

CHAPTER 8 - DELIVERING, SERVICING, ORIGINATING

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8.0 CHAPTER 8, DELIVERING, INTERFACING WITH THE PUBLIC

This manual is intended to provide guidance in the art of message formatting, exchanging, net operations and delivery. Messages transmitted by amateur stations are used to pass information between amateurs, members of the public, and officials of served agencies helping the public in times of emergency.

This chapter presents guidelines for interfacing with the people we serve when delivering messages, sending service messages, soliciting replies, and originating message traffic. Tips on disaster and public service communications operations are included.

8.1 DELIVERING MESSAGES

Delivering messages to members of the public is a very important part of the message handler's responsibility.

It is customary to route messages to an amateur station within toll free calling distance of the addressee. The receiving station typically calls the addressee by telephone and delivers the message.

If the addressee can not be reached in a timely fashion, or at all, it is the obligation of the receiving station to "service the message" back to the originator by radio message. An optional alternative is to mail the message to the addressee if telephone attempts are unsuccessful, informing the originator by service message. If the mailed message is returned by the post office, servicing the message again is customary.

Messages sometimes may be partially garbled in transmission, although we make every effort to prevent this. Messages may also be prepared with incorrect or incomplete information. Some of the strategies in the sections below may help recover from such problems without having to service the message.

A message should be delivered when the handling amateur is confident that he has received it correctly and is ready to make a proper presentation.

The entire message including op notes is often sent to an amateur addressee while op notes are omitted and ARRL Numbered Radiograms are translated for public recipients.

Some points to consider in delivery preparation and style follow.

8.1.1 FINDING ADDRESSEES

A complete and accurate address section of a message is the key to successful delivery. As mentioned in the section on message formatting, having the addressee's name as it might be found in the telephone directory along with an accurate street address, etc., will allow the delivering station to recover from most garbling or origination errors. A few useful tips follow for recovering from an incorrect telephone number (or none at all), or a bad address:

1. Checking the directory under the addressee's name even if a number is given will catch changed or incorrect numbers. The originator may have had an old or incorrect number.

2. Scan the telephone directory for names, addresses, or telephone numbers that have a significant match to parts of the message address. For unusual names this is a short task, not so for the Smith listings. A search with data base is much faster.
3. Contact the information operator for persons not found in the directory. New listings are constantly being assigned by the telephone company for people who move, etc.
4. If a telephone number is not listed (for privacy), the telephone information operator will usually say so. Messages in this case may be serviced back as "unlisted" or mailed at the discretion of the receiving station. Today many residential phones will not accept blocked numbers, or private numbers, from the calling end. Remove your blocking for the call.
5. Some areas have available a document known as a "Criss-Cross", often available for review at the library (or by telephone), or on the internet, which can be of great help in solving the tough ones. The document consists of listings by street address, by telephone number, and name. A little detective work with a map to check for proper street name and hundred block in a zip area can lead to finding the number by looking up the address. A zip code directory is very useful.
6. Police departments often have copies of the "Criss-Cross" at the local stations. A personal visit to the police station during slack hours is better than trying to ask for such information over the telephone. Police officers may not have the time to look things up for you.
7. Messages may always be hand delivered if the receiving station is willing. Take a written copy along to deliver.
8. Messages may be relayed to other amateurs who can make the telephone contact. Amateurs may sometimes be located through friends in clubs, etc., when they have unlisted numbers.
9. Check if the address or telephone number does not seem to match anything in your area. There is a Baltimore in MD and one in Ohio (discovered after hours of futile searching).
10. Repeat calls at different times to allow for the schedules of shift workers. Service after 48 hours, but persist in calling for addressees which might be away on vacation.
11. Important messages sometimes may be delivered by using the information from the "Criss-Cross", or other sources, to contact a neighbor of the addressee to either deliver the message or to help you get in touch with the addressee.
12. In emergencies, the telephone company, police department, and the American Red Cross, are well prepared to handle delivery of death or serious injury/illness messages. They are trained in dealing with the impact. Always consider the possible reaction.

If the addressee's telephone number is unlisted, you may ask the telephone company supervisor to give your number to the addressee so that you may be called for the message.

8.1.2 DELIVERING MESSAGES, STYLE, EXAMPLE

Messages are important to both the addressees and the originators, and, because our free public service is a novelty to many, we have an opportunity to serve the public and make a good

impression on the people we encounter. Much of what people know about Amateur Radio will be learned from the experience of receiving a message, and how well (or poorly) the delivering amateur presented himself or herself.

