

Stop Card, Alerts and Announcements

Stop!

Before making a jump bid (i.e. a bid at a higher level than the minimum required) a player must place the Stop card in front of him, then place his call as usual, and eventually remove the Stop card. His left-hand opponent (LHO) should not call until the Stop card has been removed. The Stop card should be left on the table for about ten seconds, to give the next player time to reflect. It should not be removed prematurely.

After a jump bid, the next player must pause for about ten seconds before calling. It is an offence either not to pause or to show indifference when pausing. If the Stop card has been removed prematurely or has not been used, an opponent should pause as though the Stop card had been used correctly.

The purpose of this, is to avoid unauthorized information being given to the partner of the LHO, based on how quickly LHO bids or passes. For example, LHO might have been planning to make an opening bid, but if there is a pre-emptive bid, now decides to pass. After the Stop card, LHO is not allowed to 'pass quickly', as this gives information to his partner than he had nothing to think about.

Alert!

The English Bridge Union (EBU) rules govern which bids need to be alerted and announced at EBU events. The basic rule is that most **artificial bids and highly unusual bids need to be alerted**. So when your **partner** makes an artificial bid, you take out the Alert card and make sure your opponents have seen it. You should also say 'Alert'.

You do not need to alert:

- Most bids above 3NT (except artificial bids made on the first round of bidding)
- Double of a suit bid that is intended for takeout (this includes negative doubles)
- Double of a NT bid that is intended for penalties

Common bids that need to be alerted are the following artificial bids:

- 2♣ opening bid (showing 23+ points) and the 2♦ response to an opening 2♣
- Fourth Suit Forcing bids
- Splinter bids made on the first round of bidding (even if above 3NT)
- The 2NT response to an opening Weak Two bid
- The 2♠ response to 1NT, unless this is a natural bid

Announcements

The idea of announcements is that it removes the need to alert the most common artificial bids. Before this, any reply of 2♣ to 1NT had to be alerted – either because it was artificial (such as Stayman) or even if it was natural – as that would be considered 'highly unusual'. The **partner** of the person making the bid makes the announcement.

Common bids that need to be announced:

- 1NT opening bid – partner announces the range (says “**12 to 14**”)
- 2NT opening bid – partner announces the range (says “**20 to 22**”)
- 2♣/3♣ response to 1NT/2NT – partner announces “**Stayman**”
- Opening bid of 2♦, 2♥ or 2♠ - announced as “**Weak**”, “**Strong, Forcing**”, or “**Strong, Not Forcing**”
- Red-suit transfer bids in response to 1NT/2NT:
After 1NT-2♥, or 2NT-3♥ Partner says “**Spades**”
After 1NT-2♦, or 2NT-3♦ Partner says “**Hearts**”