

Digital Training Session 2.

This is the second part in a series of training sessions on the use of digital communications in Harris County.

This part discusses *operating guidelines* for digital messages. Here are the major points:

1. Use voice for urgent messages so that immediate acknowledgement can be provided.
2. Send messages direct to the internet if it is known to be operational. Use the Telnet module in Airmail or a normal email service
3. Minimize the message size:
 - Use plain text in the message, not Rich Text or graphics
 - Keep the message concise and direct
 - If you send attachments
 - a. Save word processing files in .txt before attaching (not .doc files, etc)
 - b. Save spreadsheets as .csv files before attaching (not .xls files, etc)
 - c. If you send photos, process with a photo editor to reduce the size and definition. Then save as .jpg files not larger than 20Kb
 - Do not re-send the message history when replying unless necessary
4. Manage the size of attachments sent to you:
 - a. Limit the attachment size that Winlink will send you. Generally this should be 35Kb max. if you run Pactor3 or 1200 packet. You can set this attachment size by going to the Winlink website, then Message Access, then User Profile. If you run Pactor 1, you will want to reduce this to maybe 10 or 15 Kb.
 - b. If you want to cancel downloading of a large file, you can log on in keyboard mode then LM (List Mine) then either:
 - i. Read the messages you want, or
 - ii. Kill the message that is causing you problems
5. Use your judgment in requesting acknowledgement of receipt of digital messages. Request acknowledgement when necessary, but not for more routine messages.
6. For the availability of Telpac and digipeaters in your area, refer to whichever of the following will be best for your particular case:
 - The Winlink website [map](#) showing Telpac locations
 - The Winlink website [list](#).
 - [The findU site](#), eg nearby stations (edit the callsign)
 - The HCARES website for Telpacs, digis and PMBOs
 - Monitoring of beacons
 - Using APRS, post your position and then send a message to WLNK-1
 - a. Use letter "T" in body of message for a return message indicating the nearest Telpac station position and distance.
 - b. Use letter "M" in body of message for a return message indicating the nearest PMBO station position and distance.

- Using Airmail in Keyboard mode, connect to a local PMBO via telnet or Pactor on HF, then enter I for information.
- 7. Do not use digipeaters or nodes unless necessary. This reduces congestion and increases reliability of operation
- 8. Practice simplex operation with other digital stations using Airmail. (Paclink does not currently support direct station-to-station contact)
- 9. Refer to training material available on the HCARES website
- 10. Familiarize yourself thoroughly with your TNC. They will occasionally do unexpected things and will need to be reset.

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This ends the second session in a series on the use of digital communications in Harris County. In this session, we have seen important operating guidelines for digital messages

In the next session, we will discuss *Station Guidelines*

These digital guidelines will, and should, change regularly as more opportunities arise. If you have any comments or suggested changes, please let your EC know or email them direct to kb2wf@yahoo.com