In today's telemarketing world, the first consideration in delivery style is to make immediately clear that your call is not a sales pitch or solicitation. Ascertain if you have reached the correct residence or location then explain who you are and why you are calling.

Use care to explain that you have a greetings message so that the party on the phone does not jump to the conclusion that you are bearing bad news. People naturally think a "radiogram" is used only for the worst kind of news.

If the message is bad news, extra effort has to be made to soften the blow. Explain that the message might not be good news and you wish to help them understand the content clearly. This is a difficult and delicate matter requiring serious tone, calm voice, and sympathetic attention to the reactions of the party on the line. Messages concerning death or serious illness might be better handled if you contact the local American Red Cross or police for assistance.

*** MESSAGE DELIVERY EXAMPLE:**

A good way to deliver a routine message might be as follows:

"Good (evening), is this the (addressee last name) residence? (on the affirmative) May I speak with (addressee name) please?"

If asked, identify yourself and your purpose without revealing the message contents (reserved for the addressee). When contact is made:

"Good (evening) Mr. (Mrs., Ms.) (name), this is an Amateur Radio operator here in (city). We are the Hams you hear about who help with communications during emergencies. We also send radiograms for people as a daily free public service, and I have a greetings message here for you from (place of origin). I will read it through for you and would be happy to repeat it if you care to write it down."

This allows the person to ask you to wait until they get pencil and paper before starting, if they wish.

Read the message text slowly and clearly, using plain language (translating ARL messages with blanks filled properly), and saying "period" for X-RAY as needed, etc., then say:

"... and the message is signed by (signature) from (place of origin) at (time filed, if present) on (date)."

Reading the message preamble, prowords, OP NOTES, or full addressee information, is not done unless there is some information contained therein which might need to be discussed to verify the correct delivery.

Ask if they would like you to repeat the message again to permit them to write it down, or simply to hear it again. Repeat the message, if required.

Offer to send a message back, or perhaps a message to another party of the addressee's choice. A reply may have been requested in the text by ARL SEVEN, or in the preamble by HXE. These requests are honored differently. See the later sections below.

Recipients may or may not ask about how the message system works. This is your chance to talk about Amateur Radio. They will be amazed to hear your story.

8.1.3 ANSWERING MACHINE DELIVERY

Leaving messages on answering machines is a controversial subject for a number of reasons. Often such machines do not give sufficient information to be sure you have reached the right addressee, and certainly not the individual addressee within a household. There is no assurance that the message will be saved and recovered properly or privately. There may be risk in leaving your contact information on a stranger's answering machine. Etc., etc.

Optionally you may choose to leave word on the machine that you have a greetings message for the addressee name, and leave your number for them to call for the message. Some amateurs are more comfortable simply indicating that they have a greetings message for the addressee name and they will call back later to attempt delivery.

Generally the delivery of the radiogram is not considered completed until the delivering station has contacted the addressee directly.

8.1.4 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. It is understood that a receiving station shall send back a service message for an undeliverable message even without any HX code or other instruction to do so.

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 who relayed the message to you. Deal only with the originator, you have the ball once you accept the message.

When a service message is required look up the full address of the originating station in the call book, including telephone number if possible, to use in the address block of the service message. Use the ARL SIXTY SEVEN numbered radiogram and indicate in the text of the service message the original message number and addressee last name, and then add the explanation. 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. Note that "number" is included.

Service messages are given special handling since they affect timely delivery of messages. The service message designator "SVC" is placed ahead of the message number, and the precedence of the service message is the same as the message being serviced. (Note: The use of SVC, although

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stipulated in ARRL literature, is seldom used in current practice. Service messages are often seen without the SVC designator. It is retained in the examples and formatting information in Chapter 1.) No service message is required for normal timely deliveries.

Example PBL:

NR SVC 6	PREC R	HX__	STN ORIG W3HAM	CK ARL 20	PLACE OF ORIG HAGERSTOWN MD	TIME FILED	MON JUL	DY 10
-------------	-----------	------	-------------------	--------------	--------------------------------	------------	------------	----------

Service messages from your station use your message number, the precedence of the message being serviced, your call sign and your city-of-origin.

There are several categories of messages requiring service.

8.1.4.1 HXC AND HXD

HXC and HXD preamble requests are confirmations of handling which require service messages back to the station of origin.

HXC: "Report date and time of delivery (TOD) to 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, time and method of delivery."

