

CHAPTER 1 - THE ARRL MESSAGE FORMAT

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1.0 THE ARRL MESSAGE FORMAT

The standard ARRL message format is used to send written amateur radio messages throughout the National Traffic System (ARRL NTS) and independent nets. The format is standardized in order to provide a uniform means of originating, handling, and tracking messages.

A message is considered a “formal” radiogram when it is completed with a correctly formatted preamble, address, text and signature. Stations in the system are not obligated to handle incomplete or improperly formatted messages.

This chapter presents the message format and how to fill out the message form. The ARRL standard message consists of four main parts:

1. PREAMBLE: Information to track the message;
2. ADDRESS: Name and address of the intended recipient;
(with optional delivery “Op Note”);
3. TEXT: The message information; and
4. SIGNATURE: The party for whom the message was originated;
(with optional reply “Op Note”).

RECORDS: These four parts are recorded on the message form along with information records about how the message was originated, received, sent or delivered. The handling operator’s duties include entering these records.

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1.0.1 EXAMPLE BLANK FORM

Below is an example form fabricated for this manual. The ORIG and DLVD blocks at the bottom were added here for demonstration of records. Official ARRL message packs are available from the ARRL, Newington, CT, 06111, and: <<http://www.arrl.org/FandES/field/forms/>>.

ARRL RADIOGRAM FORMAT:

NR	PREC	HX__	STN ORIG	CK	PLACE OF ORIG	TIME FILED	MON DY																												
(2) TO					THIS RADIO MESSAGE WAS RECEIVED AT:(9) AMATEUR STATION _____ TEL _____ NAME _____ STREET ADDRESS _____ CITY,STATE,ZIP _____																														
TEL OP NOTE (2.4) TXT					<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 15%; border-bottom: 1px solid black;"></td> <td style="width: 15%; border-bottom: 1px solid black;"></td> <td style="width: 15%; border-bottom: 1px solid black;"></td> <td style="width: 15%; border-bottom: 1px solid black;"></td> <td style="width: 15%; border-bottom: 1px solid black;"></td> <td style="width: 15%; border-bottom: 1px solid black;"></td> <td style="width: 15%; border-bottom: 1px solid black;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border-bottom: 1px solid black;"></td> <td style="border-bottom: 1px solid black;"></td> <td style="border-bottom: 1px solid black;"></td> <td style="border-bottom: 1px solid black;"></td> <td style="border-bottom: 1px solid black;"></td> <td style="border-bottom: 1px solid black;"></td> <td style="border-bottom: 1px solid black;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border-bottom: 1px solid black;"></td> <td style="border-bottom: 1px solid black;"></td> <td style="border-bottom: 1px solid black;"></td> <td style="border-bottom: 1px solid black;"></td> <td style="border-bottom: 1px solid black;"></td> <td style="border-bottom: 1px solid black;"></td> <td style="border-bottom: 1px solid black;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border-bottom: 1px solid black;"></td> <td style="border-bottom: 1px solid black;"></td> <td style="border-bottom: 1px solid black;"></td> <td style="border-bottom: 1px solid black;"></td> <td style="border-bottom: 1px solid black;"></td> <td style="border-bottom: 1px solid black;"></td> <td style="border-bottom: 1px solid black;"></td> </tr> </table>																														
SIG (4)			OP NOTE (4.2)																																
RCVD FROM (5)		NET	DATE/TIME		SENT TO (6)	NET	DATE/TIME																												
(7) ORIG - FROM - DATE/TIME Name Addr City TEL					(8) DLVD - TO - DATE/TIME Name Addr City TEL																														

Experienced traffic handlers can write and handle messages on plain paper, five or ten to a page. Get to know the format well enough to be able to do likewise.

1.0.2 EXAMPLE MESSAGE

In order to discuss and illustrate the various parts of the message, the following example message will be used. This abbreviated presentation form will be used often throughout this manual, less the form lines, with the preamble, address, text, and signature each indented.

1 R HXE W1AW 12 NEWINGTON CT 1830Z JUL 1 DONALD R SMITH 164 EAST SIXTH AVE RIVER CITY MD 00789 301 555 3470 THANKS FOR MESSAGE X HOPE TO SEE YOU AT HAMFEST X 73 DIANA	(1. PREAMBLE) (2. ADDRESSEE) (ADDRESS) (CITY/ST/ZIP) (TEL) (3. TEXT) (TEXT) (TEXT) (4. SIGNATURE)
--	---

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This message is entered on the form below and the form blocks are numbered for reference. Preamble numbers in brackets [] refer to sections 1.1.#, and part (block) numbers in paren. () refer to sections 1.#. in the text below. This form was created for this manual.

PREAMBLE (1)																						
[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]	[6]	[7]	[8]															
NR 1	PREC R	HX__ HXE	STN ORIG W1AW	CK 12	PLACE OF ORIG NEWINGTON CT	TIME FILED 1830Z	MON DY JUL 1															
(2) TO DONALD R SMITH 164 EAST SIXTH AVE RIVER CITY MD 00789					THIS RADIO MESSAGE WAS RECEIVED AT:(9) AMATEUR STATION _____ TEL _____ NAME _____ STREET ADDRESS _____ CITY,STATE,ZIP _____																	
TEL 301 555 3470																						
OP NOTE (2.4)																						
TXT (3)																						
<table border="0"> <tr> <td>THANKS</td> <td>FOR</td> <td>MESSAGE</td> <td>X</td> <td>HOPE</td> </tr> <tr> <td>TO</td> <td>SEE</td> <td>YOU</td> <td>AT</td> <td>HAMFEST</td> </tr> <tr> <td>X</td> <td>73</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>								THANKS	FOR	MESSAGE	X	HOPE	TO	SEE	YOU	AT	HAMFEST	X	73			
THANKS	FOR	MESSAGE	X	HOPE																		
TO	SEE	YOU	AT	HAMFEST																		
X	73																					
SIG (4) DIANA OP NOTE (4.2)																						
RCVD FROM (5) WD3W		NET MEPN	DATE/TIME 012215Z JUL 91		SENT TO (6) KD3JK	NET MDD	DATE/TIME 012308Z JUL 91															
(7) ORIG - FROM - DATE/TIME Name Addr City TEL					(8) DLVD - TO - DATE/TIME Name Addr City TEL																	

