

Part II - The Preamble

| Number | Precedence | HX | Orig Stn | Check | Place | Time | Date |
|--------|------------|----|----------|-------|-------|------|------|
| | | | | | | | |

The preamble or “header” is the section of the message form where all the administrative details of the message are recorded. There are eight sections or “blocks” in the preamble. Two of them, “time filed” and “handling instructions,” are optional for most messages.

Block #1 - Message Number: This is any number assigned by the station that first puts the message into written format. Essentially a message serial number.

Block #2 - Precedence: The precedence tells everyone the relative urgency of a message. There are four levels of precedence: Routine, Welfare, Priority, and EMERGENCY.

Routine – abbreviated with the letter “R.” Most Amateur traffic is handled using this precedence □ it is for all traffic that does not meet the requirements for a higher precedence. In a disaster situation, routine messages are seldom sent.

Welfare – abbreviated as “W.” Used for an inquiry as to the health and welfare of an individual in a disaster area, or a message from a disaster victim to friends or family.

Priority – abbreviated as “P.” For important messages with a time limit; official messages not covered by the EMERGENCY precedence or a notification of death or injury in a disaster area. This precedence is usually associated with official traffic to, from, or related to a disaster area.

EMERGENCY – there is no abbreviation for the word EMERGENCY is always spelled out. Use this for any message having life or death urgency. This includes official messages of welfare agencies requesting critical supplies or assistance during emergencies, or other official instructions to provide aid or relief in a disaster area. The use of this precedence should generally be limited to traffic originated and signed by authorized agency officials. *Due to the lack of privacy on radio, EMERGENCY messages should only be sent via Amateur Radio when regular communication facilities are unavailable.*

Block #3 - Handling Instructions: This is an optional field used at the discretion of the originating station. The seven standard HX pro-signs are listed below.

Block #4 - Station of Origin: This is the FCC call sign of the first ham that put the message into written format.

Block #5 - The Check: The check is the number of words in the text section only. Include any “periods” (written as “X,” spoken as “X-Ray”).

Block #6 - Place of Origin: This is the community or building where the originator of the message is located, whether ham or not. This is not the location of the ham that first handled the message, which is listed in Block 4, “Station of Origin.”

Block #7 - Time Filed: This is an optional field unless “Handling Instruction Bravo” (HXB) is used. HXB means “cancel if not delivered within X hours of filing time.” Completing the time field is generally recommended. During emergencies, use “local time” with indicators such as CST or CDT to eliminate confusion by emergency management personnel.

Block #8 - Date: This is the date the message was first placed into the traffic system. Be sure to use the same date as the time zone indicated in Block 7.

Handling Instructions

HXA -- (Followed by number.) “Collect” telephone delivery authorized by addressee within (X) miles. If no number is sent, authorization is unlimited.

HXB -- (Followed by number.) Cancel message if not delivered within (X) hours of filing time; service (notify) originating station.

HXC -- Report date and “time of delivery” (TOD) to originating station.

HXD – Report to originating station the identity of the station who delivered the message, plus date, time and method of delivery. Also, each station to report identity of station to which relayed, plus date and time.

HXE -- Delivering station to get and send reply from addressee.

HXF -- (Followed by date in numbers.) Hold delivery until (specify date).

HXG -- Delivery by mail or telephone - toll call not required. If toll or other expense involved, cancel message, and send service message to originating station.

If more than one HX pro-sign is used, they can be combined like this: HXAC. However, if numbers are used the HX must be repeated each time. On voice, use phonetics for the letter or letters following the HX to ensure accuracy, as in “HX Alpha.”

Part III – Message Elements

Message Address, Text, and Signature

The Address

The Address section of the formal written traffic format that contains the information needed to deliver the message. Formal traffic to be delivered within the emergency net should contain the name of the individual receiving the message along with some identification of their location. For example, a shelter manager needs to send information to a manager at the EOC. The address of the message would include the following;
To: Joe Bagodonuts

Supply Coordinator

Red Cross Minneapolis Operations Center

This address contains all the information a station would need to call the net control station (NECOS) and list “1 Priority for Red Cross Minneapolis Operation Center.” The NECOS would then route the traffic to the station in the net located at the Red Cross Minneapolis Operation Center. The majority of formal emergency traffic is delivered verbally directly to the addressee of their designated representative.

