only if natural, showing hearts.
- 1♠ - 2♠: Takeout, Alert only if natural, showing r spades.
- 1♣ - 2♣: Takeout, Alert only if natural, showing clubs.
- 1♣ (could be short) - 2♣: Takeout, Alert only if natural, showing clubs.
- 1♦(could be short) - 2♦: Takeout, Alert only if natural, showing diamonds.
- 1♣ (Polish club, could be short, could be strong) - 2♣: Takeout, Alert only if natural, showing clubs.
- 2♣ (Precision style, 5+ clubs)- 3♣: Takeout, Alert only if natural, showing clubs.
- 2♦ (majors, e.g. Flannery)- 2♥: Alert only if natural, showing hearts.
- 2♦(majors, e.g. Flannery)- 2♠: Alert only if natural, showing spades.

### The following are not considered cuebids:

- 1♣ (strong artificial and forcing) - 2♣: Clubs, any other meaning requires an Alert.

- 2♦ (majors, e.g. Flannery)- 3♦: Diamonds, any other meaning requires an Alert.
- 2♦ (any three-suited hand, e.g. Mini-Roman)- 2♥/♠ or 3♣/♦: Natural, no cuebid available. Alert other meanings.
- 2♣(any three-suited hand, e.g. Mini-Roman) - 3♣: Clubs. Alert other meanings.
- 1♦-P-1♥-2♥: If natural or 2-suited takeout, no Alert.
- 1♦-P-1♥-2♦: If natural or 2-suited takeout, no Alert.

### **Part 3 – Doubles, Redoubles and Passes**

**Except for those doubles with highly unusual or unexpected meanings, doubles do not require an Alert.**

- 1♠-P-4♣ (splinter bid)-Dbl

If this double asks for the lead of any suit other than clubs, an Alert is required.

- 1♥-Dbl or 1♦-P-1♠-Dbl

If either double is penalty or lead directing only, an Alert is required.

- 3♥-Dbl or 3♥-P-P-Dbl

If either double is penalty, an Alert is required

- 1♠-2♣-P-2♠- Dbl

If the Double says, “I do not want a spade lead on defense,” an Alert is required.

**Passes or redoubles with highly unusual or unexpected meanings require an Alert.**

- 1♣-P-1♠-Dbl- Rdbl

If redouble shows three-card spade support rather than a good hand, an Alert is required.

**Note:** A Support Double (or Redouble) showing three-card support for partner's bid suit requires an Alert. The four-card support raise or bids that tend to deny three-card support are not Alertable.

- 1♠-P-2♣-2♠- P

If the second Pass says, "I do not want a spade lead on defense," an Alert is required.

## **Part 4 – Notrump Openings, Overcalls, Responses and Rebids**

**All conventional notrump openings and some overcalls require an Alert.**

- Systemically unbalanced or conventional 1NT openings or overcalls by an unpassed hand, when permitted, and openings at the two level or higher with an unusual range or conventional meaning require an Alert.

**Example:** 1♣-P-1♠-1NT

If this shows the other two suits, an Alert is required.

However, after P-1♣-P-1♠-1NT, no Alert is required.

- 2NT overcalls of 1-level openings to show the minors or the lower unbid suits (Unusual) are not Alertable.

**Example:** 1♣-2NT

If this shows the two minor suits (diamonds and clubs) by agreement or the two lower suits (diamonds and hearts) by agreement, no Alert is required.

**Example:** 1x-P-1y-2NT

If this shows the other two suits, no Alert is required.

- If the example 2NT bids above have any other conventional meaning, then an Alert is required.
- Strong, natural 2NT overcalls of 1-level openings are Alertable unless made in balancing seat.

**Example:** 1♣-2NT If this is natural and strong, then an Alert is required.

**Example:** 1♣-P-P-2NT If this is natural and strong, then no Alert is required.

- A 3NT overcall as Unusual must be Alerted.

