

Mecklenburg County ARES®

Traffic Handling Part 1

This is the first of a 3 week series explaining all the aspects of passing traffic during a local emergency.

Tonight in Part 1, we will review the ICS-213 form, how to fill it out and the basics tools for traffic handling.

During part 2, next week, we will review the procedures for passing traffic, including prosigns

During part three we will have a brief review of the first two sessions and everyone staying for the entire net will be given the opportunity to practice sending traffic.

Basic tools for traffic handling

- Radio
- Message Forms and the directions to properly fill out the form.
- Pen or Pencil to fill in the message forms
- Log Book to record all of the incoming and outgoing message traffic (ICS-214).
- Training in net procedures and how to send traffic.
- Phonetic Alphabet

To give a little history, in response to 911, the Federal Government required all local, state and Federal agencies, across the entire country, to adopt a single message form. Prior to that time each town, city, state and agency had their own unique message forms. It caused a lot of confusion and wasted a lot of time converting messages from one form to another.

The standard form is now the ICS-213 form, which is available thousands of places on the net. It is also available on the Mecklenburg ARES Yahoo group. I highly recommend that you all download this form because it will be used on this Net over the next 3 weeks.

The ICS-213 form is very simple to fill out. If you have e-mail then you are already familiar with the basic setup.

1. Indecent Name (optional) –
2. To: - The name and position of the official who will receive the message
3. From: - The name and position of the official who is sending the message
4. Subject: -
5. Date:
6. Time: - Regular clock time including AM/PM
7. Message: -
8. Approved by: Name, signature and position of the person
9. Reply – Any reply to the original message
10. Replied by Name, signature and position of the person
11. Date / time: of the reply

This form has all of the info that most e-mails have, including some of the info usually automatically filled in by your computer like date and time. It does have several fields in addition to what you would normally see in an e-mail like position names and signatures.

Net Etiquette

All Traffic nets are directed nets similar to this net and all of the daily nets in our region. Each net is called by a Net Control Station, who directs all of the communication during the net. His or Her job is to make sure the net runs smoothly.

The first step when you are handling traffic is to check in to the net. We do it daily but here is a review of that procedure.

You call net control, let the repeater drop, say your call sign, your name and your location. Net control will recognize your station. If you deployed during an emergency then your location will be the name of the shelter or incident where you are assigned.

If you have traffic to send when you check in to the net then also tell net control that you have traffic, how many pieces of traffic and the destination where the traffic needs to be sent.

If you are already checked into a net and are given a message to send then call net control, let the repeater drop, give net control your call sign, your location, the number of messages to be sent and the destination(s) where the traffic needs to be sent.

Net control will call the location that will receive the traffic and ask that station to contact you directly so they may begin to copy the message(s)

Alternately net control may elect to have you and the other operator to go to a different repeater to send messages if the Net frequency is very busy. In this case, go to the other repeater send your traffic then report back into the net and confirm with Net Control that the message has been sent. It is the sending operator's responsibility to confirm with Net Control because the receiving station will be delivering the message.

Be sure when you send or receive a message to log it. You will have to give a copy of your log to the person who relieves you at the end of your shift. If you are deployed to a location where a governmental agency is in charge then you should use ICS-214 form as your log.

Also bring plenty of message forms, extra paper and writing implements when you are deployed. Along with your radio equipment they will be your chief tools.

Next week, we will briefly review today's presentation and then introduce everyone to the procedures for actually passing traffic including prosigns. Be sure to review the Phonetic alphabet it will be used heavily during the next two weeks during the ARES nets.