These service messages are done without the knowledge of the addressee since they are your responsibility as the handling station. HXC replies are negated by a service message for the undelivered message. The HXD information may be included within a service message:

Examples:

1) HXC SERVICE OF DELIVERED MESSAGE

SVC 12 R W3RX 10 PODUNK MD AUG 23

JOHN A HAM W3TX

123 OAK ST

BALTIMORE MD 21200

410 555 1000

NR	45	HARRISON	DLVD	PHONE
AUG	23	2205Z	X	73

= JOHN W3RX

2) HXD SERVICE OF DELIVERED MESSAGE

SVC 12 R W3RX ARL 16 PODUNK MD AUG 23

JOHN A HAM W3TX

123 OAK ST

BALTIMORE MD 21200

410 555 1000

NR	45	RCVD	W3RLY	AUG
23	2205Z	X	DLVD	HARRISON
PHONE	AUG	23	2220Z	X
73				

= JOHN W3RX

3) HXD SERVICE, MESSAGE RELAYED

SVC 12 R W3RX 16 PODUNK MD AUG 23

JOHN A HAM W3TX

123 OAK ST

BALTIMORE MD 21200

410 555 1000

NR	45	HARRISON	RCVD	W3RLY
AUG	23	2205Z	X	SENT
W3XX	AUG	23	2235Z	X
73				

= JOHN W3RX

4) HXD WITH SERVICE OF UNDELIVERABLE MESSAGE

SVC 12 R W3RX ARL 17 PODUNK MD AUG 23

JOHN A HAM W3TX

123 OAK ST

BALTIMORE MD 21200

410 555 1000

NR	45	RCVD	W3RLY	AUG
23	2205Z	X	ARL	SIXTY
SEVEN	45	HARRISON	PHONE	UNLISTED
X	73			

= JOHN W3RX

8.1.4.2 UNABLE TO COMPLY WITH HX CODES

The inability to comply with any other HX codes should be cause to generate a service message back so indicating.

8.1.4.3 DELAYS

DELAYED messages due to not being able to contact the addressee by telephone within 48 hours of message origination, or for other reasons in the handling process, should be cause to generate a service message back to the station of origin, so indicating in the text:

REF NR 234 MESSAGE ARRIVED LATE THIS STATION X DLVD APR 20 2200Z.

When the addressee can not be reached within 48 hours of origination, service the message and ask if the originator wishes you to cancel the message (QTA), and continue trying to contact people who might be away on vacation, etc.. Two days is about the limit for "sitting" on a message before servicing. Keep trying to make contact with the addressee until you hear back from the originator. It is considerate to confirm late delivery once successful.

ARL SIXTY SEVEN 234 SMITH 410 555 1212 NO ANSWER TWO DAYS X WILL CONTINUE TO TRY X QTA QUERY,

and later:

REF NR 234 SMITH DLVD PHONE APR 12 2300Z. This may be a service message.

8.1.4.4 MAILING

MAILING messages to addressee when telephone contact is not possible (an optional choice of the delivering station) should generate a service message back to the station of origin. If the mail is returned another service message is indicated.

ARL SIXTY SEVEN 234 SMITH NO LOCAL OUTLET X MAILED APR 10,
or
ARL SIXTY SEVEN 234 NO PHONE ANSWER TWO DAYS X MAILED APR 10, etc.
and;
ARL SIXTY SEVEN 234 SMITH MAILED APR 10 X RETURNED APR 13 BY POST
OFFICE UNDELIVERABLE , if returned.

8.1.4.5 GARBLED

If the message was garbled, repeat the parts in question so the originator may compare data with the original or check back with the person for whom the message was sent.

ARL SIXTY SEVEN 234 J SOTH 10 OAK RD PODUNK MD NO PHONE GIVEN X
UNLISTED X CONFIRM INFO.

Ask for the message to be re-filed to you if garbled.

ARL SIXTY SEVEN 234 SMITH MESSAGE GARBLED PSE REFILE.

Ask for additional information, or numbers verified, if desired.

ARL SIXTY SEVEN 234 SMITH MISSING ADDRESS AND PHONE 410 555 1212
INCORRECT X PSE REFILE.

8.1.4.6 UNDELIVERABLES

Undeliverable messages for any other reason should be serviced back to the station of origin as soon as possible, explaining the problem. There are numerous situations that might prevent delivery, among which are incorrect and unlisted telephone numbers, addressee unknown, etc. In the case of incorrect and unlisted telephone numbers the service message should contain the telephone number received in case the unlisted number was garbled in the original transmission.

