

Training Net Material

The NTS is changing with the times and it is suffering by a lack of younger members due in part to the availability of other services to pass formal messages over long distances. Amateur Radio is also suffering for the same reason. The NTS provides a valuable training ground for ARES and RACES operators who will need the skills when they are activated. ARES operators may be called upon to pass formal written messages from shelters or other locations for the public or served agencies. How will they know how to do this if they do not get the experience in NTS ? When participating in ARES SETS and also while participating in local and Section nets, I have tried to work with operators who did not know how to pass or receive an NTS format message correctly. It was very difficult to work with them as they didn't have the skill gained from the experience of participating in the NTS. Our NTS is a 'System'. Systems have structure and procedures.

We all know from personal experience that one does not get skilled at participating in a system

by reading a book or piece of paper. The NTS experience is a great way to learn how to pass formal traffic. Participating in local 2 meter and or HF NTS traffic nets that meet daily are very accessible ways to get skilled at participating in formal nets and passing formal written traffic. If anything, ARES and RACES operators who do not participate in NTS net are missing out on great opportunities to get skilled. Either it is because there is no local net accessible to them or they do not make the time to participate. In ARES, we need to be functional when we are needed. Training is important. The NTS traffic nets are training for ARES and any other service where formal nets are required. Monthly or Annual exercises do not train operators but can only give us an idea of how well those services can work. Experience, gained from NTS net participation will help operator performance.

The NTS uses new technologies. There was a time when traffic was passed only via CW. Now traffic is passed via voice on SSB and FM. Traffic is passed via packet and Winlink 2000 radio. When a technology is sufficiently

available to amateur radio operators and is able to be utilized to pass traffic, the NTS will use that method if it helps to get the message through. As technologies mature, amateurs make use of them in many ways including NTS.

There are delays in passing traffic. Most traffic is passed with Routine priority. There are additional priorities available for handling priority or emergency traffic. I know that the NTS trained operators who do what ever it takes to get such a message through as soon as possible, but that routine traffic is generally not time sensitive or urgent. Perhaps due to a lack of NTS operators in a community, some traffic for that community is not delivered without delay and this points out a need to recruit more NTS operators, not a need to remove support for the NTS.