Formal message traffic, usually health and welfare messages, addressed to individuals outside the emergency net would be routed to the NTS (National Traffic System) through a liaison station and be delivered to the addressee. Because Health and Welfare messages are generally delivered by telephone the address information must include an accurate telephone number. Remember in an emergency situation, health and welfare traffic is handles only when there is no higher priority traffic (EMERGENCY or priority precedence.)

Message Text

The Text is the next portion of the formal written traffic format we’ll examine. The text follows the Address and is preceded by the proword BREAK. The message text must be brief and accurately convey the intent of the individual originating the message. The message text is limited to a maximum of 25 words, including punctuation. The message text is ended with the proword BREAK. All the words, numbers, and punctuation between the two prowords BREAK are considered the message text. The Check is a count of words, numbers, and punctuation between the “BREAKS”.

The information for the message text generally comes in the form of a request from a Served Agency official. For example, the shelter manager might stick his head in the door while going past and say, “We are getting low on generator fuel. Better get another tank set up for delivery. Oh, are they sending you some help?”

That is sure important information but not in a form you could transmit to another station. Your next step is to compose a message that is short and to the point. “Send gas” would be short but you might want to include a little more information! Once you have written the message text on a radiogram form you would run it by the manager for his okay.

The following is an example of a message text;

BREAK
NEED TWO OPERATORS AND TEN
GALLONS GENERATOR FUEL XRAY ADVISE
DELIVERY TIME
BREAK

This sample message would have a check of 12. Notice the proword XRAY is used to represent the punctuation in the text and is counted in the check.

Signature

The signature is an optional part of the message. However, during emergencies, requests for material or personnel generally require the signature of the official in charge. An example would be a shelter manager’s

request for additional supplies due to an increase in the number of shelter clients. The signature would most likely contain the individual's title as well. For example; Fernando Lamas, Dry Gulch Shelter Manager. This example signature would be transmitted after the prowords BREAK at the end of the text. You would transmit; "BREAK signed Fernando Lamas, Dry Gulch Shelter Manager, BREAK, No More, OVER. The prowords BREAK after the signer's title marks the end of the message. The phrase "No More OVER" tells the receiving station that the entire message has been transmitted and the sending station is waiting for the receiver to ROGER the message or ask for fills.

Part IV - Message Text

ARL Emergency Text Messages

ARRL Numbered Radiograms are a standardized list of often-used phrases. Each phrase on the list is assigned a number. There are two groups: Group One is for emergency relief and consists of 26 phrases numbered consecutively from "ONE" to "TWENTY SIX," and preceded by the letters "ARL." For example, "ARL SIX" means "will contact you as soon as possible."

Group Two contains 21 routine messages, including number "FORTY SIX" and from "FIFTY" through "SIXTY NINE." Earlier printed versions of this list do not contain the latest additions. For the complete list, see <http://www.arrl.org/FandES/field/forms/fsd3.pdf>

When using numbered radiograms, the letters "ARL" are placed in the "check" block of the preamble, just prior to the number indicating the word count, as in "ARL7."

In the text of the message, the numbered radiogram is inserted by using the letters "ARL" as one word, followed by the number written out in text, not numerals. For example: "ARL FIFTY SIX."

It is important to spell out the numbers letter by letter when sending using voice. This allows the receiving station to correctly copy what is being sent, and not inadvertently write the figures out as "FIVE SIX" instead of "FIFTY SIX." "ARL FIFTY SIX" is counted as three words for the "check" block. Two common receiving errors are to write "ARL-56" and count it as one word, or "ARL 56" and count it as two words.

Some numbered messages require a "fill in the blank" word in order to make sense. Here are two examples:

ARL SIXTY TWO: Greetings and best wishes to you for a pleasant _____ holiday season.