Indicate if the telephone number is unlisted or private if there was none given in the message and you learn that in your checks.

ARL SIXTY SEVEN 234 SMITH PHONE UNLISTED.

If a number was given, but it was incorrect, and you were not able to make contact due to the correct number being unlisted or private, so indicate. Do not service back changed or corrected telephone numbers, or other information, without permission of the addressee.

ARL SIXTY SEVEN 234 SMITH PHONE 410 555 1212 INCORRECT AND UNLISTED.

If the address or telephone number does not seem to match anything in your area, attempt to find the correct location, forward the message there, or service as unknown address and no listing. A good atlas or web search can find errors in state, town, zip, address, etc.

ARL SIXTY SEVEN 234 J SMITH 190 OAK RD PODUNK MD X NO NAME ADDRESS OR
PHONE MATCH FOUND.

Report if the addressee is unknown at a valid address, a former resident, etc.

ARL SIXTY SEVEN 234 SMITH ADDRESSEE UNKNOWN X NO LISTING.

Report silent keys only with permission.

ARL SIXTY SEVEN 234 SMITH REPORTED DECEASED, and, if a mass roster mailing, you might add: "... PSE REMOVE FROM MAILING LIST BY REQUEST"

Do not send back forwarding addresses without permission. Simply report such undeliverables as unknown.

ARL SIXTY SEVEN 234 SMITH ADDRESSEE UNKNOWN AT ADDRESS". Only the addressee on the message should authorize sending information back.

8.1.4.7 EXAMPLE SERVICE MESSAGE

In addition to the examples of HXD undeliverable texts shown for that case, there are many possible formats for the text of service messages. Examples of some texts are shown in the previous sections. The ARL SIXTY SEVEN is most often used in these messages, but plain text may be used as well when it better suits the purpose.

Last name of the addressee on the original message is shown optionally added to the message number for a redundant verification of the message being serviced.

Sent from your station to the station of origin (W3TX):

1) SERVICE UNDELIVERABLE MESSAGE

SVC 12 R W3RX ARL 14 PODUNK MD AUG 23

JOHN A HAM W3TX

123 OAK ST

BALTIMORE MD 21200

410 555 1000

ARL SIXTY SEVEN 234 SMITH

410 555 1234 INCORRECT X

NO LISTING X 73

= JOHN W3RX

8.1.5 GENERATING A REPLY, HXE, ARL SEVEN, OFFERS

Replies may be generated based on:

- 1) **HXE** in preamble (“Delivering station get reply from addressee, originate message back.”),
- 2) **ARL SEVEN** request in the text (“Please reply by Amateur Radio through the amateur delivering this message. This is a free public service.”), or
- 3) based on a routine **OFFER** by the delivering station to generate reply.

8.1.5.1 HXE APPROVED

If the addressee agrees to send a reply, the delivering station may originate a message from its station back to the party signing the original message (at the city-of-origin), or to the station-of-origin if necessary, as a regular third party message origination. The city-of-origin on the reply should agree with the location of the person for whom the message is being originated.

8.1.5.2 HXE DENIED, SERVICE MESSAGE

In the HXE case, when the addressee does not wish to reply, the delivering station may send a service message back to the station-of-origin over its own signature referencing the original message and indicating that there is “no reply” to the HXE request. The city-of-origin and signature should be yours. REF NR 234 SMITH HXE NO REPLY.

8.1.5.3 ARL SEVEN APPROVED

If the addressee agrees to send a reply, the delivering station may originate a message from its station back to the party signing the original message (at the city-of-origin), or to the station-of-origin if necessary (addressed to the original message signature c/o station-of-origin if an address is not available), as a regular third party message origination. The city-of-origin on the reply should agree with the location of the person for whom the message is being originated.

8.1.5.4 ARL SEVEN REFUSED, OPTIONAL SERVICE

In this case, when the addressee does not wish to reply, the delivering station may send a service message back to the station-of-origin over its own signature, with permission, referencing the original message and indicating that there is “no reply”, but this is an optional courtesy and voluntary. The city-of-origin should be yours. REF NR 234 SMITH NO REPLY. Discuss the possible reply with the addressee, and honor a request to send nothing back. The ARL SEVEN option is the addressee’s, who might also wish to have you originate a “no reply” message over their signature.

8.1.5.5 OFFER TO REPLY

Once a message is delivered, offer to originate a message reply, reminding the party that it is a free public service. Help them gather the required addressee information, and to create a short and clear text (possibly with ARRL Numbered Radiograms). Ask if they would like to send a message to anyone else as well. Assure them of your best effort to get the message delivered but that no guarantee can be made.

