

The ARRL Radiogram

Although the ICS-213 form is to be used in a response using ICS, if the served agency requests the use of the ARRL Radiogram, then this form is to be used. This situation occurred during the HURREX on June 6th. The City of Austin OEM sent a message to the Galveston County Emergency Management Coordinator using the ARRL Radiogram.

The ARRL Radiogram is similar to ICS-213, but there are differences between the two forms. This form can be downloaded from the ARRL website and can also be downloaded from the Harris County ARES website.

The Radiogram consists of three sections: the Header, the Text, and the Signature.

The Header contains the Message Number, the Precedence, the Handling Instructions, the Callsign of the origination station, the Check, the Place of Origin, the Time and Date Filed, and the Addressee.

The Message Number is a sequential number assigned by the originating operator. This number is used to track the message throughout its entire life cycle from origination to delivery and is unique to that message.

There are four Precedences: Routine, Welfare, Priority, and Emergency. The Routine Precedence is the most common Precedence used on NTS traffic. It denotes routine traffic such as birthday greetings. It is denoted by "Routine" on voice circuits and "R" on CW and digital circuits. The Welfare Precedence is for either a person outside a disaster area inquiring about a loved one inside the disaster area or a person inside a disaster area sending a message about their status to loved ones outside of the disaster area. A Red Cross DWI (Disaster Welfare Inquiry) is an example of the Welfare Precedence. It is denoted by "Welfare" on voice circuits and "W" on CW and digital circuits. The Priority Precedence is reserved for important time-critical messages and other traffic that is important for an emergency response, but *do not* pertain to the *immediate* safety of life of individuals. Priority is denoted by "Priority" on voice circuits and "P" on CW and digital circuits. The final Precedence is Emergency. Emergency messages are messages possessing *life or death urgency*. Emergency is always spelled out "EMERGENCY" on all circuits and *this precedence is reserved for the most extreme situations where lives are under an immediate threat*. Emergency messages are always handled first on NTS circuits, then Priority messages, then Welfare messages and finally Routine messages.

The next part of the header are the Handling Instructions. These are optional and if they are used, they are preceded by "HX". For example "HXC" means send a message back to the originating station stating the time and date of delivery. "Delivery" means that the message is delivered to the addressee. "HXE" means get a reply from the addressee and send this message back to the originating station. They can be combined. "HXCE" means both report when the message was delivered and get a response from the addressee.

The Station of Origin is the callsign of the originating station.

The Check is a count of the words in the text. It is preceded by "ARL" if ARRL Numbered Radiograms are used.

The Place of Origin is the city where the message was originated.

The Time Filed is when the the time the message was originated. This is optional and is normally reserved for time-critical messages. The time zone should be indicated as either "Z" for UTC or local time such as "CDT".

The Date Filed is the date in which the message was originated. This is required for all NTS formal messages.

The Addressee is the final part of the header. This is the addressee and normally contains the name, street address and telephone numbers of the addressee for routine messages. In messages from EOC to EOC, the name and position are mandatory but the telephone number and street address are optional.

The next section of the Radiogram is the Text. This is the actual text of the message. Words count as one word in the Check in the header. A single X -- read as "X-ray" on voice circuits and sent as "X" on CW and digital circuits -- is used as the substitute for spaces on Radiograms and counts as one word. A group of numbers, letters, or a mixture of numbers and letters counts as one word for the Check. On voice circuits the group is preceded by "Number Group", "Letter Group", or "Mixed Group". The Numbered Radiograms are preceded by "ARL" and then the number spelled out. For instance, the Numbered Radiogram for telling an operator the time and date a message was delivered is "Forty Seven" and would be sent as "ARL Forty Seven" on all circuits. The "ARL" counts as one word and the words in the number are also counted. For instance, the "ARL Forty Seven" counts as three words. The concept of Numbered Radiograms is one of the reasons that in an ICS situation, Radiograms are normally not used since they violate the principle of messages using plain English. Numbered Radiograms were developed to decrease the time necessary to pass a message when common phrases are used.

The final section is the Signature. This is the signature of the person who actually wrote the message. If this message pertains to an emergency response, the signature must contain the person actually creating the message and the title of that person.

Occasionally, Operator Notes or Op. Notes. will follow the signature. Operator Notes are used to convey handling instructions not covered by the normal Handling Instructions.

When sending a message via a voice circuit, you first read the header and conclude with "Break for Text" and listen for requests for fills. When the receiving operator says "Ready for Text", you then read the text at a speed in which you can comfortably write. I normally read five words at a time -- which is the number of words on one line of the Radiogram form -- and listen for any requests for fills. You conclude the text with "Break for Signature". Signature is sometimes abbreviated to "Sig". The receiving operation will count the number of words in the message and if this count matches the count contained in the header, this operator knows that the proper number of words have been copied. When the receiving operator says "Ready for Signature", read the signature and say either "Break, no more" if there are no more messages to be sent to this operator or "Break, (number of remaining messages) more" if there are more messages to be sent to this operator. The station receiving may or may not be the final station in the chain. When the receiving operator is satisfied that the message has been copied perfectly, this operator will say "I acknowledge message number" and then

the message number.

ARRL Publication FSD-3 contains all the Numbered Radiograms and FSD-218 contains the Precedences, the procedural signs and phrases, and the CW Q-Signals. These are available on the ARRL website or on the Harris County ARES website.