MESSAGE HANDLING

USING THE
ICS FORM 213
BARC

CREDIT: Borrowed from Arlington VA RACES

OBJECTIVES

- **<u>WHY</u> uses the ICS Form 213**
- **<u>WHAT</u> is an ICS message?**
  (How it d*iffers from an NTS radiogram)*
- **<u>CONCERNS</u> for operational traffic**
- **<u>HOW</u> to send a message by <u>VOICE</u>**

Practice Using the ICS Form and Procedures

- <u>All members</u> learn to use ICS form
- <u>Practice on nets</u> and in exercises
- <u>Because you cannot wait</u> until a real emergency

WHY *NOT*
USE THE NTS RADIOGRAM:

- **NTS Radiogram form is NOT USED by Ravalli County, or by state and federal agencies.**

- **Office of Emergency Management uses ICS procedures and formats.**

- **Some incoming messages (Salvation Army & Red Cross) use NTS.**

- **Do NOT reformat incoming messages; handle all incoming traffic as received.**

Why Use the ICS Form 213:

- **<u>Operational messages</u> are routed directly, by the MOST EXPEDIENT method.**

- **<u>Served agency messages</u> *are sent directly* between OEM and deployed resources.**

- **<u>ICS Form 213 is widely used</u> by FEMA, SHARES, DHS, CAP, Coast Guard.**

- **<u>Its use is straight-forward</u>, a *common sense* sending protocol, similar to an email message.**

Why BARC Members Learn and Practice Message Handling:

- **Accurate, Brief, Clear** messages, in plain language, provide efficient emergency communications

SIGNAL REPORTING IN PLAIN LANGUAGE

- **Loud & Clear (log as LC)**
- **Good Readable (log as GR)**
- **Fair Readable (log as FR)**
- **Weak Readable (log as WR)**
- **Weak Unreadable (log as WU)**

When is a Formal Written Message NOT Used?

- **Formal messages *are not needed* for most "Real-Time" Tactical Communications:**
- **Direct conversations between third parties**
- **Life-safety matters *when timing is critical***
- **Most routine task assignments**
- **Most routine task completions**
- **Most routine resource coordination**
- ***Record routine exchanges as line-items** in your ICS Form 309 Comm Log*

A Formal Written Message Is Needed For "Record" Communications - ALWAYS

Because incident reports are public documents,

USE A FORMAL MESSAGE FOR:

- **Station activation & closure**
- **Damage assessments**
- **Shelter and EOC status**
- **Situation updates**
- **Declarations**
- **Resource Requests**
- **ICS facility relocations**

Operational Traffic

- **"Record" communications -- SITREPS (situation reports), resource requests, etc. must be signed** by the agency originator, to identify responsibility & authenticity.

- **Agency controller establishes priority.** *If used, precedence follows the Message Number before the Group Count, on "admin line" 4.*

- **ICS Precedence:**
  URGENT, IMMEDIATE, R (ROUTINE)

WHAT IS AN ICS MESSAGE?

- **Record Communications** *on behalf of served agency officials must be written in ICS Form 213 format or on the originating agency's approved form*

- **But don't fixate on the FORM**!

- **Be prepared to copy long messages.**

- *Learn to copy messages without relying on a FORM!*

ICS Form 213 Message Form

1 - Incident Name

2 - "To "line

3 - "From " line

4 /5/6- "Subject / Date / Time" line

7 - "Message" field

8 - "Signature" line

9 - "Reply" field

10 - "Reply

2 - "To" line
Name, Agency and Title of Recipient

ICS Form 213 MESSAGE

- -- -

TO: POSITION:

_____

3 - "From" line
Name, Agency and Title of Originator

ICS Form 213 MESSAGE

- -

TO: POSITION:

_____

FROM: **POSITION:**

_____

4 - "Subject / Date/ Time" line
Incident or Task Name, Date, Local Time

ICS Form 213 MESSAGE

- -
- - -

TO: POSITION:

_____

FROM: POSITION**:**

_____

SUBJECT: **DATE:**   **TIME**:

_____

DATE format is DAY MONTH
TIME is 24-hour LOCAL time
(unless the served agency specifies UTC)

7- Message Number and Group Count
precede "Message" Text (ten lines, 50 words)
Plain language, no codes or jargon

MESSAGE No: **Group Count:**

				5
				10
				15
				20
				25
				30
				35
				40
				45
				50

8 - "Signature" line

SIGNATURE: POSITION:

Name and title of the originating official is essential for message authentication.

9 - "Reply" Block
(ten lines, 50 words)

REPLY: **Group Count:**

				5
				10
				15
				20
				25
				30
				35
				40
				45
				50

10 –"Reply Date/Time/Signature"

DATE: **TIME:**   **SIGNATURE/POSITION:**

TRANSMITTING THE MESSAGE HEADERS

- ***Precedence, if any, goes after the message number.***

- ***After sending the line say "Break for text, OVER."***

- ***If the receiving station requires a "fill" on anything sent up to this point,***

- ***They use the prowords "SAY AGAIN."***

- ***Otherwise they simply say "Roger Over or Roger Out…"***

HINTS ON SENDING AND RECEIVING THE TEXT

- **Pause briefly after each line of five words.**

- **Say "BREAK" after text and before sending SIGNATURE in case a fill is needed.**

- **To request a "fill" say:**
  "Say Again…

      word before (or all before) …
      word after (or all after) …
      word (or all) between... and…

Get out your pencil and paper!