Be certain to guide the originator in understanding the restrictions imposed by FCC content rules or international regulations.

Such originations use your message number and the city-of-origin of the party for whom the message is being originated, as in any other third party traffic origination.

Never originate messages for a third party without their permission.

Respect privacy. Do not generate messages containing information about a third party without their permission.

8.1.6 SOLICITING MESSAGES

You do not have to deliver a message to originate traffic. Feel free to solicit messages from friends and neighbors, or even by posting notices at work. Exposing the public to the services offered by Amateur Radio can be very rewarding. It may suddenly become clear to people why you spend so much time in the shack, and why Amateur Radio is such an important resource. See section 8.2 regarding solicitations.

Never originate messages for a third party without their permission.

8.1.7 KEEPING RECORDS

Keep records for all traffic originated and delivered for your own benefit. Comply with current FCC and international regulations regarding keeping records of third party traffic crossing international borders.

Having a copy of a message delivered years before can be of great help if you get one garbled for the same party again.

8.1.8 PUTTING TRAFFIC INTO THE NTS

All amateurs are welcome to check into the Local or Section level traffic nets to send originated traffic. If you are not able to do so, you may give your traffic to other stations who can, or contact your local Section Net Manager, the Section Traffic Manager (STM), ARES EC, SEC, or Section Manager (SM) for help. (Also see the ARRL Net Directory for net listings.)

8.2 COLLECTING MESSAGES FROM THE PUBLIC

Messages may be solicited from friends, neighbors, work associates, nursing homes and hospitals (with management permission), etc., and at public events of virtually any type. (See Public Event Solicitations.) Setting up message booths at ARES public service events is an excellent opportunity for this sort of activity.

As mentioned in the section on message formatting, the originating station operator is the best person to gather the required information for proper message preparation while still in contact with the originating party. Get sufficient information to re-contact the party at a later time if there is a delivery question or problem.

8.2.1 ADDRESS INFORMATION

Remember to collect a complete addressee name (as most likely to be listed in the directory at the delivery point), and add children's names at the end of the line. Get a full street address including any apartment or institution information. Include the zip code and telephone information, even if you have to call the originating party back at a later time to get it. If the telephone number is not available, you might call long distance information or search the web resources to get it and include it in the message.

8.2.2 ORIGINATOR INFORMATION

Record the name, address, and telephone number of the originating party, on the message blank for your reference information. Note the time, method, and place of origination to jog your memory at a later time.

This information will be very helpful if you receive a service message or a reply for the originator.

8.2.3 HELP WITH TEXT

Help originators design a short and concise text. Use ARRL radiograms if possible. If the party needs to send much more than 25 words, you may break the message into two or more messages to keep the size of each one reasonable. Remember, when doing this, to make each message make sense on its own just in case the several messages do not all arrive at the destination at the same time. You can work on this together with the originator.

8.2.4 BUSINESS PROHIBITION

Explain to originators, as diplomatically as possible, the prohibition of business traffic. Messages which facilitate the regular business affairs of ANY party are not allowed. This applies to the

affairs of companies, organizations, government, whether profit or non-profit, charitable, etc. See 97.113 in the rules, as amended..

8.2.5 PUBLIC EVENT SOLICITATIONS

A great way to serve large numbers of people is to set up an amateur operation at a public event or public area (with appropriate permission). The amateurs have an opportunity to explain Amateur Radio to people, and offer to send radiograms. Stress that the message service works even when the phones, cel-tels and email are no longer in service during emergencies.

Experience indicates that the people encountered at these places may not be prepared with proper address information. Advertising in advance is a great way to gather a larger and better prepared crowd. Be prepared to re-contact people later at home to get the needed information if necessary.

Have a team of amateurs greet and talk with the public. Most groups wisely have an amateur coach the originator and fill in the message form as the person dictates the information This will usually insure legible hard copy for use by the sending operators. Direct entry into laptops for packet forwarding is also an impressive technique to use, although the public is equally impressed by hearing CW as their message goes out. Consider using linked laptops to the sending station table and a printer for hard copy archiving.

Consider a limited text, or choice of several texts, in order to permit booking messages to the greatest extent possible. This is not much of a limitation for most event solicitations. ARRL Numbered Radiograms with a variable blank entry are handy for this purpose---especially for holiday greetings type messages.

