

INTRODUCTION TRAFFIC

LESSON ONE

Within any organization, ARES, RACES and Skywarn included, there are VAST differences in the training provided, not just the subjects but the quality of training provided. A simple example is this; during the early aftermath of Katrina there were multiple operators from specific groups that did not understand what a tactical call was, much less know how to use one. Yet, per their group, these people were fully trained. Those same people were unable to compose a message in anything but the chit-chat mode. Yet they were known as fully trained. It makes no difference which group you refer to; each group has the same inconsistency in training.

Basic training should and in fact MUST be consistent throughout the nation, no matter which organization or group within that organization an individual is a member of. Within ARES, RACES and SKYWARN organizations there are significant differences in training even between groups that are adjacent to one another. If your next door neighbor has good training, why can't you? The answer is very simple; it's called NIY - Not Invented YET! Far too many groups are run as a dictatorship to provide latitude in how they run their organization. Latitude is good if it does not impede or restrict adequate training. Katrina proved that we as a nation are not

properly trained in emergency communication. Oh, we got great reviews and Pats on the back for what we did, BUT those Amateurs, and the leadership of ARES RACES, that ARE trained and who were there on the front lines knows what I am saying.

The real question then is; are we content with looking like over half of the Amateur Radio communicators have no training when we have a mutual aid situation or do we want to improve? Some groups use the ARECC courses for training, some use information from N8UT and others use other resources. THERE, is a large part of the problem. We need to have all groups using a single, simple, nation-wide training program that is fully viable and many would add free. Our goal needs to be FOR Amateur Radio rather than for an organization or group. We must begin to grow Amateur Radio back into the strong and knowledgeable group it once had a reputation of being. That's our prize.

One of the first thing we need to understand is what types of EMERGENCY NETS are used and why. Then we need to learn and become proficient in TRAFFIC HANDLING and MESSAGE WRITING.

Unfortunately there are a veritable plethora of those that think obtaining an Amateur Radio License suddenly qualifies them as an emergency communicator. Unfortunately for the Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) that is not true.

What we find a lot of times in a real incident is that those who believe in that instant gratification syndrome can screw up any incident beyond belief because they have not taken the time, nor expended the effort, nor made a commitment and do not have the proper ATTITUDE to learn emergency communications and message handling skills. Sending and receiving messages is what ARES/RACES and SKYWARN is all about, that is our job plain and simple.

Are you there to be the best communicator you can be or are you there to make points?

Some folks take the ARECC courses and receive the certificate, then they proclaim to be experts, and want to immediately get into the leadership positions. However the fact is that they are not yet qualified, they have no experience, and soon run on their own agenda. *Agendas are great, IF the agenda is to provide our served agencies the best possible communications, nothing else.*

If you have listen to the various ARES/RACES or SKYWARN activities going on around the different States, you will be appalled by the untrained people trying to accomplish a simple job. Most of it is role playing, and soon all will be exposed as they have not had training, or practiced with their communications skills.

So, this brings about the training sessions I will be presenting over the next several weeks. We have a lot of new folks coming on board the ARES/RACES teams all around the State who will need help and training in message handling procedures. Also for those of us who have been around for a while, these training sessions will be good reminders for those things we tend to forget. Every time I do a training session on message handling I learn something new.

So, let's get started this evening with what types of Emergency nets there are during emergencies or disasters.

Types of Emergency Nets

There are three types of nets which might be set up during an ARES/RACES event. These are the TACTICAL NET, RESOURCE NET, and the COMMAND NET. Which net, or whether all three evolve during an event, is strictly a function of the size of the event.

Tactical Net

The "Tactical Net" is the "front line" net during an incident. This type of net is typically used by a single city to manage amateur radio operations within that city's boundaries or may be Nation wide like it was during Katrina, Wilma and Rita. There may be several tactical nets for a single operation depending on the volume of traffic. Types of traffic which might exist on a Tactical net could be anything from traffic

handling, to coordination of ARES/RACES efforts, to recruiting. When an event grows beyond the boundaries of a single city/agency to the point where mutual aid is necessary, it becomes necessary to create the next type of net, the “Resource Net”.

