## NET OPERATIONS or Hints for How We Behave on a Net

1.  We train by example.  When stations check in to a net, they indicate if they have traffic or not. A simple "no traffic" means the NCS doesn't have to call back to find out.  And if the net control says, "Send my call first" to check in, please follow those directions. During deployment, the net control may ask for your county or what kind of traffic you can take.

2.  During traffic nets, we follow net protocol and always get recognized by the net control before contributing. We are practicing for other nets.

3.  To get recognized by the net control during a net – whether it's to provide information, assist with a relay, or offer to list or accept more traffic – just say your call.  Get recognized first. Just saying, "Relay" or "Contact" gets confusing for the net control. It's easier for the NCS to just ask one station for relay help.

4.  Remember to end with your call.  Even when you've been exchanging comments on a net or giving a second go, the *last* thing you should say is your call sign. It's a good habit not just because it's an FCC requirement but because it will demonstrate to newer Hams listening that it is proper protocol.

5.  If a net preamble states, "Emergency traffic may break the net at any time," the net control does not need to take a special stand-by for emergency traffic.

6.  If a net preamble says, "This is a directed net and all communication will go through net control," nobody should interrupt without being recognized.  Nobody should inject, "Relay," or "Over," or anything else without first stating their call and getting recognized.
And if a net control says "Net stand by" everyone shuts the heck up. Listen. Listen. Listen.  Get the call signs right. Keep track of the net activity even if you're not net control.  You might have to fill in at any time.

7.  We'll handle any incoming traffic, but we much prefer it comes to us by way of the NTS so that all levels of the network get exercised.

## PROWORDS and PASSING TRAFFIC
We handle traffic efficiently by using a number of techniques. Here are some that bear repeating.

8.  When sending an NTS message by voice, start by actually saying the word "number." There's no need to name the other parts of the preamble like the check or date or to say "break for text." Just "break" is enough. The receiver knows why. Don't forget to use the proword "figures" before numbers in the text. Without it, the receiver will  assume the number is written as a word. There's **no need** for the proword "figures" in the preamble for the number, check, or date.   We don't need to say "figures"  in the preamble after "number,"  for the check, or in the time or date because the receiver already knows that will be in figures.  ZIP codes and phone numbers are done the same way.

9.  In passing traffic, we say figures in the text individually – including in the preamble.  So it's "two nine" not "twenty-nine." It's "one five" not "fifteen."  It's "six two five" not "six hundred twenty five."  We use the pro-word "figures" for numbers in the text . So remember not to label or identify the parts of the preamble as you send a formal message. You *do* say the word "Number" (not "figures") to begin, but then there's no need to say "station of origin,"  "amateur call, "with a check of," "the place of origin is."

10. On nets, please try to use standard ITU phonetics. They've been universally accepted. A is Alpha not America. B is Bravo not Baker. After Mike comes November – not Nancy, Nora or Norway. It's Papa for P – not pterodactyl. ITU phonetics have been tested internationally.

11. Please follow handling instructions. If the message is marked HXC, HXD, or HXE, it requires a response. Send a message to the person who signed the original message or to the originating station.

12. If we check in to traffic nets regularly, we - at least occasionally - take a piece of traffic. When we *do* take a message, we assume the responsibility to relay or deliver it in a timely manner. If a message is not deliverable, we send a message to the originator naming it and explaining why. Using ARL Sixty Seven is an easy way to do it. When you prepare a service message, think in terms of what information will help the originating station. For example, include the name or call of the addressee as well as the message number. If there's a phone problem, include the phone number.

13. We get every part of a message exactly right. Senders use good diction and know the difference between the letter "O" and the figure zero. Receivers listen closely. If we're not sure, we get fills or clarifications. Each message is sent or delivered exactly as we get it – no changes to form, addressee, text, or signature. If we know some part is incorrect, we can include an operator's note, but we don't change the message.

14. On nets, we practice being succinct. Just like a message text, we try to use the fewest words possible to properly do the job (except when we're talking to this audience). We try not to waste time, but we are friendly and welcoming. We listen to each other.

15. We're flexible. If we need a different mode or frequency, we adjust.

16. Many messages are passed in digital modes. The same infrastructure-independent mailbox operation from N9VC is used for NTS 9th and 10th region traffic and for ARES/RACES leadership, (i.e. DECs and above) for messaging with each other and with Wisconsin Emergency Management. The concept is independent from the Internet since that's what we may have to supplement or replace in a deployment.

17. RMS is a great adjunct to our nets, but it's a good idea to take traffic by voice or CW occasionally to keep in practice. RF is always preferred. Be aware that using the Internet with Telnet is relying on a system we may have to replace in an emergency.

18. It's also good practice to also take traffic *without* a computer or a message form. Those might not always be available. We should be able to do this with either NTS or ICS213 formats. We just need to know the difference. Feel free to use either NTS format or ICS213 format for messages, but always tell the receiver if the message will not be in NTS form. Be familiar with both.

19. When sending a message's *preamble* by voice, after you start with the word "number," there's no need for any other prowords like "amateur call" or "figures," because the receiver should already know what's coming next. There's no need to insert phrases like "coming from" or " the check is." *Do* use all the appropriate prowords in the address and text and use the full message form. Even with a net report, don't skip any parts. We want the use of the complete message form to become automatic for all of us.