NOTE: The ARRL radiogram consists of GROUPS in the Preamble, Address and its Op Note, Text, and Signature and its Op Note. These groups consist ONLY of three possible character types: LETTERS (all upper case), FIGURES, and/or SLASHES (/). The slash is used to separate characters within a group, but may be the first or last character if needed. It is not usually used as a group by itself. (Message records may in any form.)

1.1 PREAMBLE PART

All messages must have a preamble. The preamble of the message contains information about the message necessary to keep track of it as it passes through the amateur system.

The parts of the preamble, except for the check as noted later, are NOT changed by any station relaying or delivering the message. They are permanent parts of the message created by the station of origin and must remain with the message all the way to the delivery point. Preamble information is used to service undeliverable messages and to generate replies to specific handling instructions.

The HANDLING INSTRUCTIONS, [HX__], and TIME FILED, [TIME], are OPTIONAL, chosen by the station of origin based on the need for their inclusion (see sections 1.1.3 and 1.1.7).

The parts of the PREAMBLE are as follows:

NR 1	PREC 2	[HX] 3	STN-ORIG 4	CK 5	PLACE-OF-ORIG 6	[TIME-FILED] 7	MON 8	DAY 9
---------	-----------	-----------	---------------	---------	--------------------	-------------------	----------	----------

Each of these parts of the preamble are discussed in the following paragraphs (numbered according to their position).

1.1.1 MESSAGE NUMBER, #

NR 1	PREC	[HX]	STN-ORIG	CK	PLACE-OF-ORIG	[TIME-FILED]	MON	DAY
---------	------	------	----------	----	---------------	--------------	-----	-----

The message number is selected by the station originating the message and it must be on all messages. It stays with the message all the way to the point of delivery. The delivering station may need to reply to the station of origin and refer to this number.

Use number digits only, no letters, leading zeros, or dashes. Numbers are usually begun with 1 at the start of a year or month at the pleasure of the originating station.

NOTE: If the message is a SERVICE message, place letters SVC in front of message number as a leading group (infrequently used currently). Precedence is kept the same as in the message being serviced. (See the section on creating service messages.)

1.1.2 MESSAGE PRECEDENCE, PREC.

NR	PREC 2	[HX]	STN-ORIG	CK	PLACE-OF-ORIG	[TIME-FILED]	MON	DAY
----	-----------	------	----------	----	---------------	--------------	-----	-----

Letter(s) used to indicate the precedence of the message, and must be on all messages. See the latest Precedence full definitions from ARRL (From ARRL FSD-3). Messages are handled in the order of precedence as much as possible as follows;

*** PRECEDENCES (ARRL FSD-3, 2/94)**

EMERGENCY (Spelled out on form.):

Any message having life and death urgency to any person or group of persons, which is transmitted by Amateur Radio in the absence of regular commercial facilities. This includes official messages of welfare agencies during emergencies requesting supplies, materials or instructions vital to relief of stricken populace in emergency areas. During normal times, it will be very rare. On CW/RTTY, this designation will always be spelled out. When in doubt, do not use it.

PRIORITY (P):

Use abbreviation P on CW/RTTY. This classification is for a) important messages having a specific time limit, b) official messages not covered in the emergency category, c) press dispatches and emergency related traffic not of the utmost urgency, d) notice of death or injury in a disaster area, personal or official.

WELFARE (W):

This classification, abbreviated as W on CW/RTTY, refers to either an inquiry as to the health and welfare of an individual in the disaster area or an advisory from the disaster area that indicates all is well. Welfare traffic is handled only after all emergency and priority traffic is cleared. The Red Cross equivalent to an incoming Welfare message is DWI (Disaster Welfare Inquiry).

ROUTINE (R):

Most traffic in normal times will bear this designation. In disaster situations, traffic labeled Routine (R on CW/RTTY) should be handled last, or not at all when circuits are busy with higher precedence traffic.

Notes: These precedences are not meant to prohibit handling lower level traffic until all higher levels are passed. Common sense dictates handling higher precedence traffic before lower when possible and/or outlets are available.

*** EMERGENCY:** Emergency is always spelled out in the preamble. Means other than Amateur Radio should be included in the delivery options. EMERGENCY messages have immediate urgency. They should take priority over any other activity and should be passed by the best means available with the cooperation of all stations.

*** EXERCISE MESSAGES:** Messages in the ARRL format passed for test and exercise purposes may be given a precedence preceded by the word "TEST", as in "TEST R", "TEST P", "TEST W", or "TEST EMERGENCY". It is customary to indicate within the text of such messages the words "TEST MESSAGE", or "EXERCISE". Using "EXERCISE" as the first and last groups of the text helps alert listeners to the nature of the content to avoid undue alarm.

In some exercises, the life of the message may be terminated when the exercise period is terminated, i.e., any such messages are not handled after the exercise. Consult with the ARES/RACES/NTS group conducting the test to determine if such messages should be filed, handled and delivered afterwards to permit a full evaluation of the exercise.