Resource Net

A “Resource Net” is primarily used to recruit resources, both operators and equipment, in support of mutual aid operations. The “Resource Net” evolves as a natural outgrowth of the size of the incident. The “Resource Net” is also used as a check-in point before an assigned responder leaves for his/her assignment. As the size of an operation increases and more ARES/RACES jurisdictions become involved in the incident, a “Command Net” may become necessary.

Command Net

The “Command Net” allows the ARES/RACES leadership to communicate with each other to resolve amateur radio operations-related problems. This is also the net which would be used to allow cities to talk to each other. It is conceivable that this net could become cluttered with a high volume of traffic and it may be necessary to create further tactical nets to allow this traffic to flow efficiently. As an added note, when other agencies such as Red Cross and the Salvation Army establish their own nets they are considered tactical nets. Each

such tactical resource should have someone monitoring the main Command Net so that they can respond to Agency-to-Agency requests.

Being Part of an ARES/RACES Net

Taking part in ARES/RACES and SKYWARN nets and learning how to handle traffic are perhaps the two major qualifications required of an ARES/RACES/SKYWARN team member. Being a successful participant of a net requires exercising some discipline, and observing a few basic rules of the road:

- 1) Report to the Net Control Station promptly as soon as you arrive at your station.
- 2) Ask the NCS for permission before you use the frequency.
- 3) Only use the frequency for traffic, not for chit-chat.
- 4) Answer promptly when called by the NCS.
- 5) Use tactical call signs whenever possible.
- 6) Follow the net protocol and procedures established by the NCS.

Getting on and off the net is important, but traffic handling techniques are important also. The first step in the process is getting all the information needed for the message:

- 1) Get the exact title/address of the addressee from the sender. This is **EXTREMELY** important to guarantee the accurate prompt delivery of the message.

- 2) Get an exact title of the sender. If a response is required, the exact name and title of the sender will become very important.
- 3) Make the message as short and concise as possible when originating your own message traffic. If handed a message originated by someone else, do not modify it. Send the message exactly as it is written.
- 4) Number, log and time stamp the messages as you send them. This will allow you to reference the messages more easily later.

What's Next for Amateur Radio Emergency Communications?

9-11, Hurricane's Katrina, Rita and Wilma and Greenberg, KS proved that amateur radio was still the strongest link of communications. However, in today's world that may not be enough for us to keep enjoying our place in emergency communications response. What advancements have been made in amateur radio for emergency support, and the key word here is SUPPORT? The ARRL has studied the problem and from that study a "National Registry" was created for Amateur operators that has complied with and taken the NIMS courses mandated in 2004 by President Bush. The reason for this Registry is that both local and national emergencies now require a higher level of training

never before expected. However, it appears the ARRL is not currently registering folks for duty. I guess they are going to do it as needed, which is an error in my mind. The database at AB2M is still active, but I do not know how or if updates are done. That website is: <http://aresdb.ab2m.net/> .

Clearly this should tell us that for those planning on supporting large scale disasters you must be trained and you must be credentialed. Being “Credentialed” means that the person has had the training, has all the licenses, maybe has some experience, and has been vouched for by a responsible party. This is done to keep from wasting manpower at an incident to do something that could be done beforehand.

Ten years ago it was usually sufficient to have an understanding of only the basics of emergency communications. Today that is not good enough for our served agencies. Their training has advanced to higher levels and so should ours. Our ARES/RACES teams need to accommodate the served agency requests and needs, doing so we gain significant credibility. Not doing so we may find ourselves turned away when we show up.

The new century brings more challenge in how we must adapt and how quickly we must make those changes. We need to raise the level of professionalism of hams who participate in emergency activities and to be able to make a smooth transition into the ICS/NIMS. Simply stated, those with little or no training are almost of no use.

At the direction of our Section Emergency Coordinator the following bulletin was sent out last week to all of the Arkansas District Emergency Coordinators and Emergency Coordinators.....

ALL ARKANSAS ARES/RACES VOLUNTEERS MUST COMPLETE THIS TRAINING.

Those who did not complete training by the Oct 1, 2006 deadline should CONTINUE the courses and send copies to the EC in your County just as soon as you have completed the required on-line courses. Until you do, you may not be able to work in the EOC or with any served agency. Please continue to take and complete these classes, they are **IMPORTANT!!!**

NIMS course requirements: It was decided that since the government requirement for line level responders only includes IS- 100 and IS-700, only those two NIMS courses are required for those below the AEC level. Those with 'planning' responsibilities, AEC and above would still need 200 and 800-A as well as the 100 and 700 courses.

