



# ARES MESSAGE HANDLING TUTORIAL




## San Diego Amateur Radio Emergency Services

**ARES Monthly Meeting  
Message Handling Tutorial - 101  
November 8<sup>th</sup>, 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




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## 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

# ARES MESSAGE HANDLING TUTORIAL

## 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



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

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## 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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## ARES Message Handling 101 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

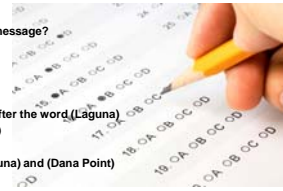


8. Is it ok to use shorthand, such as "Q" signs in a message?

- 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