

STM/NTS

To be a public service volunteer demands a different attitude and skill set than those we use daily. The volunteer has to have a strong motivation to help a client organization, or community in need. He or she recognizes the importance of dedication, motivation, training, and cooperation, in getting the job done. This includes occasionally taking direction from authorized leaders in ARES, and in those organizations we serve. Participation is a conscience decision of the ham to accept these challenges, responsibilities and to follow the proper procedures at all times. Message handling and the NTS/NTSD are key parts of our training for successful ARES operations.

I would like to encourage everyone to tune in to the RN-5 NTS net at 10:30 AM and 3:30 PM Monday through Saturday on 7.280.00 and listen to the entire net two or three times. This will give you a sense of how NTS nets are conducted and how the operators communicate. The next step might be to practice copying the messages you hear being relayed. This copying process will help you become familiar with the radiogram also.

Then, when you are ready, simply check in to the net when the net control asks for check-ins from

Arkansas. Be sure to mention that this is your first check-in to the RN-5 Net. You will find the other operators eager to help and very patient. Remember that your participation is always voluntary. Even if you check in, you do not need to handle any traffic if you do not want to.

And remember, NTS message handling skills are valuable in other volunteer services, including ARES and RACES.

Another reminder about the NTS. It's Fast, efficient, and easy, right? Maybe. Here is what the ARRL has to say about Deviation from Normal Routing.

Failure to use the normal routings, if carried to the extreme, will result in strangulation of one or more NTS nets at region or area levels. That is, if section nets send representatives to other section nets to clear traffic direct instead of through the region net, the region net will starve for traffic. Similarly, if region nets maintain liaison with each other direct instead of through the common medium of the area net, the latter will have little traffic and will not prosper. It is in the interest of efficiency, organization, system, training and conservation of skilled personnel to use the NTS structure as it is intended to be used. Let us not be ridiculous, however. Those who would follow the system to the letter are occasionally guilty of

unnecessarily delaying delivery. Any station in NTS, regardless of the function the operator performs, who receives a message destined to a point in his local calling area, should deliver that message rather than filter it further through the system. There are many metropolitan areas which straddle NTS net coverage boundaries but have common toll-free telephone coverage.

It would also be a good idea to exercise the system by generating some traffic. I would like to see everyone that is checked in to our net this evening and those that are just monitoring to please send at least one message per month and ask your friends, fellow club members, to do the same. It could be a pleasant greeting to someone else on a net. It might be a thanks for a QSO to someone you worked on another frequency. It could be standard seasonal greetings. Maybe a compliment to a good NCS is in order. One message per month isn't asking too much. We handle traffic for practice. Let's use the system.

This is also the season for severe weather. Although traffic handled on weather nets is not the format one usually sees on section nets as part of the National Traffic System, it is certainly important traffic and the usual rules apply. Get it right. Be clear and concise. Follow the directions of the net control.

Listen. Listen. Listen. It's a chance to apply the skills and discipline you have learned about traffic handling.