At the April 2007 DEC meeting it was agreed that Arkansas ARES/RACES would be a NIMS compliant organization.

The leaders (the DEC's and the EC's) of Arkansas ARES/RACES are expected to lead the way when it comes to education and training.

THIS TRAINING IS MANDATORY FOR ALL ARES/ RACES VOLUNTEERS.

Essential Elements of Any Message

LESSON TWO

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The first essential element is:

Every message must be identified with a unique ID. In Amateur radio, the message number and the call-sign of the originating station combine to be unique. The unique identification of a message is important in order to track the message from origin to delivery and as a reference in case there is a question about the message, or if a reply is required.

Classification of a message generally means the “precedence”. This is a designator which tells those handling the message what level priority the message carries.

The second essential element is the addressee.

In order to deliver a message, you must know to who and where it is to be delivered. The addressee information must be clear, complete and accurate. If there is any doubt about how a message is addressed, check with the originator before putting it into the system. A simple clarification about where

to find the addressee could make a major difference in how fast the message gets there.

The third essential element is the message text.

The message text, of course is the whole point. Different message formats require that the text be organized in specific ways, but there are no general rules about the text. Even if you don't understand it, you still must send the message **EXACTLY** as you received it. If you suspect the addressee will not understand it, you may want to attempt to get clarification before sending the message, but if the originator says "that's it" don't quibble, just get the message moving.

The fourth and last essential element is the signature of the individual and organization.

This is a very important element and often overlooked. When the message is delivered, it must be clear to the addressee who the message is from and who is responsible for its content. This is important in case there is a question or a reply is required. Many messages will require both a name **AND** a title or position.

Message Handling:

Sending the message:

Efficient traffic handling means getting the message relayed with 100% accuracy in the least practical amount of time. 100% accuracy is especially important even if you do not understand the content of the message. If it makes no sense to you, it **MAY** be appropriate to get an explanation before you put it on the air. This is a judgment call. If you are handling medical traffic, it is helpful but not necessary to understand what you are communicating. But if you are communicating information you do not understand, accuracy is all the more critical.

Send the message ONCE:

There are many elements of technique that contribute to getting it “right the first time”. The most important is, when you **SEND** a message, you **DO NOT READ** it. When you are sending a message, the person receiving it must write it down and most people can not write as fast as we talk. Therefore, you must slow your delivery to allow the receiving station to comfortably and legibly write the message down. If you are too fast, and have to repeat many times, the end result is that it takes longer. It is better to slow your delivery so that the receiving station gets it the first time than to repeat all or part of the message. You might try composing a message and sending it to a tape recorder. Then play the tape back to see if you are comfortable writing it down at that speed. You will probably be surprised. When sending a message, speak

slowly, distinctly, clearly, and do not let your voice trail off at the end of words or sentences. Give each and every word equal force. Follow standard procedures as much as possible, and try to do things consistently. That way the people receiving traffic from you will be used to your delivery and it will not be a guessing game about what you are going to do next.

Procedural Words:

Sending technique involves the use of certain procedural words and phrases which help the receiving station anticipate what is coming next. When first encountered, these procedures sometimes seem a bit artificial and unnecessary. However, these have proven over a long period of time to be useful. When you make procedural words and phrases a habit in your message sending, they fall in automatically and become natural. The primary function of these words and phrases are to define the parts of the message, and to alert the receiving station about what is to follow.

The phrase MESSAGE FOLLOWS is used to alert the receiving operator that the message is about to start. The next thing the receiving operator hears must be written down.

The word BREAK is used at the end of the address and again at the end of the text and you should stop transmitting briefly

to. This procedure separates the parts of the message as well as giving the receiving operator an opportunity to ask for a fill or other clarification. If the receiving station requires a fill, he or she should say “BREAK” in return, and wait for an acknowledgement from the sending station before asking for a fill.

END indicates the end of the message, and is usually accompanied by an indication of whether there are more messages to follow: END NO MORE indicates end of message and no more messages. END ONE MORE, indicates the end of the first message and one more to follow. Saying OVER after the END phrase asks the receiving station to acknowledge your message. Make sure you get a clear acknowledgement before you leave the frequency or proceed with other business. When receiving traffic, make sure you have it right before you acknowledge the message. Train yourself to always use OVER when you finish a transmission and want another station to reply.

