An Introduction to Emergency Nets

Nets and Types of Nets
a) A net is a group of stations exchanging information over a communications network.
b) An “Open net” is a small group of stations can who self-manage the exchange of information and messages between one another.
c) A “Directed net” is a “formal” net in which communication between stations is coordinated by a Net Control Station (NCS) to promote the efficient exchange of information and messages.

What is an Emergency Net
a) An emergency net is a group of stations organized to provide communications to one or more “served agencies” when normal communications systems are disabled or overloaded. An emcomm net may be a formal “directed” net or an informal “open” net depending on the number of participating stations and the volume of messages, or traffic.

Types of Emergency Nets
a) Traffic nets - handle formal written messages in a specified format, such as on the ARRL RADIOGRAM or FEMA ICS FORM 213.
b) Tactical nets - are used for real time coordination of field activities related to an emergency.
c) Resource or Logistics nets – are used to acquire, coordinate and assign volunteers and material support in an emergency.
d) Information nets - are usually open nets to collect and share information about developing situations. The net can receive updated information and disseminate official bulletins, and direct operators, stations, and traffic to the appropriate nets operating on other frequencies.

Checking Into an Emergency Net
a) Stations wishing to participate should listen to the current exchange of information and for specific instructions. When the Net Control Station requests check-ins, state your FCC call sign and category of traffic. For example “WD5SP with priority traffic”, or “KE5DLU no traffic”.
b) If an exchange of lower priority traffic is in progress, you may need to “break” into the net with important emergency traffic. Wait for a pause during an exchange, then quickly respond by saying “break” with your call letters –
   you will say: “Break WD5SP”
   NCS will say: “We have a breaker”, “Go Ahead WD5SP”
   You will say: “WD5SP with emergency traffic”
   NCS will say: “WD5SP list your traffic”
you will say: “WD5SP one emergency for Santa Fe EOC, one priority for Roswell PD”
NCS will say: “Santa Fe EOC call WD5SP for your traffic”

Checking Out of an Emergency Net
Checking out informs the Net Control Station that your station is no longer on the air, and that you are leaving your location and/or operating position safely.

a) Always inform NCS when you are leaving the air, even if for only a few minutes.

b) In most situations, give the Net Control Station your tactical call sign, reason for close, duration of close, and FCC call sign.

c) Some reasons to close and check out are:
   i) You, your location, or station is in danger
   ii) You may be asked by someone in authority, a public safety official for example, to move or terminate operations.
       1) Terminate operations immediately
       2) Move without question or argument.
       3) Notify the NCS at your first opportunity.
   iii) Your station is closing under the direction of NCS
   iv) You have turned the location over to another operator.
   v) You need a break and there is no relief operator.
This RADIO MESSAGE was received at:

AMATEUR STATION: ___________________
NAME: ___________________
STREET ADDRESS: ___________________
CITY, STATE, ZIP: ___________________

TELEPHONE NUMBER:

________________________________
________________________________
________________________________
________________________________

Sig: ___________________

FROM: ___________________
DATE: ___________________
TIME: ___________________

REJC'D: ___________________

Sent: ___________________
TO: ___________________
DATE: ___________________
TIME: ___________________

This Radio Message was received at:To:

____________   ____________   ____________   ____________   ____________
____________   ____________   ____________   ____________   ____________

Telephone Number:

________________________________
________________________________
________________________________
________________________________

Sig:

FROM: ___________________
DATE: ___________________
TIME: ___________________

REJC'D: ___________________

Sent: ___________________
TO: ___________________
DATE: ___________________
TIME: ___________________

A licensed Amateur Radio Operator, whose address is shown above, handled this message free of charge. As such messages are handled solely for the pleasure of operating, a "Ham" Operator can accept no compensation. A return message may be filed with the Ham delivering this message to you. Further information on Amateur Radio may be obtained from ARRL Headquarters, 225, Main Street, Newington, CT 06111.

RadioGram Components:

Number: Your message number

Precedence: "R" for ROUTINE unless it is an emergency! Routine, Health & Welfare, Priority or Emergency

Handling Instruction(s): (*Most commonly used)

A = Collect landline delivery authorized by addressee within X miles (i.e., A25 - If no number, authorization is unlimited).
B = Cancel message if not delivered within X hours of filing time; service originating station (i.e., B4).
*C = Report date and time of delivery (TOD) to originating station.
D = Report to originating station the identity of station from which relayed, plus date and time, or if delivered report date, time and method of delivery.
E = Delivering station get reply from addresses, originate message back.
F = Hold delivery until... (date). (i.e. F5 holds until the "5th")

*G = Delivery by mail or landline toll call not required. If expense

Originating Station: Ham who formats & submits it to NTS.

Check: Word count for message body. If ARL text is used, precede count with ARL (i.e., ARL22).

Place of Origin: Where message originates.

Time Filed: In ZULU time (rarely used).

Date: Date message was written (Month & Day).

To: Put name and amateur call sign (if applicable); Street address; City; State (2-letter abbrev) & ZIP; Telephone including area code. ZIP is required for NTS messages sent digitally via Packet, etc.

Body: Text goes here, maximum 5 words per line and 25 words total. A telephone number with area code counts as 3 words (707 555 1212). ARL numbered texts are spelled out (i.e., ARL FORTY SIX). "73" is written as 73, counts as one word.

Signature: This is the signature of the person who wrote the message, may differ from the Originator. If a ham operator, include name and call sign. If not a ham, include name and phone number (including area code).

REC'D: Operator call sign message was rec’d from, time and date.

SENT: Operator call sign sent to, time and date. If receiver is last stop and delivers the message, note to whom delivered, how, and time and date.

kg6ila: 09/2003