

NATIONAL TRAFFIC SYSTEM – NTS

The NTS format was written by the Amateur Radio Relay League (ARRL) and adopted by Radio Amateurs Canada (RAC) as the method of passing traffic in North America.

WHY USE NTS?

If all traffic handlers use the same format the risk of errors in message content is reduced.

In **EMERGENCY** situations accuracy in message handling is essential for the preservation of life.

It cannot be emphasized enough, the responsibility that rests on the shoulders of traffic handlers.

NTS RADIOGRAM

The radiogram has information which is a complete record of how and by whom the piece of traffic is handled.

In **EMERGENCY** and **PRIORITY** situations the radiogram becomes a legal document so a written copy must be retained.

The radiogram has four distinct sections, they are

PREAMBLE ADDRESS TEXT SIGNATURE

It is essential to make sure each section of the radiogram is accurately copied.

If in doubt about any part of the radiogram you must ask for clarification.

Failure to comply with this could result in errors of a vital nature.

PRACTICE

The only way to become proficient in traffic handling is to send and receive messages using the NTS format and by doing this on a regular basis.

You cannot hope to learn the passing of NTS traffic during an emergency.

Treat every piece of traffic you handle as if it were emergency traffic. By so doing you will adopt a mind set that will enable you act with confidence when confronted with real emergencies.

I repeat an earlier statement : **It cannot be emphasized enough, the responsibility that rests on the shoulders of traffic handlers.**

NTS RADIOGRAM

This is the basic format for the radiogram.

RADIOGRAM VIA AMATEUR RADIO							
Number	Precedence	HX	Station of Origin	Check	Place of Origin	Time Filed	Date
To					Notes		
Phone							
Signature							
Rec'd from	Date	Time	Sent to	Date	Time		

THE PREAMBLE

RADIOGRAM VIA AMATEUR RADIO							
Number	Precedence	HX	Station of Origin	Check	Place of Origin	Time Filed	Date

NUMBER This is the number of the radiogram which must remain with the radiogram. Use only figures, no leading zero's or letters.

PRECEDENCE The letter in this box indicates the importance of the radiogram. **R** for routine, **W** for welfare, **P** for priority and **EMERGENCY** is always spelled out.

HX This HX with a letter is called the handling instructions and indicates how to deal the message. This box is optional and may be left empty.

STATION OF ORIGIN This is the call sign of the station originating the radiogram. If you are putting a radiogram together you are the station of origin.

CHECK The number in this box tells how many groups in the text.

PLACE OF ORIGIN The place name in this box relates to the location of the person for whom this radiogram is being formulated.

TIME FILED The 24 hour clock is used in this box. If no time zone indicated the time is ZULU time. This box is optional and may be left empty.

DATE The month using the first three letters and the day, the year is not included.

ADDRESS

To

Phone

This is the address of the intended recipient of the radiogram and must include as much information as possible Full name of the person and call sign if applicable. Street address, city, zip or postal code plus a phone number if known. Phone number must have the area code included.

TEXT

Each word or group as it's called is written in the text boxes. There are five boxes to a line and five lines making a total of 25 groups which is the recommended maximum number for each radiogram.

SIGNATURE

Signature					
Rec'd from	Date	Time	Sent to	Date	Time

The signature is the name of the person who requested the radiogram and their location is the place of origin in the preamble.

The notes box is for the use of the traffic handler and does not include information to be passed to the recipient.

The last line of the radiogram is self evident.

COMPLETE RADIOGRAM

RADIOGRAM VIA AMATEUR RADIO							
Number	Precedence	HX	Station of Origin	Check	Place of Origin	Time Filed	Date
15	R		VE7GN	14	GABRIOLA BC		NOV25
ToJOHN DOE VE7DXD.....2500 NORTHWIND ROAD. SOMEWHERE BC V7R3V9 Phone .250 500 4581.....						Notes	
I		WILL	ARRIVE		AT	0930	
IN		THE	MORNING		PLEASE	ARRANGE	
TO		MEET	THE		TRAIN		
SignatureMIKE.....							
Rec'd from	Date	Time	Sent to	Date	Time		

The two boxes in the preamble **HX** and **Time Filed** are both optional

This example of a radiogram shows the absolute minimum amount of information required to enable delivery.

The following pages contain information to ensure the accuracy of sending and receiving messages.

PROWORDS

These are words that proceed a portion of the radio gram requiring clarification. Their use will be discussed later together with the phonetic alphabet.

NUMBER This proword is used to announce the message number.

FIGURES Used before any numbers are read. Figures count as a group of one in the text.

I SPELL Self evident

INITIAL Indicating a single letter. The single initial counts as a group of one in the text.

INITIALS Indicate the following will contain a group of letters. The initials count as a group of one in the text.

I SAY AGAIN Self evident.

MIXED GROUP Containing letters and figures. Counted as a group of one in the text.

MIXED GROUP FIGURES Indicating that figures will be followed by letters. Counted as a group of one in the text.

PHONE FIGURES Self evident.

BREAK This proword is spoken before and after the text.

AMATEUR CALL Self evident

END AND NO MORE End of radiogram

ROGER This proword is voiced by the receiving station **ONLY** after all has been received correctly.

X This letter replaces a period in the text. Do not end the text with **X**.

BREAK The word break is spoken before and after the text. The break allows for fills and corrections.

Prowords are not written down, they are voiced only to aid in the clarification of message handling as mentioned previously.

HX IN THE PREAMBLE

This is an optional part of the preamble. If used they give instructions for handling messages.