Organize all the messages according to destination area, such as in-Section (group by town or county), in-Region (as in EPA, and WPA when in MDC), and out of Region (1RN, 2RN, 4RN, 8RN , EAN, CAN, PAN, ARN, etc., when in 3RN), and then group the "books" within each. This will allow the traffic handlers to carry all the traffic up through the net system without having to reorganize at each level.

Notify the NTS net managers in advance when planning a large batch of messages. NTSD stations may also need to provide special capacity for handling unusually large digital loading.

8.3 SENDING ORGANIZATIONAL MESSAGES

Traffic is often generated for various types of organizational activity, such as QSL bureaus, license renewal reminders or congratulations, welcoming messages from nets or clubs, even announcements, etc. Such message traffic is often created in book form but may also be customized individual messages. These messages may be originated for delivery in local areas or throughout the NTS.

On occasion, such originations are much like public service event solicitations and may be handled in a similar fashion. Some of these originations are one time "mass mailings" presenting mainly problems of volume. Others may be continuing message generation based on organizational or individual policies for sending welcome message, greetings, or reminders, requiring a consistent long term working relationship with local NTS operators.

A few tips and suggestions are in order.

8.3.1 LEGALITY, PROPRIETY

Remember that amateur messages are communications which must comply with all FCC regulations in Part 97, as amended. Traffic may not directly or indirectly support the commercial purposes of any party, must not be encrypted (i.e., configured in such a way as to obscure the meaning of the transmitted message groups), and must meet all FCC and international regulations regarding third party traffic, etc.

Do not originate messages for a third party (someone other than yourself) without their permission. Do not originate messages containing information about a third party without their permission. Respect privacy.

Although not a legal question in all cases, it is customary to limit amateur message traffic to matters not related to "causes". Without enumerating all such cases here, it is suggested that it is wise to consult with the local STM regarding propriety of message content for "mass mailings".

8.3.2 MASS MAILINGS AND BOOK MESSAGES

All messages created for mass message submissions and book transmission should meet the same standard criteria as individual radiograms, and should be handled according to standard protocols. Some additional reminders:

1) PREAMBLE: Message numbers should contain only figures, no punctuation, and no leading zeros. Do not use the optional HX code handling instructions unless really necessary. Do not use the optional filing time on Routine messages unless there is some compelling importance to the origination time. If multiple stations originate fractions of the total submission, the station of origin for each should be so entered accordingly. The place of origin may be a more complicated question. If the message source is a public event, the place of origin may best be shown as the location of the public event to indicate the appropriate information for the addressee. If the source is an organization, it may be wiser to use the place of origin for the station of origin for that fraction of the submission in order to aid routing of service messages.

2) ADDRESS: Use complete address names (as might be listed in phone books at the destination). Include the zip code for digital system routing purposes. Include a valid working telephone number. Sending a large number of messages without telephone numbers is unworkable. Amateur traffic handlers are not a free mailing service! Use the information available in "criss-cross" type publications, data base sites on the internet, or commercial CD's to get valid address and phone information. NTS injection points should refuse large submissions with any deficiency in the addressing.

3) TEXT: Use a minimum number of text variations. If variable words or phrases need to be included, attempt to group them so they may be sent in books as a single blank to be filled in within the variable text parts of the book as one group or phrase. See chapters 2 and 3 with respect to the use of BLANKS in message booking. Use ARRL numbered radiograms to the greatest extent possible. This can greatly facilitate the movement of the traffic through the NTS.

4) INSERTION: Establish, with the help of the local STM and Net Managers, and operators, a means of handling the outbound traffic within the limits of the manpower and resources at the

origination point. Ask the local STM or Net Managers to advise and consult with the NTS Region and Area staffs regarding large traffic load insertions before the event.

5) SORT: For large amounts of traffic, organize all the messages according to destination area, such as in-Section (group by town or county), in-Region (as in EPA, DE, and WPA when in MDC), and out of Region (1RN, 2RN, 4RN, 8RN, EAN, CAN, PAN, ARN, etc., when in 3RN), and then group the "books" within each. This will allow the traffic handlers to carry all the traffic up through the net system without having to reorganize and re-transmit at each level. It is not uncommon for auxiliary liaisons to be assigned to carry traffic through the Section to Region, and through Section and Region to Area, thus avoiding any re-transmission until the higher nets are reached.