ARL SIXTY FOUR: Arrived safely at _____.

ARL Text Messages Group 1

Emergency/priority messages originating from official sources must carry the signature of the originating official.

ONE--Everyone safe here. Please don't worry.

TWO--Coming home as soon as possible.

THREE--Am in ____ hospital. Receiving excellent care and recovering fine.

FOUR--Only slight property damage here. Do not be concerned about disaster reports.

FIVE--Am moving to new location. Send no further mail or communication. Will inform you of new address when relocated.

SIX--Will contact you as soon as possible.

SEVEN--Please reply by Amateur Radio through the amateur delivering this message. This is a free public service.

EIGHT--Need additional _____ mobile or portable equipment for immediate emergency use.

NINE--Additional _____ radio operators needed to assist with emergency at this location.

TEN--Please contact _____. Advise to standby and provide further emergency information, instructions or assistance.

ELEVEN--Establish Amateur Radio emergency communications with _____ on _____ MHz.

TWELVE--Anxious to hear from you. No word in some time. Please contact me as soon as possible.

THIRTEEN--Medical emergency situation exits here.

FOURTEEN--Situation here becoming critical. Losses and damage from ____ increasing.

FIFTEEN--Please advise your condition and what help is needed.

SIXTEEN--Property damage very severe in this area.

SEVENTEEN--REACT communications services also available. Establish REACT communication with _____ on channel _____.

EIGHTEEN--Please contact me as soon as possible at _____.
NINETEEN--Request health and welfare report on_____. (State name, address and telephone number.)
TWENTY--Temporarily stranded. Will need some assistance. Please contact me at _____.
TWENTY ONE--Search and Rescue assistance is needed by local authorities here.Advise availability.
TWENTY TWO--Need accurate information on the extent and type of conditions now existing at your location. Please furnish this information and reply without delay.
TWENTY THREE--Report at once the accessibility and best way to reach your location.
TWENTY FOUR--Evacuation of residents from this area urgently needed. Advise plans for help.
TWENTY FIVE--Furnish as soon as possible the weather conditions at your location.
TWENTY SIX--Help and care for evacuation of sick and injured from this location needed at once.

Part V - Message Text

ARRL Numbered Radiograms

ARRL Numbered Radiograms are a standardized list of often-used phrases. Each phrase on the list is assigned a number. There are two groups of ARL text messages. Group Two contains 21 routine messages, including number "FORTY SIX" and from "FIFTY" through "SIXTY NINE." For the complete list, see <http://www.arrl.org/FandES/field/forms/fsd3.pdf>

When using numbered radiograms, the letters "ARL" are placed in the "check" block of the preamble, just prior to the number indicating the word count, as in "ARL7."

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Some numbered messages require a "fill in the blank" word in order to make sense. Here are two examples:

ARL SIXTY TWO: Greetings and best wishes to you for a pleasant _____ holiday season.

ARL SIXTY FOUR: Arrived safely at _____.

ARL Text Messages Group 2

FORTY SIX--Greetings on your birthday and best wishes for many more to come.

FIFTY--Greetings by Amateur Radio.

FIFTY ONE--Greetings by Amateur Radio. This message is sent as a free public service by ham radio operators at _____. Am having a wonderful time.

FIFTY TWO--Really enjoyed being with you. Looking forward to getting together again.

FIFTY THREE--Received your _____. It's appreciated; many thanks.

FIFTY FOUR--Many thanks for your good wishes.

FIFTY FIVE--Good news is always welcome. Very delighted to hear about yours.

FIFTY SIX--Congratulations on your _____, a most worthy and deserved achievement.

FIFTY SEVEN--Wish we could be together.

FIFTY EIGHT--Have a wonderful time. Let us know when you return.

FIFTY NINE--Congratulations on the new arrival. Hope mother and child are well.

SIXTY--Wishing you the best of everything on _____.

SIXTY ONE--Wishing you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

SIXTY TWO--Greetings and best wishes to you for a pleasant _____ holiday season.