In the process of sending the message, there are various introductory words and phrases that alert the receiving station about what is to follow.

FIGURE or FIGURES introduces a number or group of numbers. For

example, if the number 789 appears in the message, the sending operator would say: “FIGURES SEVEN EIGHT NINE”

Note that the individual digits are always given ... “SEVEN EIGHT NINE”, not “SEVEN HUNDRED EIGHTY NINE”.

INITIAL introduces a single letter. It is often an initial in a person’s name, but not always. INITIAL is used any time there is a single letter. Always use phonetics when saying the letter. So if a person’s middle initial is “I”, it is sent as “INITIAL INDIA”.

I SPELL is used to alert the receiving operator that the next thing that will be sent will be a series of letters. If the word or group to be spelled is a pronounceable word, say the word followed by I SPELL followed by the spelling. So if the city name Bethesda appears in a message, it would be sent
BETHESDA ... I SPELL ... BRAVO ECHO TANGO
HOTEL ECHO SIERRA DELTA ALFA

Phonetics may or may not be used. Whether or not to use phonetics becomes a judgment call on the part of the sending operator, and depends on the quality of communications. If the conditions are poor, phonetics generally work better. If you are working on 2-meter FM and both stations are full

quieting to each other, phonetics often are not necessary and can actually slow the process down. If spelling without phonetics, deliver the letters slowly and distinctly. If you do use phonetics, learn and use only the standard phonetic alphabet.

I SAY AGAIN will indicate that you are going to repeat the previous word, group or phrase. It is important that the receiving operator knows that what is coming is a repeat, to avoid incorporating duplicate wording or information into the message. There is often no punctuation in messages. The letter "X" or "XRAY" is used in place of a period. Questions are indicated with the word "QUERY".

MESSAGES TRANSMITTED BY AMATEUR RADIO
DURING A DECLARED EMERGENCY OR DISASTER

What messages or types of messages may be sent over
amateur radio during a declared emergency or disaster?

Since 9-11 and hurricane Katrina, much has been written and even more opinions voiced over the air and at club meetings respecting the types of and content of messages sent over amateur radio during times of a declared emergency or

disaster. A few of the topics that have been discussed are:

1. The incident commander, served agency, person in-charge, and all message originators must be made aware of these concepts at the outset of the deployment for disaster communications:

- a. There is no privacy or expectation of privacy on amateur radio frequencies;
- b. Amateur Radio is prohibited from using any form of communications security.
- c. Amateur Radio is prohibited from using any form of encryption to hide the content of any transmission(s).

If the message contains sensitive information, the question that each control operator must ask himself or herself is “*Is this message best delivered by some means other than amateur radio?*”

Everything that can be said about message handling during normal operating environments can also be said of disaster messaging environments except that *during a disaster, you use whatever means at your disposal to transmit (send) the message.*

During deployment for disaster communications, traffic transmitted over Amateur Radio may consist of but are not limited to the following:

- a. Agency logistics concerning personnel, supplies, or deployment;
- b. ARRL numbered radiograms;
- c. General health and welfare messages;
- d. Medical team deployment, logistics, or operations;
- e. Medical traffic, medications, patient conditions, or causality list;
- f. Rescue team personnel, logistics, deployment or operations;
- g. Service traffic related to amateur radio, operator/equipment concerns or availability, circuit operation, frequency, transmission mode;
- h. Vehicle traffic conditions and road closings; and
Weather conditions and reports;

It is always advisable to keep a copy of the message transmitted should the need later arise as to what the original message actually was.

Keep the following in mind:

The message originator is entirely responsible for the content (s) of any message!

The originator of any message has the responsibility to know what the contents of the message may or may not contain. It is not your duty or responsibility as a communicator to draft the message for the originator.

This is not to say that you may not help the originator correctly phrase the message or remind the originator of the FCC's content prohibitions or the absence of privacy associated with messages sent over amateur radio.

The control operator is absolutely responsible for all message traffic sent over the Amateur Radio station of which he/she is the designated control operator! The control operator is also free to refuse to send any message generated by the incident commander, served agency, or person designated to originate messages.