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* **SERVICE MESSAGES:** The precedence of a SVC message should be the same as that of the message being serviced. SVC ahead of a message number indicates a service message sent between stations relative to message handling, or delivery. Since they affect timely delivery, they are handled before routine messages. SVC is not a precedence (See section 1.11).

1.1.3 HANDLING INSTRUCTIONS, [HX], OPTIONAL

NR	PREC	[HX] 3	STN-ORIG	CK	PLACE-OF-ORIG	[TIME-FILED]	MON	DAY
----	------	-----------	----------	----	---------------	--------------	-----	-----

OPTIONAL. Do not use handling instructions unless a particular need is present. Handling instructions are used to instruct the relaying and/or delivering operator to handle the message according to the following codes (Refer to ARRL CD 218, pink card.). If used, handling instructions must stay with the message to the point of delivery.

NOTE: Numbers following the letters are appended without a space.

* **HANDLING INSTRUCTIONS** (ARRL, FSD-218 2/91)

HXA__ (Followed by number.) Collect landline delivery authorized by addressee within [...] miles, (If no number, authorization is unlimited.).

HXB__ (Followed by number.) Cancel message if not delivered within [...] hours of filing time; service originating station.

HXC Report date and time of delivery of the message back to the originating station.

HXD Report to originating station the identity of station from which received, plus date and time. Report identity of station to which relayed, plus date and time, or if delivered, report date and time and method of delivery (by service message).

HXE Delivering station get reply from addressee, originate message back.

HXF__ (Followed by a number.) Hold delivery until [date].

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

* Compliance with these instructions is mandatory. Reports may be considered service messages.

* **MORE THAN ONE HX CODE MAY BE USED.** If more than one code is used, they may be combined provided no numbers are to be inserted, otherwise the HX should be repeated, thus: NR 27 R HXAC W1AW..., or, NR 27 R HXA50 HXC W1AW...(etc.).

1.1.4 STATION OF ORIGIN

NR	PREC	[HX] 4	STN-ORIG	CK	PLACE-OF-ORIG	[TIME-FILED]	MON	DAY
----	------	-----------	----------	----	---------------	--------------	-----	-----

The call sign of the amateur station originating (creating) the message for first introduction into the amateur system is the station of origin and must be on all messages. This call sign must stay with the message to the point of delivery. Service messages go to this station.

It is wise for stations not at their call book address to include an OP NOTE about how to send service messages or replies (See the sections on delivering and servicing messages.).

1.1.5 CHECK, CK

NR	PREC	[HX]	STN-ORIG	CK 5	PLACE-OF-ORIG	[TIME-FILED]	MON	DAY
----	------	------	----------	---------	---------------	--------------	-----	-----

The check is the number of word "groups" in the text of the message and must be used on all messages. This number is used by operators to verify that the text has been copied with the correct number of groups. See the TEXT section 1.3.4 for information about how to count word groups for computing the check. There are two ways to enter the check in the preamble:

1) 1 R HXE W1AW 12 NEWINGTON CT 1830Z JUL 1. (check is 12)

The check is entered as the number of word groups in the text if there are NO ARRL NUMBERED RADIOGRAMS in the text.

2) 1 R HXE W1AW ARL 12 NEWINGTON CT 1830Z JUL 1. (check is ARL 12)

The check is preceded by the letters "ARL" if the text includes one or more ARRL NUMBERED RADIOGRAMS (See attached list.). Note the space between "ARL" and "12".

The use of "ARL" in the check alerts the receiving operator to expect ARRL NUMBERED RADIOGRAM(s) in the text.

* **CHECK ERRORS:** This subject is covered in the "Receiving Messages" sections of chapters 2 and 3. The original check is never changed. A correction may be appended with "/".

As mentioned earlier, the preamble of a message is created by the originator and is not to be changed by other stations. If a discrepancy is found between the check and the word count of a message by relaying stations, every attempt should be made to verify that the correct text and check has been transmitted and received. This is your responsibility as an operator.

If an error can not be resolved, it is customary to modify the check in the preamble by preserving the original check, and noting the corrected value by appending it with a "/", as in 13/12. This is read as "one three corrected to one two" when transmitting on VOICE, or "13/12" on CW.

THE TEXT OR CHECK IS NOT ALTERED TO FORCE AGREEMENT!

1.1.6 PLACE OF ORIGIN

NR	PREC	[HX]	STN-ORIG	CK 6	PLACE-OF-ORIG	[TIME-FILED]	MON	DAY
----	------	------	----------	---------	---------------	--------------	-----	-----

The PLACE OF ORIGIN is the location (city and state) of the party for whom the message is created, not necessarily the location of the station of origin. For example, if the station of origin is in Baltimore creating a message for a person in Ellicott City, the PLACE OF ORIGIN would be Ellicott City in the preamble. The PLACE OF ORIGIN relates to the signature and should make sense to the addressee as the place the signing party is located. It must stay with the message to the point of delivery.

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The state is given by the US standard two letter code as in "BALTIMORE MD", or "CHICAGO IL". Note that no punctuation is used. (State abbreviations are shown in the MPG-R routing tables.)

Undeliverable messages are serviced back to the station of origin, not the place of origin (See the section on Originating Service Messages.).

If the message addressee wishes to send a reply message, the message goes back to the place of origin, and the addressee should supply the full address for such replies. If it is not available, the station of origin is the next best choice, assuming origination records are kept.

The originating station should ask the person for whom the message is originated about replies. If it is unlikely that the addressee will know the reply address, include a full address for reply as part of the signature.