SIXTY THREE--Victory or defeat, our best wishes are with you. Hope you win.

SIXTY FOUR--Arrived safely at _____.

SIXTY FIVE--Arriving _____ on _____. Please arrange to meet me there.

SIXTY SIX--DX QSLs are on hand for you at the _____ QSL Bureau. Send _____ self addressed envelopes.

SIXTY SEVEN--Your message number _____ undeliverable because of _____. Please advise.

SIXTY EIGHT--Sorry to hear you are ill. Best wishes for a speedy recovery.

SIXTY NINE--Welcome to the _____. We are glad to have you with us and hope you will enjoy the fun and fellowship of the organization.

The Importance of the Signature

During an emergency, the messages you handle can easily contain requests for expensive supplies that have a very limited "shelf life" (such as blood for an aid station), or for agencies that will only respond to authorized requests (i.e.: for medevac helicopters). For this reason, it is critical that you include the signature and title of the sender in every message.

Part VI - Sending the Message

Transmitting the radiogram for the first time applies both to originated radiograms and radiograms that have been received for relay. Let's assume you have found a station to receive your radiogram, either by your own efforts to find one or as a result of having been told by a net control station to transmit it to WA0XCQ. The net control station would direct the distribution of traffic by saying, "KC0XYZ, call WA0XCQ and pass your one routine Shakopee." The **station being called** answers first, "This is WA0XCQ ready to copy." You then proceed to transmit your message. An example would go something like this: "Message Follows, number one five, routine, KC0XYZ, eight, Burnsville, Minnesota, two one five one CST, October three one. Mrs. Judy Smith, one nine zero eight Moon Street Northeast, Shakopee, Minnesota, 55394, telephone nine five two two nine eight six four zero eight. BREAK. Mother and Dad arrived home safely Sunday afternoon. Break. Uncle George. BREAK, no more"..

Phone operators use the proword "break" for separation of the address and signature from the text. It is incorrect procedure to use the words "going to" preceding the address and "break and the text" preceding the text.

Radiograms should be sent by voice, not read. That is, reading puts emphasis on certain syllables and words, and this means de-emphasis of others. In transmitting a radiogram by voice, no word or syllable should be de-emphasized. Letting your voice fall at the end of a sentence as would be done in reading is poor practice in voice traffic work, as is letting your voice fall for unaccented syllables. You are not a broadcast announcer. Keep in mind that the receiving operator must put down what you transmit, completely and accurately.

Avoid giving dates as "four, twelve, eighty-eight." Just say "April twelve" and forget the year. (We hope no message will be over a year old! Also, don't say "today's date." Spell all difficult or unusual words (e.g., "Ferrier, I spell F-E-R-R-I-E-R"). If the word is very difficult, unusual, or a group of letters not forming a word, spell it out using ITU phonetics (e.g. "NCOIC, I spell: November, Charlie, Oscar, India, Charlie.") Using phonetics excessively is poor procedure. Usually simply spelling the word is sufficient.

Speak slowly enough to allow the receiving station time to copy the message word for word. If you think you are going too slowly, you should probably slow down even more. Try printing the message yourself as you transmit the information. This, along with on-the-air practice, should give you a feel for the proper speed.

MESSAGE FOLLOWS

15 Routine KC0XYC 8 Burnsville, MN 2151CST Oct 31

Mrs. Judy Smith

1908 Moon Street N.E.

Shakopee MN 55394

952 298 6408

BREAK

Mother and Dad arrived home

Safely Sunday afternoon

BREAK

Uncle George

BREAK NO MORE

OVER

Part VII - Delivering the Message

Delivering the Message

Now that we have successfully copied the message the most important step remains – delivering the information.

Before you grab the phone or trot down the hall, you have a little more work to do.

You need to read the message and make sure the information you are going to deliver is in plain English. The easiest way to do this is pretend you are delivering the message to someone who has absolutely NO knowledge of amateur radio.