If you, as the control operator, feel un-comfortable with the contents of any message received for transmission, it is your duty and your responsibility to make your concerns known to the originator of the message.

TRAFFIC SYSTEM TRAINING

LESSON THREE

Sending traffic seems, to a lot of operators, to be this big, huge, complex operation that is very difficult to understand. After going over the following material, you will understand that it is *not* complicated or difficult to be involved.

First, let's look at what a traffic system is?

It is a relay messaging system developed for *content accuracy*. Whatever message you send by way of a traffic system or net, it should be received *exactly* as it was originated. There is no margin for error.

Now, let's look at traffic and What is it?

Messages are formalized utilizing the RADIOGRAM format. Once a message has been formalized and entered into the system it is called "Traffic".

NOW FOR THAT MYSTERIOUS RADIOGRAM

Explanations of this simple form have probably stopped more people from participating in Traffic Nets than anything else. It is just a piece of paper and is not a confusing IRS tax form!

It's simple! If you can remember your name and call-sign, know what you want to say, and who you want to send it to, you are already 3/4 done with this form. No Mysticism or Rocket Science is involved.

THE FOUR PARTS OF A RADIOGRAM

This is dealing with the very top of the Radiogram.

Preamble:

This is the top part of the radiogram, with all the little boxes.

Message Number:

This is the number assigned by the first Amateur putting the traffic into the system. It never changes, no matter how many other operators handle the message. *A message should always have a number.* If you are originating the message, you can put any number in this box. What number it is does not matter and what numbering sequence you use doesn't matter.

If you are *receiving* the message, you *must* use the number given to you by the sender.

The Precedence:

This tells the importance, or how urgent the traffic is.

PRECEDENCES of the ARRL Radiogram are:

EMERGENCY (Always spelled out on form.):

Any 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 of welfare agencies during emergencies requesting supplies, materials or instructions vital to relief of stricken populace in emergency areas. “EMERGENCY”:
Only to be used to report an ongoing life or property threatening or damaging incident. “EMERGENCY” is the highest priority message possible. It must involve, and is reserved for, **ONLY** those messages which contain information that someone **IS ABSOLUTELY** in **DANGER OF DEATH** or **SERIOUS INJURY** IF YOUR MESSAGE ISN'T HEARD IMMEDIATELY. Here is an example: If you observe that a damaged brick wall is in danger of falling into the street, that is a safety issue and should rank as a Priority call. If the wall just fell on two people in the street that is a "danger of death" issue and would definitely qualify as an Emergency call. During normal times, it will be very rare. (When in doubt, do not use this precedence.)

PRIORITY (P):

Use abbreviation P. 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, notice of death or injury in a disaster area and personal or official types of traffic. To be used to report an important but non-life threatening situation, that your message concerns an immediate SAFETY ISSUE regarding Human Life or Injury or an immediate SAFETY ISSUE regarding *impending* property damage.

WELFARE (W):

This classification, abbreviated as W, 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 Red Cross equivalent to an incoming Welfare message is DWI (Disaster Welfare Inquiry).

ROUTINE (R):

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.

Note: These precedence's are not meant to prohibit handling lower level traffic until all higher levels are passed. Common sense dictates handling higher precedence traffic before lower

when possible and/or outlets are available.

SENDING SERVICE MESSAGES:

An amateur has an ethical obligation to keep a message "in play" until delivered, and to honor requests for service information specified in the handling instructions. *The amateur has only three choices for the disposition of message traffic: (1) RELAY it, (2) DELIVER it, or (3) SERVICE it back to the originator.*

If a station is unable to deliver a message after trying all the strategies it has available, it must originate a "SERVICE MESSAGE" back to the station of origin including as much information as possible to explain the problem. Do not report to, or send a service message to, the station that relayed the message to you. Deal only with the originator; you have the ball once you accept the message. The ARL SIXTY SEVEN message has two blanks and reads: "Your message number _____ undeliverable because of _____. Please advise." Adding the last name after the message number backs up the number in case it is garbled in transmission.

Handling Instructions:

HXA__ (Followed by number.) Collect landline delivery authorized by addressee within [...] miles, (If no number, authorization is unlimited.).