- A bid of 4NT as Unusual is not Alertable as long as the prior bid was by an opponent.
- Non-jump Unusual notrump bids below 4NT, except those made by a passed hand, must be Alerted.

**Example:** 2♠-2NT

If this shows the two lower suits (diamonds and clubs) by agreement, an Alert is required.

### **Natural 1NT opening bids require an Announcement.**

**Example:** 1NT (showing 12-14 HCP)

Partner says immediately, “Twelve to fourteen.”

Or

**Example:** 1NT (showing 15-17 HCP)

Partner says immediately, “Fifteen to seventeen.”

**Example:** 1NT (showing 14HCP with a five-card suit to 17 – without a five-card suit)

Partner says immediately, “Fourteen plus to seventeen minus.”

- Natural 1NT overcalls in the range of 14 to 19 HCP require neither an Alert nor an Announcement. If the top or bottom limit of the natural notrump overcall is out of that range or conventional by an unpassed hand, an Alert is required.
- **Note:** Natural 1NT overcalls or natural NT openings at the 2-level or higher do not require an announcement.

### **Failure to Announce 1NT Range**

A player will not be protected by the Tournament Director if he presumes to know the range of an unannounced 1NT opening bid. Players are expected to protect themselves in this situation because they know by definition that an announcement has been missed. This does not apply when an unannounced range is different from a previously announced or discussed range by a pair using a variable range.

### **Responses to 1NT Openings**

- **2♣:** If it requires partner to bid a four-card major it is not Alertable; all other uses must be Alerted.

- **2♦**: If natural and non-invitational, it is not Alertable. A transfer to hearts is Announced. All other uses must be Alerted.
- **2♥**: If natural and non-invitational, it is not Alertable. A transfer to spades is Announced. All other uses must be Alerted.
- **2♠**: If natural and non-invitational, it is not Alertable. All other uses must be Alerted.
- **2NT**: If invitational to 3NT, it is not Alertable. All other uses must be Alerted.
- **3♣,♦,♥,♠**: If natural, they are not Alertable. All other uses must be Alerted, or...
- **3♦,♥** and **4♦,♥**: If transfers to hearts and spades, respectively, must be Announced.

**Note:** As pertaining to transfer bids above that require an announcement, if the transferer may occasionally hold a Game Forcing hand without the next higher suit, announce, “Transfer” and Alert the subsequent bid which cancels the transfer meaning.

## **Part 5 – One- and Two-Level Opening Suit Bids, Responses and Rebids**

**1♣**: Not Alertable if natural (three or more cards in minor) and non-forcing. Announceable if fewer than three cards is the only unnatural meaning. Any other meaning must be Alerted (e.g., a Precision opening 1♣).

**1♦**: Not Alertable if natural (three or more cards in minor) and non-forcing. Announceable if fewer than three cards is the only unnatural meaning. Any other meaning must be Alerted.

**1♥/♠**: Not Alertable if natural (four or more cards in major) and non-forcing. (Note that canapé systems must be pre-Alerted and canapé bids must also be Alerted during the auction.) All other meanings are Alertable.

**2♣**: Not Alertable if strong and forcing, whether natural or artificial. All other meanings are Alertable (e.g., natural and weak or intermediate).

**2♦/♥/♠**: Weak, natural, non-conventional uses do not require an Alert. All other natural or conventional meanings are Alertable.

### **Responses to Suit Bids**



1♣-P-1♦:

Not Alertable if natural, forcing one round, and does not deny a four- (or five)-card major. All other uses must be Alerted.

1♣-P -1♥ or 1♣-P-1♠:

Not Alertable if it shows four or more cards in the suit bid and is forcing for one round.

**Note:** Bypassing a longer diamond suit is not Alertable.

1♣-P-1NT or 1♦-P-1NT:

Not Alertable if it shows a limited (maximum 11 HCP), balanced hand.

1♦-P-1♥ or 1♦-P-1♠:

Not Alertable if it is natural (four or more cards in the suit) and forcing one round.

1♥-P-1♠: Not Alertable if it is natural and forcing one round. Alertable if it is conventional.

