San Diego Amateur Radio Emergency Services

ARES Monthly Meeting
Message Handling Tutorial - 101
November 8th, 2008

Message Handling Tutorial - 101
Agenda

- Message Handling
- Deployment
- Confidentiality
- Message Handling Importance
- Sending the Message
- Procedural Words

- Phonetics
- ITU Phonetic Alphabet
- Message Handling Procedures
- Letter and Mixed Groups
- Verification of copy
- Summary
- Sample Message

Message Handling
Practice, Practice, Practice

- Essential attributes
  - Having a *Good Attitude* is as important as operating skills
  - Willingness to take direction
  - Desire to *LEARN*
  - Know the difference between the *Hobby* and *Service* aspects of ham radio
  - Following ICS protocol and instructions
  - Keep a record of your messages, and notes to learn from
  - Be a **TEAM PLAYER**
  - **BE PREPARED for any disaster**

Message Handling Importance
Not just for Hospitals

- Agencies / Community events:
  - EMS
  - Cal Fire
  - Salvation Army
  - Red Cross
  - MARS
  - SKYWARN
  - VOAD (Vol. Orgs. Active in Disaster)
  - Special Events
  - Miramar Air Show
  - Special Olympics
  - Runs

Sending the Message
The Basics

- **Efficient traffic handling**
  - USE ONLY THE ICS-213 MESSAGE FORM.
  - Relay the message with 100% accuracy
  - Relay in the least amount of time
  - Do you need clarification before going on the air?
  - Clarification is a judgment call
  - It is *Not necessary* for you to understand traffic content to communicate effectively
  - Accuracy is all the more critical element
  - Send the message ONCE (right the first time)
  - Maintain a copy of the message for your records.

Sending the Message
ICS-213 MESSAGE FORM

Sending the Message
Techniques

▸ There are many elements of technique that contribute to getting it "right the first time

▸ The most important is:
 – You **SEND** a message
 – You **DON'T READ** it

▸ THINK of your delivery….When sending the message
 – Speak clearly and slowly enough for your recipient to write the message accurately.

▸ The person receiving it must write it down

Sending the Message
Delivery

▸ **Most people can't write as fast as we talk so slow your delivery**

 – Allow the receiving station to comfortably (and legibly) write the message down

 – If you are too fast, and have to repeat many times, the end result is that it takes longer
   • Periodically pause and ask, "…Break for Fills?"
   • Ask your listener to indicate if you're speaking too fast.

 – It's better to slow your delivery so that the receiving station gets it the first time than to repeat all or part of the message

Sending the Message
Practice Techniques

▸ Try composing a message and sending it to a tape recorder

▸ Play the tape back and see if you are comfortable writing it down at that speed

▸ Practice on the ARES NET weekly and test your accuracy

▸ Volunteer to deliver a weekly message on the ARES NET

Sending the Message
Techniques

▸ **When sending a message**
 – Speak slowly, distinctly, clearly
 – Do not let your voice trail off at the end of words or sentences
 – Give each and every word equal force
 – Follow standard procedures
 – Do things consistently
 – Use **PROCEDURAL WORDS** (Discussed later in this program)
   • ..No guessing game about what you are going to do next
 – Do not rush to "Squeeze the Pickle" [PTT]
   • The front end of your transmission will be clipped

Procedural Words
A Common Language

▸ Sending technique involves the use of certain procedural words and phrases

▸ The receiving station can anticipate what is coming next if standard language is used

▸ Familiar ... phrases such as "**Figures**" (i.e., 1[one]5[five]7[seven])
▸ Or "**I spell**", (i.e., [juliet] [oscar] [hotel] [november]

▸ When first encountered, these procedures sometimes seem a bit artificial and unnecessary, but reap benefits in the end!

Procedural Words
A Common Language

▸ Procedural words have proven over a long period of time to be useful

▸ With practice the use of procedural words in your message sending, will become more natural

▸ The primary function of these words and phrases is to define the parts of the message, and to alert the receiving station about what is to follow

Procedural Words
Common Phrases

- The phrase **MESSAGE FOLLOWS** is used to alert the receiving operator that the message is about to start

- The next thing the receiving operator hears must be written down

- **BREAK** is used
  - At the end of the address
  - And again at the end of the text
  - Along with releasing the microphone
  - At the end of each sentence or phrase

Procedural Words
Using the Word Figures

- "**FIGURE**" OR "**FIGURES**" introduces a number or group of numbers

- For example, if the number 528 appears in the message, the sending operator would say:
  - "**FIGURES, FIVE TWO EIGHT**"
  - Note that the individual digits are always given "**FIVE TWO EIGHT**"
  - **NOT** "**FIVE HUNDRED AND TWENTY EIGHT**"

Procedural Words
Using the Word INITIAL

- **INITIAL** introduces a single letter. It is often an initial in a person's name

- **Also INITIAL** is used any time there is a single letter

- Always use phonetics when saying the letter

- So if a person's middle initial is "**I**", it is sent as "**INITIAL, INDIA**"

- **PERIOD** - Always use Plain Language

- If you mean to say **Period**, say **Period or Comma or Colon**

Procedural Words
Using "I SPELL"

- **I SPELL** is used to alert the receiving operator that the next thing that will be sent will be a series of letters