- HXB*__ (Followed by number.) Cancel message if not delivered within [...] hours of filing time; service originating station.
- HXC* Report date and time of delivery of the message back to the originating station.
- HXD* Report to originating station the identity of station from which received, plus date and time. Report identity of station to which relayed, plus date and time, or if delivered, report date and time and method of delivery (by service message).
- HXE* Delivering station get reply from addressee, originate message back.
- HXF*__ (Followed by a number.) Hold delivery until [date].
- HXG* Delivery by mail or landline toll call not required. If toll call or other expense involved, cancel message and send service message back to originating station.

MORE THAN ONE HX CODE MAY BE USED. If more than one code is used, they may be combined provided no numbers are to be inserted.

Station of Origin:

This is the Call-Sign of the Amateur who first put the traffic into the system

Check:

This is a count of the number of words in the text area of the form.

This does *not* include anything in the preamble, address and signature.

Note: *When you use the word "X-Ray" to indicate punctuation, it counts as a word.*

Place of Origin:

This is the City and State of the party who initiated the traffic, not the Station of Origin location.

Explained: If you are *initiating* a message for someone in Bozoville, Arkansas and you live in Templeville, Arkansas, then Bozoville, Montana would be the *Place* of origin. Your call-sign would be the *Station* of origin.

Time Filed:

This is the UTC time the traffic is placed into the system, not the time written.

You could have written the message last week. What is important here is the *time* you actually put it into the system.

Date:

This is the date the traffic is first placed into system.

DON'T say "12/4" for date. DO say "*December 4*". You do

not *have* to use the year. If the person taking your message doesn't know what year it is, perhaps you should find someone else?

Address:

This is the address of the individual to whom the traffic is supposed to be delivered. It goes under the word "TO" on the form.

Name Full name (including Jr., Sr., or call-sign if there is one)

Street address or P.O. Box (complete as possible)

DON'T send numbers as 12345. DO say "*figures* 12345".

City, State, Zip

DON'T say "Zip Code 12345". DO say "*Zip figures* 12345".

Phone number

This is important because most traffic is ultimately delivered via local phone calls

DON'T say "phone number 290-456-7890". DO say "*phone figures* 290 456 7890".

DON'T say "Text to follow" after address. DO say "Break for text" after giving the address.

Text:

Keep it all brief and to-the-point 25 words or less. (if possible)

Use "X-Ray" in place of periods. "X-Ray" counts as a word. DON'T say "End of message" after text. DO say "*Break for signature*" after giving the text.

Signature:

This can be a single name, a name and call-sign, or a name and title. Just enough information to enable the receiver to identify the sender. The Originating amateur should provide enough information that a reply can be sent.

DON'T say "Signature or Signed "John". DO say "*John*".
OK, you are done . . . NOW WHAT?

Say, "*End . . . No More.*"

That's all there is to filling out a message on the ARRL Radiogram. It really is simple when you don't get bogged down in all the fine little details right away. Go over this a few times and actually fill out a blank form while you are doing it.



Sending Procedures,

LESSON FOUR

When sending a message, DON'T just keep going from one end of the message to the other. *DO pause between each section to allow the receiver to "Break in" if necessary for fills.* Send it clearly and slowly, but not dragging it out. Practice writing your own message down as you send it. This will give you an idea how fast you can reasonably expect someone else to copy it down.

Don't worry about getting everything perfect. Practice makes us all better. If you listen to a traffic net for ten minutes, you will hear some of the old-timers make some blunders. It's no big deal! The most important part is to listen to how the traffic is handled and passed, then practice what you know is correct out of what you hear. People who are involved in traffic nets welcome newcomers. Just tell them you are new to the system and they will coach you.

Pro-Words

When sending formal traffic, standard “pro-words” are used to begin or end parts of the message, and to ask for portions of the message to be repeated. In addition to adding clarity, the use of standard pro-words and pro-signs saves

considerable time.

Some pro-words and pro-signs tell the receiving station what to expect next in the address, text, and signature portions of the message. Examples of some commonly used pro-words are, “figures” sent before a group consisting of all numerals, “initial” to indicate that a single letter will follow, or “break” to signal the transition between the address and the text, and the text and the signature.