Let's assume you have just rogered the following message:

| THE AMERICAN RADIO RELAY LEAGUE | | | | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|------|-----------------------------|--|------------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------|
| RADIOGRAM | | | | | | | |
| VIA AMATEUR RADIO | | | | | | | |
| NUMBER 0146 | PRECEDENCE WELFARE | HW | STATION OF ORIGIN KDOSFE | CHECK ARL4 | PLACE OF ORIGIN TWMSTER, MN. | TIME FILED 1632 CDT | DATE 22JUL09 |
| TO Grandma Reisen 638 Shady Ave Henfruit MN 52846 | | | | | THIS RADIO MESSAGE WAS RECEIVED AT | | |
| TELEPHONE NUMBER 312-729-3874 | | | | | AMATEUR STATION _____ PHONE _____ | | |
| _____ | | | | | NAME _____ | | |
| _____ | | | | | STREET ADDRESS _____ | | |
| _____ | | | | | CITY AND STATE _____ | | |
| _____ | | | | | _____ | | |
| _____ | | | | | _____ | | |
| _____ | | | | | _____ | | |
| Mary and Chet | | | | | _____ | | |
| REC'D | | | | SENT TO | | | |
| FROM | DATE | TIME | TO | DATE | TIME | | |
| <small>THIS MESSAGE WAS TRANSMITTED BY THE STATION IN THE MANNER INDICATED. THE RADIO RELAY LEAGUE IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CONTENTS OF THIS MESSAGE. THE RADIO RELAY LEAGUE IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CONTENTS OF THIS MESSAGE. THE RADIO RELAY LEAGUE IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CONTENTS OF THIS MESSAGE.</small> | | | | <small>THE AMERICAN RADIO RELAY LEAGUE, INC. IS THE NATIONAL AMATEUR SOCIETY OF LICENSED RADIO AMATEURS. IT IS A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION. THE PURPOSE OF THE LEAGUE IS TO PROMOTE THE INTERESTS OF AMATEUR RADIO AND TO PROVIDE A SERVICE TO THE PUBLIC. THE LEAGUE IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CONTENTS OF THIS MESSAGE.</small> | | | |
| Form: Copyright 1995, American Radio Relay League. Used with permission | | | | | | | |

Grandma is worried about her grandkids, Mary and Chet, who are camping in a part of the state hit by a recent storm. She could care less if you called on the phone and told her that there is a message from Mary and Chet. The message is “ARL ONE and ARL TWO”! If you are lucky all Grandma would do is slam the phone in your ear!

Now, let's deliver the message professionally and quickly. Pick up the phone and call Grandma Reisen. When someone answers, tell them who you are and ask for the adee, “My name is Bob. I am an amateur radio operator. I have a message for Grandma Reisen. Is she available?”

Once you are sure you have the adee on the phone, deliver the text of the message: Mary and Chet say, “Everyone is safe here, please don't worry. Coming home soon.”

If the message includes handling instructions, such as reply requested, make sure you follow up with Grandma while you have her on the phone.

Grandma may have some questions, such as Where were the kids? When did they send the message? How did you get the message? When are they coming home?

You have the answers to most of the questions in the message preamble: Origin, Date, and Time. You don't have answers to some of Grandma's questions but supply the information you have.

You are not quite finished with delivering this message when you hang up the phone with Grandma. You should note on the message the date and time the message was delivered and the name (or callsign) of the delivering operator. Then place the message in the station's message file.

The procedure is similar within an EOC or served agency site. First, and most important, make sure you have an accurate message before you roger the traffic.

Next, if you didn't print, or type, a hardcopy of the message as you copied the traffic, write the information now on the forms used by the served agency. Make sure your printing is legible. There is zero room for error in transcription. Proofread your hardcopy of the message. Better yet, have your logger proof the message.

Once you have an accurate hardcopy of the message, use the delivery system specified by the served agency. If the message carries an EMERGENCY priority you will want to make delivery as rapidly as possible. You might hand-carry EMERGENCY traffic to the addressee.

That covers the high points of message delivery. Remember our goal as emergency communicators is accurate, rapid information handling for our served agency.