6) SERVICE: Establish, with the help of the local STM and Net Managers, and operators, a means for handling the incoming service messages which will be received. The operators handling service messages for the originators should be readily available for receiving service messages from the NTS net operators. Regular net participation, or, at a minimum, 24/7 email service locally should be made available. When a message is inserted into the NTS, the originating station is responsible for handling any service messages generated in the process of handling the traffic. There are no special exceptions to standard operating practices for this type message origination. Prompt responses to service requests and re-filing should be forthcoming.

If messages are originated using a club call sign, or at a public service event, the club or originating station(s) must make operators readily available to the NTS for handling service messages.

These large submissions of organizational traffic are to be serviced with the same techniques and integrity as any other amateur messages. The ball is in play until the messages are delivered, relayed, or serviced, and, when stipulated with HX codes in the preamble, serviced if delivered. See the earlier sections of this chapter with regard to servicing messages and replies..

7) Maintain a ready record of all messages submitted to the NTS, and a means to record the history of service message requests or inputs. These records should contain re-contact information for all message originators in order to handle service message inputs. This is particularly important for traffic originated for the public or organizations, amateur or non-amateur.

8.4 DISASTER COMMUNICATIONS TRAFFIC

The properly trained and practiced traffic handlers and net operators are the backbone of disaster communications. Amateurs having these skills may come from the NTS, or from ARES/RACES groups, even if these groups operate on separate bands. The important point is that they share the same abilities so that they will all understand each other when joining together to help the public in times of emergency.

Operators in the field, at shelters, emergency operating centers, at the American Red Cross and other served agencies, and in surrounding areas, will all encounter the need to pass written traffic accurately and promptly at some time during these situations.

Train in advance. Teaching operators how to handle this traffic during the emergency will hinder the effort and tie up valuable manpower.

The NTS, ARES, and RACES all work together during disasters. Be sure to have a program to train people in local clubs, groups, and ARES/RACES, so skilled people will be available when needed.

8.4.1 ARES

The Amateur Radio Emergency Service (an ARRL field organization) serves the public affected by disasters, and all agencies with whom prior agreements have been made to supply support communications in such situations. An exception is Civil Defense, or Emergency Management, which is served by RACES and covered by separate FCC rules and regulations. Both ARES and RACES operators need to work together, however. The ARES “customers” typically have need to communicate with the emergency management officials during such events.

Welfare messages for the public, to and from the affected area, will all be written formal traffic. Messages for agencies will be a mix of tactical traffic, sometimes verbally handled, and formal messages, which must be delivered to officials in order for them to have written record of requests for assistance, damage assessment, command information, and the like.

It is very important for amateurs to train with the officials for whom they might be handling traffic. It is easy for amateurs to communicate compared with the difficulty faced by officials when they have to write clear concise messages for delivery by third parties. They are used to getting on the phone and explaining what they need. Practicing with them will help them get used to the methods of writing good traffic and getting to trust what Amateur Radio can do for them. Being known in advance may be the only way an amateur might ever be allowed on the scene of a disaster to help.

8.4.2 RACES

As mentioned above, the Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service is an Amateur Radio service provided for government emergency management. It is governed by separate rules in the amateur regulations, Part 97.407, but it is manned by regular amateurs enrolled by emergency management for the purpose. The RACES rules limit operations to prevent Amateur Radio from becoming used as a business communications service for government. Amateurs performing service under RACES may also serve ARES and the NTS. Joint enrollment is strongly encouraged these days, and that suggests joint training and uniform traffic handling capabilities.

A large proportion of RACES traffic is formally written. In some cases the message format is different than the ARRL form presented in this manual. This form difference is designed to make RACES traffic more easily understood by operations officials, and their message centers, which deal with traffic from a variety of services and modes of transmission. Amateur radio is happy to accommodate these differences. The exact procedures may be learned by joining the local RACES group. The basic methods of message transmission and net practices are the same.

8.4.3 WELFARE TRAFFIC

Welfare messages are generated by concerned people during disasters. Welfare messages from the affected area usually involve requests for assistance, or report on the status of affected people

and property. Incoming welfare messages to the affected area requesting information on people or property are usually generated without any prior knowledge of status.

Outbound welfare traffic almost always has priority over incoming traffic. People affected by a disaster often need to communicate requests for help or advise others of their safety. These people come to the available amateur to originate their messages, or the amateur travels through the affected region and makes himself available for contact as part of the ARES/RACES operation at shelters, etc.

Incoming welfare traffic creates a big problem. When many people are involved in a disaster, huge numbers of incoming requests for information may overload the limited amateur facilities and manpower in the area.

