

An ARRL Radiogram, use to send and receive formal written traffic is first originated, then often relayed and finally delivered. To make the traffic flow smoothly, there are certain forms and procedures for message handling.

The station that initiates the message is called the “originator.” You can originate a message on behalf of another individual whether such an individual is licensed or not. It’s up to the originating station to see that the message is in its proper format.

Tonight we will discuss the pre-amble of the message only.

The parts of the preamble, except for the check as will be noted later, are NOT changed by any station relaying or delivering the message. They are permanent parts of the message created by the station of origin and must remain with the message all the way to the delivery point. Preamble information is also used to service undeliverable messages and to generate replies to specific handling instructions.

1) **Number.** The message number is selected by the station originating the message and it must be on all messages. It stays with the message all the way to the point of delivery. The delivering station may need to reply to the station of origin and refer to this number. Use number digits only, no letters, leading zeros, or dashes. Numbers are usually begun with 1 at the start of a year or month at the pleasure of the originating station. You assign a sequential number to each message you originate. If you are relaying the message number you received with the message stays the same all the way through the process.

2) **Precedence:** There are four precedence’s that tell the stations relaying the message how important the message is.

The first precedence is EMERGENCY (Always spelled out on the form and verbally when the precedence is transmitted.) When do we use such a precedence? Only for a message having life and death urgency to any person or group of persons, which is transmitted by Amateur Radio in the absence of regular commercial facilities. This includes official messages from served agencies during emergencies requesting supplies, materials or instructions vital to the relief of a stricken population in emergency areas. During normal times, it will be very rare. (When in doubt, do not use this precedence.)

The second precedence is abbreviated P for priority. This classification is for all important messages having a specific time limit, official messages not covered in

the emergency category, press dispatches and emergency related traffic not of the utmost urgency.

The third precedence is abbreviated W, and refers to either an inquiry as to the health and welfare of an individual in the disaster area or an advisory from the disaster area that indicates all is well. Welfare traffic is handled only after all emergency and priority traffic is cleared.

The fourth precedence is abbreviated R. and stands for routine. Most traffic in normal times will bear this designation. In disaster situations, traffic labeled Routine should be handled last, or not at all when circuits are busy with higher precedence traffic.

3) **HX:** Handling instructions are optional cues to handle a message in a specific way. There are several resources and cheat sheets to help you with this, but for now remember it is optional.

4) **STATION OF ORIGIN:** The Callsign of the amateur station originating (creating) the message for first introduction into the amateur system is the station of origin and must be on all messages. This call sign must stay with the message to the point of delivery. (Service messages go to this station.)

5) **Check:** The check is the number of words of text, and number groups in the message only. The receiving station will count the number of words, letter groups and number groups he has written down in the text. That number should equal the number in the check that you sent. We will learn more about what makes up the check number when we get to the text part of the radiogram in a later program. For now it is sufficient to understand the number should always match the text. It serves to make sure the message is relayed accurately.

6) **Place or origin:** is usually the city and state of the originating station. It can also be the location of the third party wishing to initiate a message through the originating station. For instance the place of origin could be WRMC, Batesville.

7) **Time Filed:** Filing time is optional and is the time in UTC the message was filed at the originating station. It should only be used when filing time has some

importance relative to the precedence, handling instructions, or meaning in the text. The bottom line is don't add the time unless it is needed.

8) **Date:** is the month and day (year is not needed), that the message was filed at the originating station. If we don't know the year it was originated then we have run into serious trouble somewhere.

Month must be used on all messages. This entry is the month in which the message is created and is written in the preamble as the three letter abbreviation: The month is written as a three letter abbreviation JAN, FEB, MAR, APR, MAY, JUN, JUL, AUG, SEP, OCT, NOV, DEC.

The **day** is the day of the month on which the message was originated and must be used on all messages. The day is written in figures only, no leading zeros. On voice, two digit days are spoken as two separate digits ("one seven" rather than "seventeen", etc.).

Last of all, when you send one of these messages, don't read the titles of the headers on the radiogram. The person receiving the message already knows that part, and by leaving those off, you effectively double your sending speed and efficiency. The word Number is used before the message number to indicate the beginning of the message, and the HX precedes the optional handling instructions letter when used. For instance it might be sent as HXG.

Now let's do a short exercise to practice the part we have learned. Understand the goal of this training is to present a training program over a period of four or five weeks, that when completed you will be able to send, receive, relay and originate formal written traffic. To get better at it, you will have to practice it.