

Packet Network Update

Date: May 14, 2017

From: Santa Clara County ARES/RACES Packet Committee

Subject: Packet Network Update – General Release of SCCo Packet Installer v129

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 v129
- New Recommended Installation Procedure
- 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 v129

SCCo Packet Installer version 129 has moved from pre-release to general release status. It is now the standard installer for use by all Santa Clara County BBS users. The changes are summarized below.

Outpost Changes

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

User Configurable Folders

Five user-configurable folders are added. The user can assign a name to each folder. The primary use will be managing workflow at a busy station. For example, after messages are printed, they can be moved to the “Printed” folder.

Profile Locking

The user can select whether changes to profiles are saved or not. “Always” is the original Outpost behavior. “Prompt” will ask the user if the change should be saved. This is what most people will want to use to avoid unintentional profile changes and is the new SCCo default. “Never” will likely be used by most EOCs. “Never” does not save the change and does not ask the user, avoiding well-intentioned but undesired changes.

Enhanced Bulletin Retrieval

A list of commands can now be configured for retrieving bulletins. This makes bulletin retrieval compatible with any BBS, including JNOS bulletin areas, and enhances user control and flexibility.

Station ID Enhancements

Users can more easily manage all FCC and tactical call signs used for the station ID. Each ID can now have its own signature.

New BBS Login Configuration

Telnet and Winlink login info is now associated with each individual BBS. Users pre-configure the password for each ID on each BBS. Outpost automatically picks the right password based on the selected ID and BBS.

Station ID Checked When Sending

Messages will only be sent if they were created by the user performing the Send action. This avoids one user sending a message that was created but not sent by a prior user, which could lead to confusion for the recipient.

Application Programming Interface

A new API has been created so that cities/agencies that want to create their own add-on message handler (like PacFORMS) can do so. The API allows the add-on developer to define how custom message types are handled within Outpost and how information is passed between Outpost and the add-on.

ICS-213MM Keep Local Feature

The generic ICS-213 message feature (not usually part of the Santa Clara County workflow) can now be used to send messages on a local network, without the need to connect to a BBS. This is useful for mesh networking.

PacFORMS Changes

The following changes to PacFORMS are included in this release.

New EOC-213RR Resource Request Form

A new, two-page Resource Request form has replaced the Logistics Request form. The old Logistics Request form will still be handled properly if received from a station that has not yet updated to this release.

General Display Enhancement

All PacFORMS were updated to have more consistent fonts and background colors and to print more consistently with the automated printing function of the Advanced Packet Logger used at the county EOC.

New Recommended Installation Procedure

The software download web page defines a recommended installation procedure for use by all users, but especially where multiple Windows accounts will be accessing Outpost or where the Outpost user is not a Windows administrator. The new procedure places the Outpost data directory in a location that is accessible by all Windows accounts. Consult the client software download page for more details:

<http://www.scc-ares-races.org/packet/client-software.html>

Action Item Summary for ALL Packet Users

The use of installer version 129 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 profiles to the new SCCo defaults. 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>