Handling Instructions

- 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 (TOD) to 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, time and method of delivery.
- HXE**--Delivering station get reply from addressee, originate message back.
- HXF**--(Followed by number.) Hold delivery until...(date).
- HXG**--Delivery by mail or landline toll call not required. If toll or other expense involved, cancel message and service originating station.

If the radiogram has **HX ...** in the preamble some action is requested. The instructions **HXB to HXE** require a reply to the station of origin.

TIME FILED

This is an optional part of the preamble. If included in the preamble it must be in the 24 hour format.

If the time is local time it must have the letter of the time zone after the figures e.g. Pacific Time would be written as 0930PST. If no letters are included the time will be taken as zulu time.

PHONETIC SPELLING

Phonetic Word List adopted by the
International Telecommunication Union

A	Alpha	N	November
B	Bravo	O	Oscar
C	Charlie	P	Papa
D	Delta	Q	Quebec
E	Echo	R	Romeo
F	Foxtrot	S	Sierra
G	Golf	T	Tango
H	Hotel	U	Uniform
I	India	V	Victor
J	Juliet	W	Whiskey
K	Kilo	X	X-ray
L	Lima	Y	Yankee
M	Mike	Z	Zulu

The use of standard phonetics makes the spelling of words easy to understand.

VOICING A RADIOGRAM

The headings of the preamble are NOT read out, with the exception of the first one.

RADIOGRAM VIA AMATEUR RADIO							
Number	Precedence	HX	Station of Origin	Check	Place of Origin	Time Filed	Date
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ToJOHN DOE VE7DXD.....2500 NORTHWIND ROAD. SOMEWHERE BC V7R3V9 Phone .250 500 4581.....						Notes	
I	WILL	ARRIVE	AT	0930			
IN	THE	MORNING	PLEASE	ARRANGE			
TO	MEET	THE	TRAIN				
SignatureMIKE.....							
Rec'd from	Date	Time	Sent to	Date	Time		

The prowords are printed in red . Do not write down the prowords they are for information only.

PREAMBLE

NUMBER ONE FIVE - ROUTINE - VICTOR ECHO SEVEN GOLF NOVEMBER - ONE FOUR -
 GABRIOLA **I SPELL** GOLF ALPHA BRAVO ROMEO INDIA OSCAR LIMA ALPHA
INITIALS BRAVO CHARLIE - NOVEMBER TWO FIVE

ADDRESS

JOHN **I SPELL** JULIET OSCAR HOTEL NOVEMBER – DOE **I SPELL** DELTA OSCAR ECHO
FIGURES TWO FIVE ZERO ZERO - NORTHWIND **I SPELL** NOVEMBER OSCAR ROMEO TANGO
 HOTEL WHISKY INDIA NOVEMBER DELTA – ROAD – SOMEWHERE **I SPELL** SIERRA OSCAR
 MIKE ECHO WHISKEY HOTEL ECHO ROMEO ECHO - **INITIALS** BRAVO CHARLIE
MIXED GROUP VICTOR SEVEN ROMEO THREE VICTOR NINE
PHONE FIGURES TWO FIVE ZERO FIVE ZERO ZERO FOUR FIVE EIGHT ONE

TEXT

After the address say BREAK and wait for receiving station to give you the go ahead.

I WILL ARRIVE AT **FIGURES** ZERO NINE THREE ZERO IN THE MORNING PLEASE
 ARRANGE TO MEET THE TRAIN

Say BREAK after sending the text and wait for receiving station to give you the go ahead.

SIGNATURE

MIKE **I SPELL** MIKE INDIA KILO ECHO END AND NO MORE

VOICING RULES

1. Speak slowly, imagine you are writing down what you are saying.
2. Use phonetic spelling for names of people, places and any unfamiliar words in the text.
3. If asked to repeat any part of the radiogram use phonetic spelling.
4. Pause between each group in the text.
5. Only use the proword ROGER after all is correctly received.
6. Never change text content.

ASKING FOR FILLS AND REPEATS

You have missed the dotted word and request a fill.

I WILL AT

I need the word after WILL and before AT.

or

..... WILL ARRIVE AT

I need the word before WILL

or

I
.....
.....
.....
.....

I need all after I

CORRECTING ERRORS IN THE CHECK AND TEXT GROUPS

If the CHECK figure in the preamble and the groups in the TEXT do not agree give the text again to resolve the problem. If there is incorrect information and the text has a different number of groups take the groups in the TEXT as being the correct figure. The CHECK in the preamble will be corrected as 13/14 and voiced as , ONE THREE CORRECTED TO ONE FOUR. Both operators must agree to the change. This is the ONLY change you can make to the radiogram.

ARL MESSAGES

These are messages used to shorten groups in the text. If they are included in the text the CHECK in the preamble will have the letteres ARL followed by the text groups e.g. ARL20

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	Moving to new location. Send no further mail or communication. Will inform you of new location 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 communications 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.

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 here 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 QSL's 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.

These 10 pages have enough information enabling you to send and receive a simple NTS radiogram. For further information on NTS there is a Handbook link on the homepage of my website.

www.ve7gn.ca My email address ve7gn@shaw.ca Mike VE7GN

NETS **BCEN** Daily CW net on 3652 at 1900 Pacific Time. This is an area net just for BC and Yukon.

BCYTN Daily SSB net on 3716 at 0230Z This is an area net just for BC and Yukon.

RN7 Daily SSB net on 7235 at 0945 and 1515 Pacific Time. This is a region 7 net including Alaska,

Albert , British Columbia, Yukon, Washington, Oregon , Montana and Idaho.

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