Copy along as I send the message headers:

"TO, Initials, **CHARLIE PAPA TANGO**…Anthony, I SPELL, **ALPHA, NOVEMBER, TANGO, HOTEL, OSCAR, NOVEMBER, YANKEE**,… Barrero, I SPELL, **BRAVO, ALPHA, ROMEO, ROMEO, ECHO, ROMEO, OSCAR."**
"Initials **ECHO OSCAR CHARLIE,**
Fire Duty Officer." -

MESSAGE HEADERS

- <u>TO</u>: **Cpt Anthony Barrero**
- <u>POSITION</u>: **EOC Fire Duty Officer**
- <u>FROM:</u> **Cpt Ronald L Mastin, IC**
- <u>SUBJECT:</u> **I95 HAZMAT**
- <u>DATE:</u> **2JUN**
- <u>TIME:</u> **0530 L**
- <u>MESSAGE NUMBER</u>**: 6201**
- **URGENT**
- <u>GROUP COUNT:</u> **50**

Now lets copy the "Message"

Please copy along for practice, then check against this text.

TRACTOR	TRAILER	CARRYING	40K	POUNDS
EXPLOSIVE	B	OVERTURNED	LEFT	SHOULDER
RAMP	I95	EXIT	170N	PERIOD
VSP	AND	CHEMTREC	NOTIFIED	PERIOD
EVACUATING	SHIRLEY	INDUSTRIAL	PARK	EAST
OF	I95	AND	RESIDENTS	IN
LYNNBROOK	EAST	OF	FLANDERS	AND
SPRINGFIELD	ESTATES	WEST	OF	FRONTIER
AND	NORTH	OF	PALOMINO	PERIOD
NEED	SHELTER	OPENED	LEE	HS

The SIGNATURE

- **Identifies the ORIGINATOR of the message.**

- **In ROUTINE traffic the Originator is often the STATION OF ORIGIN**

- **Operational (served agency) traffic <u>usually</u> has a third-party signature, such as:**

SIGNATURE: **POSITION:**

Captain Ronald L Mastin Incident Commander

         County Fire Dept.

PRIVACY AND PROFESSIONALISM

- BARC members must NOT discuss disaster information when media is nearby.

- Names are not used in messages except to identify the agency contacts.

- Refer media requests to the agency's Public Information Officer.

When to use the Proword "I Spell"

- **DO NOT** automatically spell familiar words or acronyms like "EOC" unless operating conditions are poor enough that it is needed.

- Necessary for proper names (there is no "common spelling" on emergency nets)
    "Jones, I spell JULIET OSCAR NOVEMBER ECHO SIERRA"

- To clarify homonyms, words which sound alike, but have different meanings, such as :
    "To, I spell TANGO OSCAR)"

PUNCTUATION - 1

- **Use "I Spell" when WORDS are used as PUNCTUATION.**

- **"PERIOD" Ends a sentence.** *NOT spelled out when sending unless conditions are* **weak readable** **and require "fills."**

- **"DOT, I spell Delta Oscar Tango" for a single period within a text group (email address). Don't use to end a sentence, use PERIOD!**

PUNCTUATION -- 2

- **"DECIMAL, I spell ..." used in _figure groups only_, (such as radio frequencies sent in a message text).**

- **"DASH, I spell DELTA ALPHA SIERRA HOTEL" for a hyphen.**

- **"ATSIGN, I spell ALPHA TANGO SIERRA INDIA GOLF NOVEMBER" for symbol "@" .**

Message Text Quality Control

- **Formal "Record" messages always should be CLEAR and SUCCINCT.**

- Written so that their meaning cannot be mis-interpreted or read in more than one way.

- Write out the message in full, using plain text only.

- **If a telephone number is given in the message TEXT, it is sent as three groups:**
  Area Code, Exchange and 4-digit number.

Using the Proword "CONFIRM"

CONFIRM? *(recipient uses voice inflection in form of a QUERY)*

"CONFIRM Echo Sierra Papa?"

THE SENDING STATION'S RESPONSE:

"WRONG, I Say Again Word After FIGURES ONE SEVEN ZERO NOVEMBER PERIOD, Initials VICTOR, SIERRA, PAPA, OVER "

CONFIRM (recipient's statement that it is now correct): "CONFIRM, OVER"

Authentication

- **Originating station must work from a form bearing an ORIGINAL signature of the releasing authority to verify responsibility for message contents and enabling authentication**

WHEN YOU ARE DONE WITH THIS MESSAGE:

- **If the traffic just sent is the <u>only message or last message</u> you have to send, then say:**

  "END, no more, Over"

- **If you have one or more messages to send, you say:**

  "Break, More to Follow, Over"

DELIVERING THE MESSAGE:

- **Read the TEXT and SIGNATURE of the message to the recipient.**

- **If leaving the traffic on an answering machine or with a third party (not the final recipient) give your callback telephone or other method of contacting you.**