MESSAGE HANDLING PRO-WORDS and PROSIGNS

<u>Pro-Word</u>	<u>Meaning or Example</u>
BREAK	Separates address from text and text from signature.
CORRECTION	“I am going to correct an error.”
END	End of message.
MORE	Additional messages to follow.
NO MORE	No additional messages. In CW can also mean “negative” or “no”
FIGURES	Used before a word group consisting of all numerals.
INITIAL	Used to indicate a single letter will follow.
I SAY AGAIN	Used to indicate a repeat of a word or phrase will follow.
I SPELL	“I am going to spell a word phonetically.”

LETTER GROUP	Several letters together in a group will follow. Example: ARES, SCTN.
MIXED GROUP	Letters and numbers combined in a group will follow. Example: 12BA6
X-RAY	Used to indicate end of sentence, as with a “period.”
BREAK	Break; break-in; interrupt current transmission
CORRECT	Correct, yes
CONFIRM	Confirm (please check me on this)
THIS IS	Used preceding identification of your station
HX	Handling instructions, single letter to follow – optional part of preamble
GO AHEAD	Invitation for specific station to transmit
ROGER	Message understood. In CW, may be used for decimal point in context

When receiving formal traffic, the following pro-words, always preceded by “Say Again”, are used to ask for clarification or repeats of missing words.

WORD AFTER	“Say again word after”
WORD BEFORE	“Say again word before”

BETWEEN	“Say again between”
ALL AFTER	“Say again all after”
ALL BEFORE	“Say again all before”

PHONETIC ALPHABET:

All operators should memorize the phonetic alphabet and number pronunciation, and be fluent in spelling groups of words using phonetics. DO NOT USE CUTE PHONETICS!!!!

A	ALFA	M	MIKE	Y	YANKEE
B	BRAVO	N	NOVEMBER	Z	ZULU
C	CHARLIE	O	OSCAR	1	ONE
D	DELTA	P	PAPA (PA-PA')	2	TWO
E	ECHO	Q	QUEBEC (KAY- BEK')	3	THREE (TREE)
F	FOXTROT	R	ROMEO	4	FOUR
G	GOLF	S	SIERRA	5	FIVE (FIFE)
H	HOTEL	T	TANGO	6	SIX
I	INDIA	U	UNIFORM	7	SEVEN
J	JULIETT	V	VICTOR	8	EIGHT
K	KILO	W	WHISKEY	9	NINE (NINER)
L	LIMA	X	X-RAY	0	ZERO

TRANSCRIBE THE MESSAGE EXACTLY:

The message copied should be an exact replica of the message held by the transmitting station; letter for letter, group for group. No part of the message should ever be altered, even when it appears necessary, except for appending corrections to the check value. If part of a message appears to be in error, confirm the part with the sending station. If it is correctly received, leave it alone. *You never really know what the message originator had in mind!*

BE SURE OF EVERY GROUP RECEIVED:

Do not assume that you have copied a group correctly. If you miss part of a group avoid guessing about the missing part. If the sending speed is too fast, ask for reduced speed. If interference is present, ask for a shift in frequency if possible. Ask for a repeat or confirmation if you have any doubt. Only you know for sure that you have copied every group with certainty. Do not acknowledge the message until you are certain you have it copied it completely and accurately. Take the time!

ASK FOR FILLS OR CONFIRMATION:

If interference or static is present, or you make a copying mistake, mark the groups or parts of words which might be in error (underline). If the sending station is “listening between

groups” interrupt with the group or segment. The sender will repeat. Otherwise, mark (underline, circle, etc.) groups you are not sure about as you go along. You can ask for “fills” formally after the “break” at the start of the text or at the end of the message. Read the message to check for questionable context. Ask for “fills” or confirmation until you are certain that you have the entire message correctly copied. Do not be afraid to ask or worry about taking the extra time. The benefit of being able to interrupt the moment you have a receiving doubt is obvious. You get to fix things as you go along, thus saving formal fill requests later, and valuable time.

Acknowledge the message only after this process is completed. Do not worry about taking the extra time. Other operators will respect your care.

Try to accept only those messages you can forward or deliver in a timely fashion. Sometimes you may be asked to do otherwise as a liaison station or for “store and forward”. If you accept a message, and are unable to pass it on promptly, try to find another station to accept it and keep it moving. There are many ways to move a message along. Phone a fellow amateur to take custody if you can not handle it properly. Mailing, personal delivery, telephoning neighbors of the addressee, etc., are alternative methods to direct telephone delivery. Messages should be delivered within 48 hours if possible.

TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR MESSAGES ACCEPTED:

Once you acknowledge a message, it is your message to handle. Do not go back to the station from which you received it and bother him with delivery problems or change your mind about accepting it, however, it is reasonable, in some circumstances, to find the station from which the message was received and confirm the message content, but it is your responsibility, not his, to service the message.

EMERGENCY MESSAGES:

Emergency messages should be handled by the fastest path available, on or off radio. Notices regarding death or serious illness are often better delivered by relief agencies or public safety officials unless you have had the proper training and feel comfortable handling this type of message.

HONOR ALL HANDLING INSTRUCTIONS:

HX codes regarding delivery, progress and replies are part of the job. Failure to honor these requests is as serious as not delivering the message at all. If a reply is requested by HXE from the addressee, and no reply is forthcoming, send a service message back and say so. In these type messages, the

"ball is in play" until the originating station receives his expected response. An "ARL SEVEN" reply request in the text is an option for the addressee to approve.

DO NOT ORIGINATE MESSAGES WITHOUT PERMISSION:

Originating a message for a third party (Someone other than yourself.) without permission is a fraud and forgery. (Strong words!) Generating messages about a third party or their property or status without their permission is also considered very poor practice.

DO NOT service back changes of addresses, phone numbers, or other personal information about the addressee without their permission. The original message might be intended to pry into the private affairs of the recipient.

MAKE NO COMMENTS REGARDING MESSAGE CONTENT:

It is not proper to comment on the content of a message on the air, or allow such a judgment to affect how a legal message is handled. The originator and the addressee deal with the content of messages. Any legal message placed in play in the traffic system should get the same good service. Even an apparently pointless message is at least giving the system some practice, and it is improper to assume that the message is pointless to the originator or addressee.

ACCEPT ONLY MESSAGES WHICH MEET FCC RULES:

Accept only messages in which content and purpose comply with the FCC regulations in force regarding third party traffic, the prohibition of "business" traffic, encryption, and other rules regarding prohibited communications.

It is difficult to examine a message and conclude with certainty what purpose or meaning is in the content in all cases. If in doubt, it is not mandatory to accept the message---refuse it. If you know by some other means than content that a message is business related, or otherwise illegal, do not handle it. If you wind up with such a message, and do not wish to send it along, send a service message to the originating station. You are the licensee held responsible by the FCC. Handling messages is a voluntary service.

If you never learn any more than this about the Radiogram, you will do just fine passing traffic with what you have learned so far. By the time you compose and send 10 or 12 messages, the Radiogram form, these simple procedures, and what to say, will be permanently imprinted on your brain.

Traffic Nets Schedule

Time	Frequency	Days	Name
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<i>08:30 AM to 09:30 AM</i>	<i>7285 kHz</i>	<i>Mon-Sat</i>	<i>Daytime Texas Traffic Net</i>
<i>10:00 AM to 12:00 PM</i>	<i>7290 kHz</i>	<i>Mon-Sat</i>	<i>7290 Traffic Net</i>
<i>10:30 AM</i>	<i>7280 kHz</i>	<i>Mon-Sat</i>	<i>NTS Fifth Region Cycle 1</i>
<i>01:00 PM to 02:00 PM</i>	<i>7290 kHz</i>	<i>Mon-Fri</i>	<i>7290 Traffic Net</i>
<i>01:30 PM</i>	<i>7280 kHz</i>	<i>Sunday</i>	<i>NTS Fifth Region Cycle 1</i>
<i>02:15 PM</i>	<i>14345 kHz</i>	<i>Daily</i>	<i>NTS Central Area Net Cycle 2</i>
<i>03:30 PM</i>	<i>7280 kHz</i>	<i>Daily</i>	<i>NTS Fifth Region Cycle 2</i>
<i>06:30 PM to 07:30 PM</i>	<i>3873 kHz</i>	<i>Daily</i>	<i>Texas Traffic Net</i>
<i>07:00 PM CST 08:00 PM CDT</i>	<i>3935 kHz</i>	<i>Daily</i>	<i>Central Gulf Coast Hurricane Net</i>
<i>09:30 PM to 10:30 PM</i>	<i>3935 kHz</i>	<i>Daily</i>	<i>Southwest Traffic Net</i>

