

ARRL RADIOGRAMS
PART ONE OF TWO

The handling of radiogram traffic was the basis for the formation of the ARRL, and a sizable segment of amateurs still makes this their principal Amateur Radio operating activity. Amateur radiogram service does not compete with any other services, since there are no charges and can be no guarantee. Provided FCC and international regulations are complied with, messages may be accepted from anyone for sending by Amateur Radio.

What constitutes legal messages, or any other kind of third party communication, has been a matter of considerable discussion and various interpretations throughout the years. The pertinent regulations are 97.3b, which defines an amateur operator as being a person “without pecuniary interest”; 97.112, which forbids any kind of compensation for use of an amateur station; and 97.114, which details certain prohibitions on third-party traffic.

The largest organized system of nets is the ARRL Section and Regional National Traffic System. .

ORIGINATING RADIOGRAMS

Any amateur can originate a radiogram on behalf of another individual, whether such individual be a licensed amateur or not. It is the responsibility of the originating amateur, however, to see that the message is in proper form before its first transmission, because under most circumstances it is improper for a relaying or delivering station to make changes. Each radiogram originated and handled should contain the following component parts in the order given:

(A.) Every radiogram transmitted should bear a “number”. Such a system is convenient for quick reference purposes. Most traffic handlers start with number 1 at the beginning of each year.

(B.) Every radiogram has must have a “precedence” listed. This will normally be “Routine” abbreviated with the letter R. It is a separate part of the preamble and is transmitted as such, not as part of the number. Other precedence’s are “Emergency” which is never abbreviated, “Priority” abbreviated with the letter P, and “Welfare” abbreviated with the letter W.

Please observe the following ARRL provisions for PRECEDENCES in connection with written message traffic. These provisions are designed to increase the efficiency of our service both in normal times and in emergency.

EMERGENCY

This is 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 a stricken populace in emergency areas. During normal times, it will be very rare. When in doubt, do not use it.

PRIORITY

This classification is for 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 and notice of death or injury in a disaster area, personal or official.

WELFARE

This classification 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

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.

(C.) “*Handling Instructions*” (HX) are available pro-signs for use when or if desired by the originator or the originating station, whenever special instructions are required in the handling of the radiogram.

(D.) The “*station of origin*” is the call of the station from which the radiogram was first sent by Amateur Radio and is included so that handling stations will be able to communicate with the originator if something interferes with the prompt handling or delivery of the message.

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(E.) The “*check*” is the number of words and numerals in the text of the radiogram. Handling stations should agree on the check before the message is considered handled. Full information on checking radiograms is given later.

(F.) The “*place of origin*” is the name of the place (city or town) from which the radiogram was started,

not necessarily the location of the station of origin. The preamble of a radiogram filed at League headquarters in Newington Conn., might read as follows: NR 457 R W1INF
21 NEWINGTON CONN 2057Z JUNE 11.

If a message is sent to your station by mail or otherwise not filed in person, the preamble should show the place the radiogram originally came from. If the radiogram came to League Headquarters by mail from Hot Springs, AR the preamble would read: NR 457 R W1INF 21
Hot Springs, AR 2057Z JUNE 11. Any radiogram received at an amateur station by any means other than Amateur Radio is an origination when put on an amateur circuit by that station.

(G.) The “time filed” is the time at which the radiogram is received at the station from which it is to be sent. Standard practice is to use UTC time. This part of the preamble is optional with the originating station. During all emergency or disaster operations the time should ALWAYS be used.

(H.) The “month and the day” of the month that the radiogram was filed at the originating station. The year is not included. If the filing time is UTC, be sure the date agrees.

(I.) The “address” is the full name, street and number, city, state and Zip code of the party to whom the radiogram is being sent to. The telephone number should be part of the address. A complete address should always be given to ensure delivery. When accepting a radiogram for origination this point should be stressed. In street addresses where the words east, west, north, south are part of the address, spell out the words in full. Suffixes “th,” “nd,” “st,” etc., are not recommended. Example: “17 W 21th St” should be “17 West 21 St.” It is not good practice for the relaying station to change address format, but the originating station should observe the above practices to insure clarity in retransmission.

(J.)The “text” consists of words in the body of the radiogram. No abbreviations should be substituted for the words in the text of the radiogram.

(K.)The “signature” is usually the name of the person originating the message. After the signature, say “no more.”

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START PART TWO

COUNTING WORDS IN RADIOGRAMS

The amateur radiogram “check” is the count of the number of words in the text only. While it is

assumed that the rules of grammar and spelling will be followed, the check count is determined principally by the spacing used by the transmitting operator in sending the text. Since the first operator to transmit the radiogram is the operator of the originating station who enters the check in the preamble, this check should carry through to destination. The relaying operator has no authority to change the check unless it is definitely determined that the check as he received it is incorrect, then he should confirm with the transmitting operator before making the change. When such a change is made, the original check should remain in the preamble. Example: an original check of 10 corrected to 9 would be sent "10/9".

The letter X pronounced "X-ray" is used in place of a period and is counted in the check as one word.

Special note: The ARRL recommended procedure for counting the telephone number if used in the text of a radiogram is to separate the telephone number into groups, with the area code counting as one word, the three-digit exchange one word, and the last four digits one word. For example, 123 456 7890 counts as three words in the text of a message. Separating the phone number into separate groups also minimizes garbling.

A few rules have to be observed in sending words so the principle of counting as sent will not be abused:

- (1.) Make your spacing methodical and accurate on phone.
- (2.) Follow the dictionary wherever possible.
- (3.) Do not waste time in traffic nets arguing about how to count. The purpose of the “check” in amateur traffic handling is to confirm the number of words or groups in the text.

When traffic is heavy and time is precious, it is not considered advisable practice to query a check unless you have reason to believe that a mistake was made, either in sending or copying.

ARL Check

Messages containing ARRL numbered radiogram texts have the same form as any other radiogram, except that the symbol “ARL” (NOT ARRL) is used before the check. This symbol indicates that a spelled out number in the text of the radiogram refers to a complete text bearing that number on the ARL list. In delivering a message with an “ARL” text, one of course delivers the complete text. It is therefore very necessary that the symbol “ARL” be included with the check to avoid the possibility of delivery of a meaningless number to the addressee.

Use of ARL text is a special tool for special occasions. When used, it should be used properly to avoid delays and confusion.

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