1.1.7 TIME FILED, [TIME], OPTIONAL

NR	PREC	[HX]	STN-ORIG	CK	PLACE-OF-ORIG	[TIME-FILED] 7	MON	DAY
----	------	------	----------	----	---------------	-------------------	-----	-----

The OPTIONAL "TIME FILED" is used only when filing time has some importance relative to the precedence, handling instructions, or meaning in the text. TIME FILED is the time when the message is created by the station of origin. The time figures are in the 24-hour format followed by the letter "Z" to denote UTC time, or local time, as in "0215Z" or "2215EDT". It is acceptable to specify local time as "L", as in 2215L.

UTC (Z) date and time is customary on ARRL messages (an unmarked time is assumed to be UTC). To avoid ambiguity, mark the time with a Z, time zone designator, or L.

Time and date must agree, that is be related to the same time zone.

The TIME FILED is normally omitted on routine traffic having no special time concerns. If used, the filing time must stay with the message to the point of delivery.

Example: 0215Z JUL 13, 2215EDT JUL 12, or 2215L JUL 12 (all three filing times/dates are equivalent).

1.1.8 MONTH FILED, MON

NR	PREC	[HX]	STN-ORIG	CK	PLACE-OF-ORIG	[TIME-FILED]	MON 8	DAY
----	------	------	----------	----	---------------	--------------	----------	-----

Month must be used on all messages. (If TIME FILED is used, this date must agree with that time); This entry is the month in which the message is created and is written in the preamble as the three letter abbreviation: The month/day is assumed to be UTC unless marked otherwise by a time. The abbreviations:

JAN, FEB, MAR, APR, MAY, JUN, JUL, AUG, SEP, OCT, NOV, DEC.

The full name of the month is spoken when transmitting the preamble on voice. On CW, only the three letters are sent.

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Example: 0215Z JUL 13, 2215EDT JUL 12, or 2215L JUL 12 (all three filing times/dates are equivalent). "7/13" and other variations are not used.

1.1.9 DAY FILED, DY

NR	PREC	[HX]	STN-ORIG	CK	PLACE-OF-ORIG	[TIME-FILED]	MON	DAY 9
----	------	------	----------	----	---------------	--------------	-----	----------

The DAY FILED is the day of the month on which the message was originated and must be used on all messages. (If TIME FILED is used, the date and time must agree). The day is written in figures only, no leading zeros. On voice, two digit days are spoken as two separate digits ("one seven" rather than "seventeen", etc.). The month/day is assumed to be UTC unless marked otherwise by a time. Example: 0215Z JUL 13, 2215EDT JUL 12, or 2215L JUL 12 (all three filing times/dates are equivalent). "7/13" and other variations are not used.

1.1.10 REVIEW OF THE PREAMBLE

The preamble consists of the following parts, two of which are optional (OPT.):

NR	PREC	[HX] OPT.	STN-ORIG	CK	PLACE-OF-ORIG	[TIME-FILED] OPT.	MON	DAY
----	------	--------------	----------	----	---------------	----------------------	-----	-----

In the example message given, the preamble is:

NR 1	PREC R	[HX] HXE	STN-ORIG W1AW	CK 12	PLACE-OF-ORIG NEWINGTON CT	[TIME-FILED] 1830Z	MON JUL	DAY 1
---------	-----------	-------------	------------------	----------	-------------------------------	-----------------------	------------	----------

If the handling instruction, HXE, and the filing time, 1830Z, were not used by the originating station (both are optional), the preamble would be as follows: Most routine messages in the amateur system are of this form.

NR 1	PREC R	[HX]	STN-ORIG W1AW	CK 12	PLACE-OF-ORIG NEWINGTON CT	[TIME-FILED]	MON JUL	DAY 1
---------	-----------	------	------------------	----------	-------------------------------	--------------	------------	----------

A SERVICE message would have a preamble as follows:

NR SVC 1	PREC R	[HX]	STN-ORIG W1AW	CK 12	PLACE-OF-ORIG NEWINGTON CT	[TIME-FILED]	MON JUL	DAY 1
-------------	-----------	------	------------------	----------	-------------------------------	--------------	------------	----------

An EXERCISE message would have a preamble as follows:

NR 1	PREC TEST R	[HX]	STN-ORIG W1AW	CK 12	PLACE-OF-ORIG NEWINGTON CT	[TIME-FILED]	MON JUL	DAY 1
---------	----------------	------	------------------	----------	-------------------------------	--------------	------------	----------

Special rules apply for voicing a preamble. (See Chapter 2.) On CW simply send all the characters and spaces.

There is no prosign or proword sent at the end of the preamble.

1.2 ADDRESS PART

The second section of the message is used to specify the name, address, city, state, zip, and telephone number of the addressee. From the example message:

- | | | |
|-----|----------------------------------|---------------|
| (2) | DONALD R SMITH | (ADDRESSEE) |
| | 164 EAST SIXTH AVE | (ADDRESS) |
| | RIVER CITY MD 00789 | (CITY/ST/ZIP) |
| | 301 555 3470 | (TEL) |
| | (plus optional OP NOTE; see 1.5) | |

Getting as much addressee information as possible is the responsibility of the operator originating the message. Stations relaying or delivering the message can not be in a position to do this as well. An originating operator should try to anticipate the problems the delivering operator might have, and try to help assure success by getting a complete address including telephone number while still in contact with the originator.

If part of a message address is garbled in transmission, a complete address will help the receiving operator recover by giving him more leads to track down. (See the chapter on message delivery.)

No guarantee of delivery can be made by amateurs handling messages for the public. However, the reputation of Amateur Radio and the ARRL is enhanced if all operators try to pay attention to details which help assure that the message will get through.

1.2.1 ADDRESSEE

Line 1 should contain the full name of the addressee and, if possible, it should be the name as it is most likely to be found in the local telephone directory at the point of delivery.