Additionally, there is great difficulty finding particular individuals in a disaster area for the purpose of delivering messages. American Red Cross shelters may not even have lists of sheltered people for up to 72 hours after the onset. Telephone service may be out, or limited by officials.

During disasters, it is important not to solicit inbound messages unless the amateurs in the area have approved incoming traffic, and have provided for the stations to archive it, or handle it with a means to deliver it. Amateur leadership in the area will advise when it is possible to handle incoming traffic. ARRL bulletins from WIAW will announce the NTS situation in this regard, or local leadership will announce the status on local nets. Typically the NTS will move inbound welfare traffic as close to the delivery area as possible, and have stations archive it where the local amateurs can check through it as time permits. Local BBS servers or emergency prepared packet stations can help in this work.

Incoming messages for served agencies regarding the relief operation have to be handled. Such traffic should be handled separately, routed through reliable paths, and should not be listed as welfare traffic.

No matter how upset outside originators may be, neither they nor you can do anything to make it possible to deliver traffic in the area until emergency organizations have done their work. An undeliverable message sent, and not answered, may actually generate more concern than no message at all. Listen, and do not transmit. You may hear enough information to help concerned people without wasting the time of amateurs on scene. On the other hand, a judgment may be made and inbound traffic accepted to help the concerned feel that they have at least made a reasonable attempt. Check that the area is accepting and archiving such traffic.

Overloading the message system with incoming welfare traffic may seriously hinder the passing of urgent traffic affecting the stabilization of the situation. Arranging for separate paths to the archiving site can help. This way the concerned originators of inbound inquiries at least will know that there are competent traffic handlers making the effort to service their requests.

A team of traffic handlers can sort through the archived incoming welfare traffic and service those regarding the public at the fringe of the affected area, outside that area, or otherwise reachable. Occasionally public safety may request, to help prevent overloads, that the telephone system not be used, however.

Quite often the relief organizations and public safety officials will expedite the installation of special telephone service, etc., thus dramatically relieving the pressure for welfare status reports.

The obvious point is that qualified traffic handlers are needed in quantity during such events. Untrained, but concerned, operators will attempt to do their best, but will not have the calm confidence of knowing the system and how to operate therein. Training is key. Every amateur in your local club or area should get at least a minimum of familiarity training in handling messages and where to find the nets that move them.

8.4.4 TACTICAL VS. FORMAL TRAFFIC

Handling routine traffic for people on a day to day basis is done with calmness and organization. There is no reason not to conduct operations during a disaster in the same fashion. In fact, it is more important to do so at such times. Official traffic and welfare traffic for the public is critically important at these times, demanding that the amateur system work at its best.

One of the most frequently asked questions about handling traffic during emergencies is why bother with formal traffic when it is so much faster to communicate with verbal exchanges. The reason is simple. Amateur radio does not manage the operations during such emergencies. It is the conduit for communications between officials... the FAX machine they rely upon to get a written record from point A to point B. They are busy people, and will respect and appreciate the professionalism of amateurs who can deliver their information in clearly legible, accurate, timely, written form.

Communicating with another amateur, back and forth, can convey complete understanding of a tactical message. That same clarity can be lost, or content forgotten, when a third party must be informed of the verbal content; particularly when there are facts and figures to convey. The official will probably have to write them down when told as well. Do it for the official, and he can carry the message form around in his hand until it is serviced.

It is entirely reasonable that ARES/RACES operations may from time to time use abbreviated message formats for handling written forms of tactical traffic. Often such forms (incident reports) indicate an addressee, text, source, and date/time group. Note that many served agencies require that the source be identified by full name, and perhaps title, to authenticate the message. Some consider a message without such a signature as invalid.

Even medical emergency reports during public service events are appreciated when they are written and handed to a public safety official at a command post. That official may have dozens of other matters in progress, and can not be expected to remember what an excited ham yells into his communications van.

There are many circumstances when verbal delivery is acceptable, but amateurs should make careful judgments about when it is safe to do so. When in doubt, write it out...and keep a copy of it in case you are asked to repeat it. Matters of utmost urgency may be delivered verbally, and then followed up with a written record (marked as handled if appropriate).

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We communicate, we do not administrate. The message handling skills presented in this manual serve us well during emergencies. The same operating disciplines and verification of copy can produce the same quality of service for such messages of record.

Remember, the NTS is chartered to serve the ARES field organization during emergencies. Check around and ascertain if there are sufficient numbers of competent traffic handlers available to relieve the “iron men” during major events. The time and effort spent in training will pay big dividends.