20. If time is included in the preamble, it's usually in 24-hour format in local time. If the message crosses time zones, GMT is a good idea. And actually give the date. Don't just say "today's date." The date of an NTS message is given in the month – day format. Today would be NOV 2. ICS 213 messages are more likely to format their date as day – month – "2 NOV." Either way, the year isn't needed unless there could be confusion.

21. Pace your voice sending. Remember someone else has to write or type that fast. Long words require a slightly longer pause after them so they can be copied. Remember, the receiver probably can't write as fast as you can speak. Try writing the text yourself as you say it.

22. When you use prowords, use them in the standard pattern each time. For example, in the use of "I spell," it's done like this. First, you say the word in the text. Then you say, "I spell." Then you use the ITU phonetic alphabet to spell it and then continue with the text. And what do you spell? Any name, uncommon word, or homonym .

23. "I say again" works the same way in those three steps. Say the group, say "I say again" then repeat the group.

24. Most of us have wide-area calling, but if you bring routine traffic to a net destined for someone outside your immediate area, it's best to list it on several consecutive nets before delivering it yourself. We'd like to exercise as much of the system as we can with each routine message. Of course, emergency and priority messages always go as quickly and directly as possible.

25. When you do deliver a message, there's a trick it. Nowadays, with so many unsolicited phone calls, a delivering station needs a script like, "Hi, I have an amateur radiogram for _____ from _____." If there are questions about the text or the traffic network be friendly and polite in your explanation. Message delivery can be excellent publicity.

26. So what about that ICS213 format? A message is a message. We send, receive, relay, and deliver a message exactly as it was given to us by a served agency or part of a traffic system. We don't change the format or the content. If we are writing or sending a message *on our own behalf* then can we select a format or the content – not if the message comes from a served agency. If the receiving station isn't familiar with the ICS213 form, it will help to number the blocks.

## NET CONTROLS (and everyone else)

27. When starting a net, or if you go to a different frequency to receive traffic, don't forget to ask if it's in use before you start. Do *not* create interference. Nobody owns a frequency. The receiving station calls first. If you move up or down frequency but your target spot is occupied, keep moving in the same direction to an open spot. Receiver calls first. I say again, "Nobody owns a frequency." [FCC regulations 97.101 (6)]

28. Try to avoid overly long pauses if you're called or responding on a net. It avoids confusion. If the delay is unavoidable, a simple "Stand by" will do.

29. Try shadowing a net control, keeping track of the check-ins, traffic listed, and who takes what traffic. That way, you'll be ready to assume net control or volunteer to be a net control yourself.

30. When we agree to be a net control, we start on time and run the net efficiently. We recognize stations by saying the call or by call and name. We avoid extra comments. There's no need to

comment on every comment made by participants. We take frequent stand-bys for additional stations and traffic.  We try for a little variety in how we recognize each station and we don't pause too long before responding to check-ins.

31. If circumstances change, we change.  We learn. For example, we no longer take a separate stand-by for emergency traffic when the net preamble already says we will take emergency traffic at any time. So you won't hear an NCS ask for it. We learn; we adjust.

32. Be ready to serve as net control. And when the occasion arises, please, please, offer to be a net control even if it's only once in a while.  We *all* need that practice to stay ready for our role in support of served agencies.

33. Don't tune up on net frequency when the net is in session. Just move up or down far enough to avoid interfering. As a net control, if a net frequency is busy, find a clear spot nearby just as you would if you were moving off to pass traffic.  Nobody owns a frequency.

34. Net controls, start your net on time. Set your clock.   Sometimes we start a net early due to conditions, but don't be late.

35.  Encourage stations checking in to always listen carefully to the net controls. If they ask for a specific representative like a 9RN rep or an SSB representative on any mode, please respect that. Wait your turn.

36. We could really use more stations as liaisons between nets – like going to or from a CW net or a 9th Region session. You could choose a slot that fits you.

37. Never hesitate to stop to explain traffic handling to those who are new at it. Our patience and encouragement will pay off. Take along some extra FSD-218 pink cards today and pass them along. Operators can always learn something.

38. Have a system for organizing your traffic, a way to keep straight what's been sent, what's received, what's delivered, etc.  Mark each message so *you* can read it and keep clear lists. There should be a copy of each formal message so you can refer to if needed.

39.  When preparing for or checking in to a net, pay close attention to what's going on. Shadow the net control.  Keep your own list of check-ins and traffic. Really listen to the net control. Remember the receiving station calls first.

40. Before sending any traffic – proofread.  Check for an accurate group count fix any misspelling, mathematical errors, or missing words in the text. Like they say, PREEFROOD and check to be sure you didn't ___ anything out.

41. Finally, we've also been pleased with what we're *not* hearing on the nets. I mean controversial topics such as politics, religion, or criticism of other Hams. Being positive and supportive of each other while we concentrate on practicing traffic handling skills is what we do. So don't forget – especially during the political season – that our traffic nets are not the place for discussion of issues such as politics, religion, or public criticism.  This is K9LGU and I approved this message.