Messages addressed to children should contain the parents listed name, for example:

JUDY AND BARBARA SMITH
C/O DONALD R SMITH
164 EAST SIXTH AVENUE (etc.);

or,

DONALD R SMITH AND JUDY AND BARBARA
164 EAST SIXTH AVENUE (etc.)

Amateur call signs and/or titles are included at the end of the name of the addressee:

JOHN R SMITH W3XYZ

or,

JOHN R SMITH PRES PODUNK ARC

1.2.2 STREET ADDRESS

Line 2 is the street address (or institution name which might require an extra line in the address). Enter figures, street name (spell out east, west, north and south for clarity), and apartment or unit number. Sections of a city, as in SE or NW, are usually left abbreviated.

Apartment or unit numbers for residences are usually included at the end of the street address line. Note the EAST in the street address is spelled out. This is preferred to the abbreviation "E", etc.

JAMES R SMITH
23 EAST OAK DRIVE SW APT 34

Nursing home or other institution names are usually entered as additional lines:

ROBERT A JOHNSON
PLEASANT VISTA NURSING HOME ROOM 26 (Extra line.)
101 HOWARD ST
NEW YORK NY 00787 212 555 6700

1.2.3 CITY, STATE, ZIP

The CITY, STATE (using standard two letter abbreviations), and ZIP code are entered without punctuation. NINE DIGIT ZIPs are written with a spelled DASH, i.e.
OWINGS MILLS MD 21117 DASH 2345

FOREIGN ZIP CODES may be one or several “mixed” letter/figure groups. They are written as they would be for posting, without punctuation.

1.2.4 TELEPHONE NUMBER

Telephone numbers are written as three groups of digits with no punctuation; area code, exchange, and number (only two groups if the area code is not required):
212 555 3245, or 555 1200 (note no hyphens used)

International phone numbers may be grouped differently. They are written as grouped in a directory, without punctuation.

* **NOTE:** In this manual telephone numbers may be shown on the city/state/zip line in some examples. The telephone figures are always sent as a separate line of the address however.

1.2.5 ADDRESS OP NOTE

An OP NOTE may be inserted after the telephone figures, before the text, relating to handling and/or delivery matters. The words “OP NOTE” are used to introduce this information when transmitting the message. OP NOTES are optional, and are generally not considered part of the message to be delivered to the addressee. They are primarily for use by the handling operators. For example, the following address with OP NOTE relates to when to attempt delivery by telephone.

DONALD R SMITH
164 EAST SIXTH AVENUE
RIVER CITY MD 00789
301 555 3470 OP NOTE WORKDAY ONLY

1.2.6 PUNCTUATION

PUNCTUATION IS NOT USED IN THE ADDRESS SECTION. The only exception in general use is the symbol "/", sometimes used to separate parts of a street address, group, or institution name. If a DASH or HYPHEN is required, it is spelled out to avoid conflict with prosigns used in the transmission process:

SFC JOHN L JONES
357TH ORD/CMD 34 DASH 765 UNIT
FORT SMITH CO 99770
600 555 7899

1.2.7 MESSAGES FOR OTHER SERVICES

Messages which must be re-filed with other systems, such as MARS, may require additional information such as rank, unit information, APO, etc. Find out what is required by consulting an operator in that system before accepting the message so that you are prepared to ask for what is needed.

1.2.8 INTERNATIONAL TRAFFIC

Messages addressed to persons in other countries are subject to regulation or prohibition according to treaties between those countries and the United States. Before accepting messages for international transmission, check the ARRL list of countries with whom third party traffic is permitted, or consult with the ARRL Section Traffic Manager in your Section.

1.2.9 RE-CONTACTING ORIGINATING PARTY

Originating stations should also get complete information from the originator to permit re-contact if a problem arises in delivery, or if a reply message is received (this information is entered in block 7 on the message form, see 1.7).

1.3 TEXT PART

The text contains the actual message information authorized by the person for whom the message was originated. Note that the amateur does not originate messages for a person without permission from that person!

The text is entered in section 3 of the message form. (When transmitting a message, the text is separated from the preceding address, and the signature to follow, by the use of the word "BREAK" on voice, the prosign <BT> on CW, to allow the receiving operator to know its beginning and end. BREAK and <BT> are not counted as groups.)

The text is divided into word "groups", five or ten to a line for easy counting, and is usually limited to 25 words or less.

ARL	FORTY	SIX	X	DO
YOU	WANT	THE	304/BA	EQUIPMENT
QUERY	THE	SIX	DASH	B
TYPE	IS	NO	LONGER	AVAILABLE
X	CU	ON	7013R5	73

Note the use of "X", "QUERY", "/", "DASH", "R" and spelled-out numbers for the ARRL numbered radiogram "ARL FORTY SIX" (See the following section.). The check is ARL 25.

1.3.1 PUNCTUATION

PUNCTUATION characters are not used in the text except as follows:

- /:** The slash, "/", is used to separate characters within a group, as in 304/BA. Since the "/" is part of the group it does not qualify as a separate group for the check. Although usually not used as a group by itself (a space on the left and on the right), if so used it would be counted in the check.
- X:** The letter "X" used to denote a period. The letter "X" is never used as the last group of the text. The "X" is a separate group and IS counted for the check.
- R:** The letter "R" is used in place of a decimal in mixed figure groups, as in 7013R5 (7013.5), or 146R670 (146.670). Since the "R" is part of the group it does not qualify as a separate group for the check. (The inclusion of the "R" makes the group a "mixed group" for transmission on voice.)

