

Packet Network Update

Date: August 19, 2015

From: Santa Clara County ARES/RACES Packet Committee

Subject: Packet Network Update – General Release of SCCo Packet Installer v109

Attention: All ECs, AECs, MACs and Santa Clara County Packet Users

This Packet Network Update contains important information which affects your ability to access and use the county packet network. This update covers the following topics:

- General Release of SCCo Packet Installer v109
- Action Item Summary for ALL Packet Users
- Questions / comments / concerns

Please read this information thoroughly, take any required or recommended actions, and pass along to any packet users in your local area.

General Release of SCCo Packet Installer v109

SCCo Packet Installer version 109 has moved from pre-release to general release status. It is now the standard installer for use by all Santa Clara County BBS users. PacFORMS remains unchanged from the previous installer version 89. The changes to Outpost are summarized below.

Three Main Changes

The three most important changes in Outpost for Santa Clara County users are as follows:

ER# 1190: Change PACTIME AFTER value from 1 to 2 in all XSC_... TNC setups

This works around a bug that exists in some TNCs which occurs when PACTIME AFTER is set to 1. The bug will cause the problem TNCs to send many small (10-12 character) packets instead of larger (128 character) packets. Such behavior dramatically lowers the overall throughput of the radio channel for both the user with the problem TNC and all other users on the same frequency. A setting of 2 causes the problem TNCs to fill each packet before sending it. And testing shows that a value of 2 does not produce any measurable performance degradation to TNCs that did not have the bug. Therefore, a consistent setting of "PACTIME AFTER 2" is now the standard.

Note: The "Standard TNC Parameter Settings" document was updated in July to reflect this new value for PACTIME AFTER.

ER# 1222, 1248, 1252, 1268: Session log enhancements

The Outpost Session log now includes the login/connect user name for each session, plus the following additional information for each sent or received message: "Date:" header (as received), Date local (as interpreted by Outpost in local PC time), "From:" header (as sent/received), From address (as interpreted by Outpost), "To:" header (as sent/received), "Cc:" header (as sent/received), To/Cc address (as interpreted by Outpost), "Subject:" header (as sent/received), and Local-ID (if assigned).

These additions to the log make it much easier for the user to see what happened during their session with the BBS. The information is also very useful when reporting a question or problem since it provides key information to match against the BBS system logs and other resources.

The session log is accessed as follows:

- In Outpost, navigate the menu path: Actions > View Outpost Data Directories
- Open the logs directory
- The Session log is named "sessionYYMMDD.log", where YYMMDD is the date.

ER# 1247, 1249, 1250, 1265, 1266, 1270, 1271: Address format enhancements

A critical part of the Santa Clara County ARES/RACES/ACS mission is health and welfare message traffic to and from the families of first responders and other emergency staff. The Santa Clara County BBSs are set up to handle e-mail to/from the Internet, as well as traditional packet message and bulletin traffic. But previous versions of Outpost did not interpret some forms of Internet addresses correctly. This version corrects those problem so that Outpost understands all valid Internet e-mail address formats. In addition, the session log enhancements described above help verify proper address handling by showing the actual address, as received, along with how Outpost interpreted the address.

Additional Fixes and Enhancements for Santa Clara County Users

The following additional fixes and enhancements are important to most Santa Clara County users:

- ER# 1217: Enable use of Delete key in the BBS, To, and Subject fields of a New Message
- ER# 1251: Add receipt exclusion for "mailer@..."
 - Outpost will no longer send read or delivery receipts to "mailer@..." addresses. This is the from-address used by JNOS to send non-delivery notifications via BBS forwarding.
- ER# 1253: Allow use of a space after the semi-colon between multiple addresses in the To field of new messages
- ER# 1257: Change PacFORMS detection: "!PACF!" must now begin in first column, not anywhere in the message
 - This prevents Outpost from incorrectly identifying some non-PacFORMS messages as PacFORMS
- ER# 1267: Corrected resend message function that does not properly set the form type for PacFORMS
- ER# 1260: Installer will delete the deprecated PacFORMS folder on the desktop

Other Fixes and Enhancements

The following additional fixes and enhancements are also included in this release:

- ER# 1045, 1256, 1259: Installer now allows selection of a custom data directory
- ER# 1242: Make telnet login user name case sensitive (needed for some non-JNOS BBSs)
- ER# 1243: Remove support for AA4RE Prompt for Tac Call Customization (code simplification)
- ER# 1255: Back out previous change for Reply-All (ER# 1072), which was not working correctly in all cases.
 - A Reply-All will now contain one's own address. Simply delete it from the To field if that is not desired.
- ER# 1264: Corrected handling incomplete generic ICS-213 message posted to the BBS (sender aborts)

Action Item Summary for ALL Packet Users

The use of installer version 109 is now standard for all Santa Clara County BBS users. All users are expected to upgrade.

- 1) Visit the software download page:
 - <http://www.scc-ares-races.org/packet/client-software.html>
- 2) Follow the instructions to download and run the installer
- 3) Perform basic setup of the "Outpost" profile
 - Setup > Identification (Enter call sign, name, message number prefix)
 - Setup > TNC (reselect your TNC from the pull-down menu)
 - Setup > BBS (reselect your BBS from the pull-down menu)
- 4) Send and receive a test message to yourself
- 5) IMPORTANT: Review any other user-created configurations (profiles, TNC setups, BBS setups). In particular, update any user-created TNC settings to use the new "PACTIME AFTER 2" setting. Compare all settings to the documented SCCo standards and make any needed updates. See the following documentation available on the Santa Clara County web site main packet page:
 - Standard Outpost Configuration Instructions
 - Standard TNC Parameter Settings

Questions / Comments / Concerns

That's all for this update. If you have a question, comment or concern, it is likely that someone else does, too. So please post it to the scc-packet Yahoo group. That way, everyone can see the question and the answer. URL: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/scc-packet>