

NTS Operators' Guide
for Packet Radio Operation



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Preamble

1. Number – Start with 1 and number consecutively. Begin at number 1 again at the beginning of each year.
2. Precedence:
 - Emergency – An imminent life and death situation, Very rare and always spelled out.
 - P Priority – This means that there is a time value to the message text. It is usually used during disaster and occasionally during normal operations.
 - W Welfare – This message contains an inquiry or a reply of friends or relatives in a disaster area.
 - R Routine – Used for normal traffic where time is not important. It is used on 99.9% of all traffic.
3. Handling Instructions.
 - Optional and used only by the originating station. The most common are:
 1. HXE – originate a return message.
 2. HXG – cancel if a delivery expense is involved.
4. Station of Origin - This is the call sign of the Amateur Radio Station who first put the message on the air.
5. Check – The number of words, letter/number groups, and punctuation in the text.
6. Place of Origin – The city where the message sender generated the message.
7. Filing Time – Optional. When Used use UTC.
8. Date – Date of Origination. The format is Month, Day. The year is not required. The month should be written out. Example December 29.

Address

- 1 Complete name, include call sign if any.
- 2 Complete street address, including ZIP code.
- 3 Telephone number including Area code.

Text

Message - should be limited to 25-30 words including punctuation.

Signature

Name only. Love, Best regards, etc are part of the text.

[_Origination of NTS traffic_](#)

It takes a little study and thought to originate a message that you'll be proud to put your call on. Certainly you don't want SysOps across the USA laughing at your efforts, nor do you want to cause NTSOps any grief trying to deliver your message.

Let's say a neighbor asks you to send a Birthday greeting to her friend in Ohio. She has the complete address and phone number. You want to demonstrate your new packet station, so get right to it!

- ▶ Be sure of the address and phone number.
- ▶ If you know the address is a fellow Ham, include his/her call sign.
- ▶ If the address is not a Ham, but you are sure of the Packet BBS use the BBS call in the @ portion of the packet address.
- ▶ Write out your message and count the words. Too Long? The entry using an ARRL numbered text. If you don't find a list your log book or Callbook plan to pick up a list at your next ham fest. They are free at The ARRL booth. They may also be listed in a file at your local BBS. Type H (Help) for instructions on how to download the information.

Using ARRL numbered text .

Here is an example of how a ARRL numbered text can shorten a message.

```
NR 9 R W8DUV ARL 9 TAMPA FL APR 1
JOE JONES
10 BEACH PLACE
MOREHEAD CITY NC 28557
919-555-5555
BT
ARL FIFTY ONE LACKLAND SUN AND FUN X LOVE
BT
ANNIE ANDERSON
```

When delivered to a BBS in or near Morehead City, NC an alert NTS operator will see the listing, Read, Deliver & Kill the message. This is the message that Joe will receive:

```
GREETINGS BY AMATEUR RADIO.
THIS MESSAGE IS SENT AS A FREE PUBLIC SERVICE BY HAM RADIO OPERATORS HERE
AT LAKELAND SUN AND FUN. AM HAVING A WONDERFUL TIME.
LOVE ANNIE ANDERSON
```

The word count for the original message was nine. If it was sent without a numbered text the word count would have been 29.

How to put the message on packet.

1. Write out the message on a radiogram form or sheet of paper. Remember you are suppose to keep a copy in your files.
2. Count the words. If the count is over 25 try rewording or find a numbered text that says what you want.
3. Check the spelling and clarity.

If everything looks right connect to your HomeBBS. Since this is where you get your packet mail it is a logical place to file your NTS traffic.

After logging onto the BBS and receiving the usual greeting and prompt, type:

```
(1) (2) (3)
ST 43113 @ NTSOH
```

- (1) ST tells the BBS you are about to file a NTS message.
- (2) 43113 is the five digit ZIP code for the destination of the message.
- (3) @NTSOH – This part of the address is made up of the letters NTS and the two letter abbreviation of the destination.

The BBS will prompt you for a Title or Subject – enter

```
(4) (5)
Columbus 614 555
```

- (4) City at Destination.
- (5) 614 555 is the area code and station code. This way the operator at the other end can see by the listing determine if they can deliver the message without having to make a toll call.

At this point the BBS will prompt you for the text. Refer to your written copy . Don't forget the carriage returns.

Type:

NR 1 R HXG W8DUV 12 APOLLO BEACH FL MAR 25
JANE JONES
121 MAIN AVENUE
COLUMBAS OHIO 43113
614-555-5555
BT
HAPPY BIRTHDAY FROM YOUR FLORIDA FRIENDS X
COME VISIT SOON X LOVE
BT
THE ANDERSONS
AR
(Ctrl Z) or /EX

The BBS will acknowledge your message and give you a prompt for further commands. Type LL 1(list the last message) and note the message number assigned to the message. Remember a packet message will reach it's destination exactly as you typed it. Read the message (R msg#) and check your work. If there is a problem and you don't wish the message to be forwarded, Kill the message (K msg#). You may now disconnect or file another message.

[Delivery of NTS traffic](#)

If you have never delivered an Amateur Radio message here are a few tips.

1. Call the phone number listed in the message and ask for the addressee. Do not leave the message with someone other than the addressee. This may involve leaving your phone number or calling back.
2. Be sure to explain that you are a Amateur Radio Operator and not Western Union.
3. Translate all ARRL numbered texts in the Radiogram. (ARL 7 means nothing unless you have a list).
4. Read the message and the signature. Ask if they have the message OK. Read it again if necessary and ask if they would like to send a reply to the message and assure them that it will not cost them anything. If they do send a reply be sure to get a complete name and phone for the addressee.
5. You may want to leave your name and phone number in case they want to send a message at a later date. This is great for Amateur Radio.

Reminder: connect to the BBS and Kill the message that you just delivered. That decreases the chances that the message will be delivered twice. If you are sure you can deliver a message, Kill it when you Read it.

[Where to get help](#)

On the BBS -

- ✓ Type T and ask the BBS SysOp.
- ✓ Type H for Help with the BBS commands.
- ✓ Type W to see What Files are available.

ARRL – free operating aids are available at most hamfests or ask your NTS net manger.

The Internet - use a search engine and surf the many excellent Ham Radio Sites.

Florida Section Traffic Managers:

South Fla	K4PG
West-Central Fla	AB4XK
North Fla	WX4J

Florida Packet Managers:

North Fla	N4GMU
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Guidelines for Florida SysOps

I have suggested that users use the T command to talk the SysOP. Here are a few tips to make those summons less likely.

1. Remind the user to use the LT commands via the Greeting text or Prompt.
2. From time to time issue a local NTS bulletin to let the users know what Files are available and how to access them. A list of Whats available and where to find it might stimulate the packet Users and increase the BBS's usefulness. It is amazing how many operators connect to the BBS, type LM and when they have no mail – disconnect.
3. If you don't already have a file for NTSOps information, Please do so. Bulletins with BIDs NTSxxx can be filed automatically by some BBS software.
4. List NTS traffic everyday. NTSOps go on vacation, get sick & forget. Stale traffic (older than 3 days) should be re-routed to the appropriate Section Traffic Manager or Section Packet Manager.
5. Some SYSOps re-address NTS traffic to a specific user who is known to be a traffic handler. This is fine but it inhibits new operators from handling the traffic. The best policy is to assign the message only when it has spent a couple of days on the BBS without having anyone look at it.