OTHER PUNCTUATION is spelled out (in order to avoid confusion with prosigns used in the transmission of the message) as in "QUERY" for a question, "DASH" to separate special number or mixed groups, "EXCLAMATION", "COMMA", etc. (Hyphens are NOT used in telephone

number groups or anywhere else in the text.) Such punctuation words are separate groups and ARE counted for the check.

"Q"-SIGNALS and other letter groups are permitted in the text. Ciphers, codes, and encryption, and other groups intended to obscure the meaning, are not.

SALUTATIONS: Words like "love" and "regards", often associated with signatures in formal letters, are put in the text in amateur messages (not in the signature).

1.3.2 EMAIL, PACKET or INTERNET ADDRESSES

Punctuation is not permitted. Appropriate spelled words are used as substitutes where required, i.e.:

W3XXX ATSIGN AOL DOT COM ("AT" may be used for "ATSIGN")

W3XXX ATSIGN WB3XXX DOT MD DOT USA DOT NA

HTTP COLON SLASH SLASH WWW DOT HOMEPAGE DOT COM

Notes: "\" is written as "BACKSLASH", "/" is written as "SLASH".

"TILDE", "UNDERSCORE", "POUNDSIGN", etc., are often encountered.

Use "UPPERCASE" or "LOWERCASE" where required to specify case.

Use "SPACE" and "DASH" where they are an integral part of an address group.

1.3.3 ARRL NUMBERED RADIOGRAMS

ARRL Numbered Radiograms are messages encoded as one or two numbers, some with option blanks to be filled out in the text, to permit many words to be condensed to a few. These numbers are always spelled out in the written message and in transmission, and are always preceded by the letters "ARL", as in "ARL FORTY SIX" in the example text.

For example, ARL SIXTY TWO reads "Greetings and best wishes to you for a pleasant [____] holiday season". In a message text this would be written as "ARL SIXTY TWO CHRISTMAS", where the word CHRISTMAS fills in the blank. Some blanks may require multiple words. Some ARRL Numbered Radiograms have multiple blanks. The text groups completing such multiple blanks may usually flow after the numbers, but they may be separated with an "X" if required for clarity.

More than one ARL message may be placed in the text. Each one is preceded by "ARL". The CHECK must contain "ARL" ahead of the group count if these radiograms are used in the text. An "X" may be used to prevent ambiguity at the end of the numbered radiogram, with or without a blank, otherwise it is not required to separate subsequent text.

1.3.4 COUNTING WORD GROUPS FOR THE CHECK

The number value to be entered in the "CHECK" in the preamble of the message is the total number of groups in the text between the start and end prosigns (but not counting the prosigns).

An easy rule to remember about counting word groups: ANY GROUP OF ONE OR MORE CONSECUTIVE CHARACTERS WITH NO INTERRUPTING SPACES, WITH A SPACE BEFORE IT AND AFTER IT, IS COUNTED AS ONE GROUP.

Such a group may be all letters, all numbers, or any mix of numbers, letters, or slashes (/), so long as there are no spaces within the group. Each word, group of connected digits, connected mixed characters, spelled punctuation word, "X", or ARL constitutes one group for the purpose of calculating the total count to enter in the check section of the preamble.

The prosigns "BREAK", or <BT> on CW, at the start and end of the text are not counted.

Examples of word groups:

ONE GROUP

X
145R67
34TH
34TH/CMD
SIXTY
FIFTEEN
7035R7KHZ

TWO GROUPS

X 73
555 5678
34 TH
34TH CMD
ARL SIXTY
FIFTY SIXTH
7035R7 KHZ

THREE GROUPS

THANKS X 73
301 555 3456
55 DASH 56XA
34 TH CMD
ARL SIXTY SEVEN
THREE ZERO SIX
7035 DECIMAL 7

NOTE: 7035R7 means 7035.7, but the period symbol is not permitted. The letter "R" is used as a substitute for DECIMAL POINT. The number group is written as 7035R7, or 7035 DECIMAL 7. If "DECIMAL" is used it is a separate group, making three total in this example.

1.3.5 EXERCISE MESSAGE TEXTS

EXERCISE messages: It is customary to indicate within the text of such messages the words "TEST MESSAGE", or "EXERCISE". Together, the "TEST" precedence and "TEST MESSAGE" in the text alert those receiving the message to the exercise nature of the content. It is suggested that use of the word "EXERCISE" as the first and last groups of the text help make this clear to any listener even if the entire message is not copied, thus preventing undue alarm. See the above section 1.1.2 Message Precedences, Prec., EXERCISE messages..

1.4 SIGNATURE PART

1.4.1 SIGNATURE

The signature of the message is the name of the person for whom the message is created (not necessarily the station of origin), and any other information that person wishes to include (such as address, telephone number, title, etc.). The Place-of-Origin given in the Preamble is the location of this individual.

Words like love and regards, often associated with signatures in formal letters, are put in the text in amateur messages.

Amateur call signs, titles, QCWA or OOTC numbers, etc., in the signature follow the name on the same line.

Addresses for the signing party are optionally included (upon request) on subsequent lines, exactly as done in the address section, but are included only if important to the originator, message purpose, or replying.

Since most addressees know the party from whom messages originate, most messages in daily NTS service have simple one-line signatures.

Messages for served agencies, particularly during disasters, generally require an authorizing signature in full. Messages without same may be refused.

It is **IMPORTANT** for originating stations to get full information about persons for whom messages are originated in order to be able to re-contact them should a problem arise in the delivery of their message, or if a reply is received (see 1.7).

Example:

```
      THANKS   FOR      MESSAGE   X      HOPE
      TO       SEE      YOU      AT     HAMFEST
      X        73
(SIG)      DIANA N1ABC AT WA1ABC BBS CT
```

Note in this case the reply information is part of the signature itself, thus delivered to the addressee as part of the message. See the next section also.