- If the word or group to be spelled is a pronounceable word
  - Say the word followed by **"I SPELL"** followed by the spelling
  - Spell all Technical terms, Difficult or unfamiliar words
  - So if the city name Bethesda appears in a message
  - It would be sent BETHESDA
  - I SPELL ... **BRAVO ECHO TANGO HOTEL ECHO SIERRA DELTA ALFA**
  - Repeat the word "BETHESDA"

Phonetics
Helpful Hints

- **Phonetics** may or may not be used
- The use of phonetics becomes a judgment call
  - Sending operator makes decision
  - Dependant on the quality of communications
- If the radio conditions are poor, phonetics generally work better
- If 2-meter FM stations are full quieting to each other
  - Phonetics often are not necessary
  - Can actually slow the process down
- If spelling without phonetics, deliver the letters slowly and distinctly

ITU Phonetic Alphabet

A - ALFA	**N - NOVEMBER**
B - BRAVO	**O - OSCAR**
C - CHARLIE	**P - PAPA**
D - DELTA	**Q - QUEBEC**
E - ECHO	**R - ROMEO**
F - FOXTROT	**S - SIERRA**
G - GOLF	**T - TANGO**
H - HOTEL	**U - UNIFORM**
I - INDIA	**V - VICTOR**
J - JULIET	**W - WHISKEY**
K - KILO	**X - XRAY**
L - LIMA	**Y - YANKEE**
M - MIKE	**Z - ZULU**

Procedural Words
Common Phrases

- **I SAY AGAIN** indicates that you are going to repeat the previous word, group or phrase
- It is important that the receiving operator knows what is coming
- Repeat, to avoid incorporating duplicate wording or information into the message
- Questions are indicated with the word "**QUERY**"
  - If the meaning of the message is dependent on a comma
  - Other punctuation, spell the name of the punctuation out
  - Such as **COMMA** or **PERIOD**
  - Decimal points in numbers are indicated by the word "**DECIMAL**"

Message Handling Procedures
Using the word "Check"

- Some message forms have a "**Check**" in the heading or preamble, which gives a word count
- This is helpful to determine whether the message was received correctly
- If you copy a message in five or ten word lines, it is easy to check the word count before you acknowledge receipt of the message
- You might encounter additional procedural phrases
- These might be accepted by some organizations and not by others
- For the most part they are redundant to the procedures already discussed
- In ARES we use:
  - "*ICS Procedures and Forms ONLY*"
  - The **ICS-213**

Letter and Mixed Groups
How to Send

- **LETTER GROUP** introduces a group of **two or more** letters that generally do not form a common word
- For example, **RACES** is a letter group
- Example send as **"LETTER GROUP - ROMEO ALPHA CHARLIE ECHO SIERRA"**
- **MIXED GROUP** introduces a group that is a combination of letters and numbers
- For example, Z4758RSK
- This would be sent **"MIXED GROUP - ZULU FOUR SEVEN FIVE EIGHT ROMEO SIERRA KILO"**

Summary

- Always say the individual numbers and use phonetics for the letters
- Using **I SPELL** before the **"Letter Group"** and **"Mixed Group"** accomplishes the same thing
- The term **AMATEUR CALL** is sometimes used to introduce an amateur call sign
- So if a message were addressed to K3XO, it would be stated **AMATEUR CALL - KILO THREE XRAY OSCAR**
- Amateur call signs should always be given phonetically
- **DO NOT USE ARRL RADIOGRAM FORMS... THEY ARE NOT ACCEPTED UNDER ICS**

ANY QUESTIONS ????

Now prepare to take the following message:

ARES Message Handling 101
TEST

1. When sending a message
  a) Speak as fast as possible
  b) Speak at a normal conversational pace
  c) Speak slower than your normal conversational pace with 'breaks"

2. The phonetic alphabet used in message handling is....
  a) Improvised as "B" as in BOY
  b) The NATO phonetic alphabet
  c) None of the above

3. If you need a "Fill" you…..
  a) Break into the senders transmission and say "Comment"
  b) Wait for a pause in the senders transmission and say "Fill"
  c) Wait until the sender says "break", then you say "break" and pause for acknowledgement from the sending station

4. When the sender says "Figures" what follows is….
  a) The measurements of Marilyn Monroe
  b) A mixture of "Numbers" and "Letters"
  c) "Numbers" only

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TEST

5. If the sending station says "Letter Group", what will follow?
   a) Several personal "letters"
   b) A common word
   c) A group of two or more letters that do not form a common word

6. If the sending station says "Mixed Group" what will follow?
   a) A common word
   b) "Numbers" only
   c) A combination of "Letters" and "Numbers"

7. If the sending station says "I Spell", what will follow?
   a) An attempt to hypnotize you
   b) The sender states the word (Laguna) and spells it
   c) The sender states the word (Laguna), spells it phonetically then repeats the word

ARES Message Handling 101
TEST

8. Is it ok to use shorthand, such as "Q" signs in a message?
   a) True
   b) False

9. The correct way to ask for a "Fill" is?
   a) Say again before the word (Laguna) or after the word (Laguna)
   b) Say again ALL Before the word (Laguna)
   c) Say again ALL After the word (Laguna)
   d) Say again all in between the words (Laguna) and (Dana Point)
   e) All the above

10. If the sending station says "Letter Group", what will follow?
   a) Several personal "letters"
   b) A common word
   c) A group of two or more letters that do not form a common word