

Tactical Message Training

April 2023 RACES Meeting Topic

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What and Why?

You may find yourself in a situation handling tactical message traffic.

What does this mean? How will you handle the message(s)?

This presentation will help you to:

- Identify critical message components.
- Understand how the message(s) should be handled.
- Be effective sending or receiving tactical messages.
- Avoid common radio operating mistakes.
- Overall, help you become an efficient and effective radio operator.

Tactical Message Training

An exercise or event could feature voice traffic to and from tactical teams:

- Tactical messages are immediate priority.
- Messages not like formal traffic.
- Calling station cannot talk for long.
- No word count will be included.
- Repeater or simplex, ham, FRS/GRMS.

Radio Traffic Procedure:

1. Signal check and identification.
2. Commence traffic exchange.
3. Verify information as needed.
4. Clear the channel w/ FCC call sign.

Receiving Station TO DO:

- Who is message for?
- Try to understand the message intent if you can't get it word-for-word.
- Send message to recipient rapidly.
- Respond directly if message is for you.

Sending Station TO DO:

- Know and say who the message is for.
- Plain language.
- Clear and concise.
- Confirm message received before ending.

Tactical Traffic Handling Tips

Use plain language.

When using tactical identifiers:

- "CERT Team Alpha this is LFP EOC "
- Call other station using tactical name.
- Add your FCC call sign to your last transmission in a series (Ham, GRMS).

Before you PTT ask yourself:

- Do I need to send this message?
- Who needs to hear it?
- What do I expect to be done with it?
- Does it need to be sent now?

Overall:

- Organize your thoughts before transmitting.
- Pass accurate and timely information.
- Transmit only when necessary.
- Limit transmission time.
- Avoid sensitive information over the air.
- Avoid codes and slang.
- Speak slowly.
- Pause message sending by releasing the PTT key.

Sending Messages - In General

All messages have 5 parts:

1. **Originator**
2. **Destination**
3. **Message Text**
4. Priority
5. Message Number

Parts 1, 2, and 3 are **critical** to every message whether tactical or formal.

Priority: Default to Important. Otherwise stated.

Message Number: Track per EOC Operations.

Parts 4 and/or 5 could be Date and Time.

GENERAL MESSAGE (ICS 213)		
1. Incident Name (Optional):		
2. To (Name and Position):		
3. From (Name and Position):		
4. Subject:	5. Date: Date	6. Time HHMM
7. Message:		
8. Approved by: Name: _____ Signature: _____ Position/Title: _____		
9. Reply:		
10. Replied by: Name: _____ Position/Title: _____ Signature: _____		
ICS 213	Date/Time: Date	

Sending Messages - In General

SIMPLIFIED SIGNAL REPORTING

Written	Say Quoted Phrase	
5	"LOUD AND CLEAR" No noise or distortion, every word clear.	
4	"FULLY READABLE" Some noise/distortion, every word understandable.	
3	"MOSTLY READABLE" Occasional words missed.	
2	"PARTLY READABLE" Many words missed.	
1	"NOT READABLE" Talking detected but unintelligible.	
0	"NOTHING HEARD" No signal detected.	

E	Echo	ECK OH	R	Romeo	ROW ME OH
F	Foxtrot	FOKS TROT	S	Sierra	SEE AIR RAH
G	Golf	GOLF	T	Tango	TANG GO
H	Hotel	HOH TELL	U	Uniform	YOU NEE FORM
I	India	IN DEE AH	V	Victor	VIK TAH
J	Juliet	JEW LEE ETT	W	Whiskey	WISS KEY
K	Kilo	KEY LOH	X	X-ray	ECKS RAY
L	Lima	LEE MAH	Y	Yankee	YANG KEY
M	Mike	MIKE	Z	Zulu *	ZOO LOO

* To distinguish "Z" from "C", it has been common practice to say "zed" (an old British phonetic) for "Z", like for call signs. "Zed" is shorter (one syllable vs. two for "zulu"). However, in formal traffic, the ITU: "Zulu", is correct.

Radio Message Traffic handling resources

At northshoreemc.com/races-net:

- Signal Report Terminology
- Introductory Words, Pro-words, and Operational Words
- ITU Phonetic Alphabet
- Sunday Night Script and Check Sheet

At northshoreemc.com/radio-checks:

- EOC Resources Guide
- Startup, Operate, Shutdown checklists
- Radio Operating Procedures Intro

Radio Operations Good Practices

Hold radio 2-3" from mouth.

Use a function or geographic identifier for emergencies: Tactical name; EOC name; Team name.

Acknowledge receipt of information.

Avoid arguments.

Know the frequency plan and the purpose for each channel.

Stay calm and courteous even in chaos.

If you cannot stay on frequency with focus on radio transmissions:

- Call Net Control and check out of net.
- Check in to net when ready.

Brief your relief operator on the current situation and any pending traffic or activity.

Keep on-air voice traffic to the point.

Answer questions directly.

Ensure you know who a message is for.

For More Information

Use your RACES Login at www.NorthshoreEMC.com

Operating in a Tactical Net:

https://www.scc-ares-races.org/operating_in_a_tactical_net.htm

Berkeley CERT Basic Training Radio Comms:

berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/2022-01/CERT-Basic-Training-Radio-Communications.pdf

NALCO ARES/RACES: <https://n6brk.org/>