1.4.2 SIGNATURE OP NOTE

An OP NOTE may be inserted after the SIGNATURE, before the end of the message, relating to reply and/or servicing matters. The words "OP NOTE" are used to introduce this information when transmitting the message. OP NOTES are optional, and are generally not considered part of the message to be delivered to the addressee. They are primarily for use by the handling operators. For example, the following signature with OP NOTE relates to replies being directed to an amateur packet BBS.

Example with signature OP NOTE:

```
      THANKS   FOR      MESSAGE   X      HOPE
      TO       SEE      YOU      AT     HAMFEST
      X        73
(SIG)      DIANA OP NOTE REPLY VIA N1ABC AT WA1ABC BBS CT
```

Note in this case the reply information is included in the OP NOTE, for the information of the handling station to use for any reply. The OP NOTE is not normally delivered to the addressee.

See the section on transmitting methods for VOICE and CW for details of how to include the OP NOTE relative to the prosigns used in transmission. The words "OP NOTE" are always included to introduce such information to indicate that the information is separate and distinct from regular message parts.

1.5 RECORDS, BLOCK 5, STATION RCVD INFORMATION

Enter the call sign of the station from whom the message was received, net name, and date/time of receipt in the RCVD block (REC'D block on regular ARRL form.)

RCVD FROM (5)	NET	DATE/TIME	SENT TO (6)	NET	DATE/TIME
------------------	-----	-----------	----------------	-----	-----------

These blocks were created for this manual.

1.6 RECORDS, BLOCK 6, STATION SENT INFORMATION

Enter the call sign of the station to whom the message was sent, net name, and date/time of transmission in the SENT block. (SENT block on regular ARRL form.)

1.7 RECORDS, BLOCK 7, STATION ORIG INFORMATION

Enter the name, address, and telephone number of the party for whom the message was originated, and date/time, in the ORIG block. (REC'D block on regular ARRL form.)..

(7) ORIG - FROM - DATE/TIME Name Addr City TEL	(8) DLVD - TO - DATE/TIME Name Addr City TEL
--	--

These blocks were created for this manual. The SENT and REC'D blocks may be used.

1.8 RECORDS, BLOCK 8, STATION DLVD INFORMATION

Enter the name and date/time of delivery, and any corrections to address and telephone number, in the DLVD block. This may be needed later for replies or future deliveries. Such corrections, or other information about the addressee, should be considered private and not sent back to the originator without getting the addressee's permission. (This information must be entered into the SENT block on the regular ARRL message form.)

* **NOTE:** Some operators make their own message forms, or copy on blank paper. Records are then noted ad-hoc in a form as desired. Others use computers with standard editors or word processors and file management, or use custom software for copying messages, verifying the check, and archiving, and/or for originating messages and check counting. Records are entered for each message depending upon the software used, and are always an important responsibility..

1.9 BLOCK 9 STATION IDENTIFICATION FOR MAILING

Enter your station information when mailing a message to the addressee so that person may contact you regarding a reply or becoming a radio amateur. This block appears on the standard ARRL message blank.

1.10 ORIGINATING A MESSAGE

When originating a message from a member of the public, remind that person that no guarantee of delivery is possible but that the amateur service has a nation-wide network of stations meeting daily to perform this free public service and that every effort will be made to get the message through.

Get all of the originating party's information for the station origination block 7.

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Get the complete name, address, city, zip, and telephone information for the addressee for block 2.

Explain the normal 25 word limit on texts and assist the party in constructing a clear text, using ARRL numbered radiograms if possible. Complete block 3.

Ascertain how the party wishes the signature to read in block 4.

Count the text word groups for the check block, fill out the preamble with your message number, call, etc., and the originating party's place of origin.

Observe the cautions in the following sections regarding legality, permission, and foreign third party traffic.

As originator you are the best filter for compliance. It is difficult to examine a message and conclude with certainty what purpose or meaning is in the content in all cases. If in doubt, it is not mandatory to accept the message; refuse it. If you know by some means other than content that a message is business related, or otherwise illegal, do not handle it.

Handling messages is a voluntary service.

You may explain regulations regarding message content and purpose to the originating party with tact and diplomacy. Help them to construct a proper message.

You are the licensee held responsible by the FCC.

1.10.1 MESSAGE LEGALITY

Accept only messages in which content and purpose comply with the fcc regulations in force regarding third party traffic, the prohibition of "business" traffic, encryption, and other rules regarding prohibited communications.

If you receive such a message, and determine it does not comply with this requirement, you are not obligated to pass it on. Send a service message to the station of origin indicating same.

1.10.2 MESSAGES ORIGINATED WITH PERMISSION

Do not originate a message for a third party (someone other than yourself) without permission. this a fraud and forgery.

Generating messages containing information about a third party without their permission is also considered very poor practice. respect privacy.

1.10.3 FOREIGN THIRD PARTY TRAFFIC

Do not transmit by amateur radio any third party messages into foreign countries that do not have treaty provisions with the united states permitting such traffic.

Traffic to foreign countries may have tighter rules, or be prohibited. Some countries may permit amateur-to-amateur messages transmitted directly---others may not. You are the first party. The

amateur receiving the message is the second party. The amateur-to-amateur case, usually permitted, is different than the case of the second party receiving a message for a third party.

Check the US THIRD-PARTY TRAFFIC AGREEMENTS list published by the ARRL in the NET DIRECTORY, periodically in QST, and elsewhere, or check with your Section Traffic Manager. This list is also available on the ARRL web site. (Regulations, International Operating.)

You are the licensee held responsible by the FCC.

