**2-28-19 ARES Training**

**Delivering a Radiogram with “ARL” Codes**

Back on the October 25th Wayne-Pike ARES Net we talked about **how to deliver a Radiogram message**. It was a pretty detailed training session and something that should be reviewed by all – you can see a copy of that training in the TRAINING LESSONS page on our Web Site… [www.WC-ARES.COM](http://www.WC-ARES.COM).

On page 2 of that lesson, the last paragraph of item number 4, there’s a short comment on messages that contain “ARL” Codes that probably should have been addressed in greater detail… that’s what we’re gonna do now.

For review, that paragraph reads “If the message contains an “ARL” Code… for example “ARL SIXTY ONE”… don’t bother to say “ARL SIXTY ONE” when reading the message… just tell the recipient the ***interpretation*** of the ARL Code… or, in this case, “Wishing you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year”.

Well, I got some “feedback” that “somebody I probably know” (whoever that might be) delivered a Radiogram and told the recipient the ARL Code number, not the translation… and it was suggested that “delivering a Radiogram” and how to deal with ARL Codes might be a good training topic… that person obviously didn’t know this was a topic we already covered… oh well…

The bottom line is that – when delivering a Radiogram – **we must assume that the recipient never heard of a “Radiogram” and doesn’t know what we’re talking about**… even if the recipient happens to be another ham radio operator! Yeah, “Radiograms” are obvious to some of us old-timers, but new hams may never have learned there is such a thing as a Radiogram.

Anyway, the point is that **ARL Codes are used to save word-count in Radiograms**… in the above example, “ARL SIXTY ONE” is 3 words, but the translation “Wishing you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year” is 11 words! In some cases there are ARL Codes that can reduce word-count by as much as 23 words, which would otherwise take up almost the whole 25 word limit of a Radiogram without any other commentary.

Anyway, when delivering a Radiogram with an ARL Code… or any other “ham radio lingo” such as “Q” codes or abbreviations, **write out the interpretation BEFORE delivering the Radiogram and read it to the recipient in PLAIN LANGUAGE.**

Even the Handling Instructions should be read in plain language… don’t say to the recipient “HOTEL X-RAY ECHO”, just say that “**a reply has been requested by the sender**”.

This is an important lesson as we’ll be soon doing a deep-dive on the Federal Emergency Management Agencies ICS-213 messaging form where there’s an emphasis on using plain language. It’s OK to use abbreviations, “Q” signals, HX codes, etc. when it’s a ham-to-ham messaging, but we’re obligated to use whatever messaging scheme that our Served Agencies require… and in most cases, that’ll be the ICS-213 format.

**Ham Radio Messaging Formats** - - - There are basically 3 kinds of messaging formats used by ARES… Casual Messaging, Radiograms, and the Federal Emergency Management’s ICS-213 messaging format.

* Casual – We already experienced an example of Casual messaging when we did our “Santa Toy Factory Drill” last December 20th. During that drill we assigned hams to be “deployed” to various Toy Factories run by Santa, and we pretended that Santa was stopping in at each factory to pick up toys to be wrapped and loaded into his sleigh for his Christmas Eve travels and deliveries. It was a fun event, but it also allowed us to practice messaging from the NCS to each station and inter-station with various items relating to the task-at-hand without using formal Radiograms as a means of messaging. The premise here is that each station – and the NCS – would keep rigorous notes in their personal log books about everything that took place involving them… anything they were told by on-site officials, anything they relayed to NCS, anything they were directed by NCS, etc. So, a record of the event was taking place which could be retrieved by viewing log books of all participants. We didn’t have to number the messages, use other preamble stuff, etc. If a formal Radiogram was necessary to communicate to a 3rd party, the NCS could draft it and send it.
* Radiograms – We’ve been studying and practicing standard ARRL Radiograms for quite some time now, and I don’t think it’s necessary to go into detail here on Radiogram uses and processes.
* ICS-213 – Then there’s the FEMA’s ICS-213 format… yeah… and we gotta learn about it to, as it’s very likely that any Served Agency that requests our communications assistance will require that we use the ICS-213 messaging format… and herein lies the “problem” – that is, the “problem” related to inadequacies of the ICS-213 compared to the Radiogram we’ve come to love and respect. Well, the good news is that WA2CCN has come up with a way to make use of the ICS-213 form AND retain all of the positive attributes of the Radiogram in a way that it conforms totally to the ICS-213 Instruction criteria set up by the FEMA… and this method has been reviewed by our very own District-3 EC, W.T. Jones, WN3LIF.

Now I know you’re all overwhelmingly excited about this new process, and next week we’ll begin training on the ICS-213 messaging format and how we’ll also include critical Radiogram-type info without CHANGING the ICS-213 message form !!! Stay tuned…