1♥-P-1NT:

Not Alertable if natural and non-forcing. Announceable if it is forcing or semi-forcing.

Alert if it:

- Promises spades or
- Has some other conventional meaning

**Note:** Semi-forcing in this case means that opener may pass with a minimum and 5-3-3-2 distribution, but otherwise will treat it as a forcing notrump. Passed hand 1NT responses, unless they cannot be passed, do not require an Announcement.

1♠-P-1NT:

Not Alertable if natural and non-forcing. Announceable if it is forcing or semi-forcing.

Other conventional agreements require an Alert.

2♣-P-2NT response to a natural, strong two bid:

Not Alertable if negative or waiting.

2♦,♥,♠-P-2NT:

Not Alertable if it asks for further clarification of a natural weak or intermediate two-bid or if it's a negative or waiting response to a natural, strong two bid. Natural, non-forcing 2NT responses to opening two-bids must be Alerted.

**Note:** A non-forcing suit response to a weak two-bid requires an Alert. A simple raise (2♥-P-3♥, for example) of a weak two-bid that is invitational or better requires an Alert.

- Game-forcing natural jump shifts are not Alertable. Other jump shifts (either conventional or natural and weak or intermediate) not in competition must be Alerted. A natural jump shift in competition does not require an Alert regardless of strength.
- A natural 2NT response which is invitational or better does not require an Alert.
- Two-over-one bids are not Alertable if they are natural and forcing for at least one round. **Note:** Natural two-over-one game-forcing bids are not Alertable.

## Opener's Rebids

- A 1NT rebid if strong (may have 16 or more HCP) requires an Alert.
- A rebid in a suit that tends to be longer than the opening bid suit (canapé) requires an Alert.
- Opener's rebid of two of a minor over partner's forcing or semi-forcing notrump response to a major does not require an Alert if it shows three or more of the suit bid (4-5-2-2 does not require an Alert as long as responder expects three or more cards in the minor).

## Part 6 – High-level Opening Bids and Responses

- 3♣,♦,♥,♠-Natural and preemptive (weak) opening suit bids at the three level are not Alertable. If you commonly preempt at this level with very weak suits (worse than Qxxxxx) or suits of fewer than six cards you must pre-Alert your methods. Intermediate, strong or conventional usage must be Alerted.
- A 3NT opening that promises a strong, balanced hand is not Alertable. Gambling 3NT openings and all other conventional uses must be Alerted.
- Natural opening bids at the three level or higher which convey an unusual message regarding HCP range or any other information which might be unexpected to the opponents must be Alerted.

**Example:** 4♥,♠ openings which are natural but are weaker than might be expected because the partnership has some other method (an example is the Namyats convention) for showing a good 4♥,♠ opening.

**Example:** 1♥-P-4♥ when playing a forcing club where the 4♥ call may have, by agreement, values for game but not slam.

**Example:** A natural 3♣ opening which is stronger than expected since the partnership has agreed to open 2♠ (a Mid-Chart agreement so the Mid-Chart has to be in effect) with weak minor-suit preempts.

**Below game, non-forcing natural suit responses to preemptive openings require an Alert.**

## Part 7 – Other Constructive Calls

Natural jump raises in competition are not Alertable regardless of strength. In the same vein, natural jump shifts in competition do not require an Alert regardless of strength.

## Part 8 – Defensive and Competitive Calls

- Very light one-level overcalls (fewer than 6 HCP by agreement) must be Alerted and also require a pre-Alert.
- Unusual overcalls, including the tendency to overcall at the two level frequently with a suit of fewer than five cards or with less than two-over-one values (approximately 10 HCP), must be Alerted and also require a pre-Alert.
- Weak jump overcalls (two or three level) do not require an Alert.
- Intermediate or better jump overcalls (two or three level) require an Alert.
- Neither weak, constructive, nor strong jump-shift advances require an Alert.
- Neither weak, constructive, nor natural jump raises of an overcall require an Alert.