1.10.4 OUTLETS FOR YOUR MESSAGES

Check into a local or section net of the NTS and submit your message for handling, or put your message on a digital system which has the capability of passing it to the NTS or destination.

Local and Section NTS nets are listed in the "ARRL NET DIRECTORY". These nets meet daily at fixed times and operate on HF for wide area coverage or VHF/UHF for local users. You do not have to be a member of the NTS or hold the Official Relay Station (ORS) ARRL appointment to check into these nets. Generally, however, the Region and Area nets of the NTS are limited to assigned liaison stations.

There is no need to get on the air and call CQ to raise a station in the message destination area. Use the National Traffic System. The converse is also true. The NTS relies on stations in local calling areas checking into NTS nets to provide delivery outlets for messages.

1.11 ORIGINATING SERVICE MESSAGES

Messages encountered anywhere in the system that can not be relayed or delivered are not discarded. A service message back to the originating station must be generated. In other words there are only three things an operator can do with a message: 1) Relay it; 2) deliver it; or 3) service it back to the originating station.

Undeliverable messages are serviced back to the station of origin, not the place of origin.

If a service message is sent back to the station of origin per its call book address, and it can not be contacted, stations often will send a service message back to the place of origin in an attempt to locate it. It is wise for stations not at their call book address to include an OP NOTE about how to send service messages or replies.

Service messages should contain a reference to the message number, addressee last name (or other identifier to cover errors in the message number), and reason(s) for the inability to relay or deliver the original message.

Generating service messages is the responsibility of the station holding the message.

Service messages are originated with the letters "SVC" ahead of the message number followed by a space, and the precedence of the service message is kept the same as that of the message being serviced. (This practice is used less frequently in recent years. Best practice of the day may be leaving off the SVC ahead of the number for service messages. The precedence is still handled the same way.)

1.11.1 ARL SIXTY SEVEN, UNDELIVERABLE MESSAGE SERVICE

The Numbered Radiogram, ARL SIXTY SEVEN, is generally used in service messages including the information mentioned above to complete the blanks.

A service message is originated with your number (preceded by "SVC"), precedence the same as the original message, call sign as station of origin and your city of origin, addressed to the original message's station of origin to report the undeliverable message. It is good practice to obtain the full address and phone number of the station of origin for this service message, if possible. On the other hand, some originators of mass mailings in the NTS are well known and may often be addressed with their call signs and city/state. Consult with your STM or other NTS operators who might be familiar with such stations.

ARL SIXTY SEVEN reads:

"Your message number [.....] undeliverable because of [.....]. Please advise."

Note the word "number" is included, thus only the figures of the original message number need be included. (It is acceptable practice to add the addressee's last name or call sign after the number as additional qualification. This protects against loss of the number in transmission.) The cause for the message being undeliverable follows. An "X" may be used to separate the explanation or parts thereof for clarity if needed. For example: "ARL SIXTY SEVEN 34 SMYTHE PHONE 410 555 1234 INCORRECT X NO LISTING X 73". This gives the originator an indication of what you received and a specific reason for your difficulty.

Do NOT service back changes of addresses, phone numbers, or other personal information about the addressee without their permission. The original message might be intended to pry into the private affairs of the recipient.

See the chapter on delivering messages for servicing criteria and more details..

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Relief Emergency · Routine Messages Recommended Precedences

The letters ARL are inserted in the preamble in the check and in the text before spelled out numbers, which represent texts from this list. Note that some ARL texts include insertion of numerals and text. Example: NR 1 R W1AW ARL 5 NEWINGTON CONN. DEC 25 DONALD R. SMITH AAA 164 EAST SIXTH AVE AAA NORTH RIVER CITY MO AAA PHONE 73-3968 BT ARL FIFTY ARL SIXTY ONE BT DIANA AR. For additional information about traffic handling, consult *The ARRL Operating Manual*, published by ARRL, or the *NTS Methods and Practices Guidelines*, www.arrl.org/FandES/field/nts-mpg/.

Group One—For Possible “Relief Emergency” Use

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

Group Two—Routine Messages

- FORTY SIX Greetings on your birthday and best wishes for many more to come.
- FORTY SEVEN Reference your message number _____ to _____ delivered on _____ at _____ UTC.
- 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.

* Can be used for all holidays.

ARRL Recommended Precedences

Please observe the following ARRL provisions for PRECEDENCES in connection with written message traffic. These provisions are designed to increase the efficiency of our service both in normal times and in emergency.

EMERGENCY--Any message having life and death urgency to any person or group of persons, which is transmitted by Amateur Radio in the absence of regular commercial facilities. This includes official messages of welfare agencies during emergencies requesting supplies, materials or instructions vital to relief of stricken populace in emergency areas. During normal times, it will be *very* rare. On CW/RTTY, this designation will *always* be spelled out. When in doubt, do not use it.

PRIORITY--Use abbreviation P on CW/RTTY. This classification is for a) important messages having a specific time limit b) official messages not covered in the emergency category c) press dispatches and emergency-related traffic not of the *utmost* urgency d) notice of death or injury in a disaster area, personal or official.

WELFARE--This classification, abbreviated as W on CW/RTTY, refers to either an inquiry as to the health and welfare of an individual in the disaster area or an advisory from the disaster area that indicates all is well. Welfare traffic is handled only after all emergency and priority traffic is cleared. The Red Cross equivalent to an incoming Welfare message is DWI (Disaster Welfare Inquiry).

ROUTINE--Most traffic in normal times will bear this designation. In disaster situations, traffic labeled Routine (R on CW/RTTY) should be handled last, or not at all when circuits are busy with higher precedence traffic.

Note--the precedence always follows the message number. For example, a message number may be 207R on CW and "Two Zero Seven Routine" on phone.