

Traffic and Message Handling Basics
Part 2 of 2 Parts by Stephen Reynolds W4CNG
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North Fulton A.R.E.S. Net

Last week we discussed that during various Disasters and SET Drills messaging handling can and will consume up to 50% of the airtime in one form or another. We looked at how formatting that communication message to be transmitted from one point to another started with the Preamble Section of the message. This week we will continue into the Addressing, Text, and Signature of the Message. To complete the overview of last week, I recall these major points:

Every Formal Radiogram or Disaster Welfare message originated should contain the following component parts in the following order to insure timely and accurate delivery.

- A. Preamble: Number, begin each month or year with message 1, those that originate from your station. If you do not originate a lot of traffic, start with 1 at the beginning of the year.
1. Precedence: Routine, Welfare, Priority or EMERGENCY.
 2. Handling instructions: One of seven categories including return receipts.
 3. Station of origin: The first Amateur Handler, who originated it.
 4. Check: How many words in the message. This insures the message is intact, like a parity check in data. In the case of a Disaster Welfare Message it will be one of 7 preformed messages.
 5. Place of origin: Where it came from.
 6. Time filed: When it originated (optional with the originating station).
 7. Date: Must agree with date of time filed.
- B. Address: This must be as complete as possible, include telephone number (remember new AC's), Zip codes.

- C. Text: Keep this as short as possible, preferable under 25 words.
- D. Signature: Who sent the message.

In part two we are getting into the message address, text and signature. First the message Address. This must be as complete as possible. The final delivery point may only have a telephone number to work from, when the address may have been needed because the message was to be mailed if not deliverable by phone. The more information here the better.

Next into the Text of the message. The following should not be included in the text of any message including Emergency. Notification of the death of a person. Medical condition of a person. Personal information to or from anyone including SSN, Credit Card numbers, and so on. This kind of information must be passed in a more secure form. Remember the world is out there listening. The exceptions are messages of life or death urgency to any person or persons which must be transmitted via amateur radio in the absence of regular commercial facilities. If in doubt, do not send the message.

The text must as brief as possible. Do not use abbreviations. Message blanks can be developed by local, regional, and state ARES groups to provide Local information not easily transmitted using the standard ARRL Numbered Radiograms. Most messages can be made up from one or more standard ARRL Numbered Radiograms. Short fill in the blanks can be added at the end of the message if required. Remember, we are not passing a 30 minute long distance message from one point to another, we are providing a Short Messaging Service between two or more isolated locations.

Last is the Signature. This is one of the more simple blocks, but must be accurate. Include the full first and last name, with suffix if present.

That is it except for getting it sent. Check into the net, listen for other traffic and see how it is being handled, and send your message. Additional Reference Material that may be helpful: ARRL Public Service Manual, ARRL Operating Manual, both published by the ARRL and available on-line at www.arrl.org.