



# Monthly Packet Message Passing Exercise Review

Period: 02/16/2022 09:00 to 02/23/2022



Santa Clara County ARES®/RACES/CRU

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# Simulated Shelters and Messages Passed

Number counts from the Xanadu EOC ICS-309 (as of 18:12):

Checkpoints assigned (people signed up):	28
Checkpoints participating:	26
Messages sent *:	532
Form EOC213RR	35
Form ICS-213	116
Other	387
Courtesy	6

Thank you for participating in this exercise!!!!

\* Excluding DELIVERED:, includes resends

# Exercise Objectives

- Based on SCC documentation
  - SCCo ARES/RACES Packet Operations - Type III, Part A and Part B courses
  - How to Send a Packet Message with Outpost - 09/19/2013
  - Standard Packet Message Subject Line - 02/22/20202
  - Standard Packet Check-in/Out Message - 09/25/2022
  - Outpost Users Guide, Basics; Version 3.4 | July 2020
  - RACES Recommended Form Routing Cheat Sheet [Rev: 04-May-2019]
- Exercise simulated 3<sup>rd</sup> party and operator-to-operator messages
  - Check-In and Check-Out
  - Plain-text messages
  - ICS-213 sending and receiving
  - XSC OA EOC213RR Resource Request \*\*
  - XSCEVENT and City Notice retrieval
- In addition
  - Outpost configuration
  - Challenges for form completeness
  - Following instructions

\*\* we don't exercise these very much, if at all

# How did we do?

- XSCEVENT notice downloaded and followed by most
  - ?? responses (we discovered issues, see NOTE below)
  - Apologies on corrected posting, see next slides
- City Notice XND@XSC downloaded and followed by less
  - ?? responses (we discovered issues, see NOTE below)
  - SCCo ARES/RACES Packet Operations - Type III, Part B course, page 90 “Using City Bulletins”
- Check-In and Check-Out
  - Better
- Radio Routing cheat sheet still needs to be studied
- Some “Fax Machine” performance issues on EOC213RR
- Some detail following variation on estimated crowd count instructions
- Challenges: noticed posting problems, county drill on Saturday taking down W1XSC from 0800 to 1400, Packet Manager error on Tuesday ECO script “burp”, a lot of MTV city notices, W4XSC down for an hour on Wednesday afternoon.

# Heads up on line endings in Outpost

## Apologies on Corrected notice reposts

- A little lesson learned, already been in discussion with Jim Oberhofer on a potential solution.
- Outpost expects text from cut and paste operations to be in the “End Of Line” format for Windows: CRLF
- If one does a copy and paste from text file created from another environment (e.g. Mac or Linux) directly into Outpost the EOL will be only LF. The Outpost editor shows that everything is fine, however send transmitting to a BBS the LF’s are removed.
- This happens with Notepad++ as it preserves the EOL that is present in the cut&paste text. To correct: Edit->EOL Conversion and select “Windows (CR LF)”. You can also use the Show All Characters ¶ button to toggle showing special editing characters.
- The MS Notepad app automagically converts to Windows (CR LF) and doesn’t have the problem.

# The Checkpoint Assignment, what to cut&paste

Your tactical number:	60
Your From <u>ICS Position</u> :	Radio Operator
Your From <u>Location</u> :	"Xanadu City Parade Checkpoint 60". You can also use: "Checkpoint 60"
Your Tactical Call Sign is:	XND060 ( <i>Reminder: this is your Outpost-&gt;Setup-&gt;Tactical-&gt;Tactical Call Sign</i> )
Your message prefix is:	X60
Start your message numbering at:	Choose any starting number you want, but make sure you know how to change this number in Outpost
Incident Name:	Xanadu City Fat Tuesday Parade
Activation Number:	XND-22-0301P
Your BBS:	Use your normal primary/secondary. There is no simulated-down BBS for this exercise
Simulated physical location:	Pick a nearby street intersection and use the street names.
Xanadu City EOC mailbox:	<a href="mailto:XNDEOC@W1XSC.ampr.org">XNDEOC@W1XSC.ampr.org</a> (primary) <a href="mailto:XNDEOC@W4XSC.ampr.org">XNDEOC@W4XSC.ampr.org</a> (secondary)
XND EOC activation period:	From Wednesday, 02/16/22 09:00 until Wednesday, 02/23/22 17:00
Voice communications with Xanadu EOC:	For simulated voice net messages, call the EOC at <b>650-542-8987</b> and leave a voice message. (Yes, this really works for this exercise). Ref: 2021 Packet Type III Part B course, slide "Standard Packet Subject Line"

# How did we do ? EOC213RR – FAX Machine

EOC-213RR Resource Request	If "Priority" is:	Then "Handling" is:	County EOC	Planning Section
	Now	Immediate (ASAP)		
	High (0-4 hrs)	Immediate (ASAP)		
	Medium (5-12 hrs)	Priority (<1 hr)		
	Low (12+ hrs)	Routine (<2 hrs)		

Field Name	Value
Requested by:	Eddie Munster, local parade official Xanadu City, <a href="mailto:eddie@themunsters.tv">eddie@themunsters.tv</a> , 555-8675309
Prepared by:	you
Approved by:	Eddie Munster
Qty:	8
Resource:	barricades for street control
Arrival:	+2 hours from now (when you started this from)
Priority:	High (maps via Radio Routing cheat sheet to RACES OA EOC213RR handling order -> Immediate)
Delivery to:	Eddie Munster, local parade official Xanadu City, <a href="mailto:eddie@themunsters.tv">eddie@themunsters.tv</a> , 555-8675309
Location:	Your street intersection
Special instructions:	barricades must be in place by HH:MM and then taken after HH:MM .....

Requested by: Eddie Munster, Local Parade Official, Xanadu City, [eddie@themunsters.tv](mailto:eddie@themunsters.tv), 555-8675309; Prepared by: you; Approved by: Eddie Munster; Qty: 8; Resource: barricades for street control; Arrival: +2 hours from now (when you started this form); Priority: High; Deliver to: Eddie Munster; Location: your street intersection; Special instructions: barricades must be in place by HH:MM and then taken after HH:MM and anything else you want in this field.

# How did we do ? EOC213RR

EOC-213RR Resource Request	If "Priority" is:	Then "Handling" is:	County EOC	Planning Section
	Now	Immediate (ASAP)		
	High (0-4 hrs)	Immediate (ASAP)		
	Medium (5-12 hrs)	Priority (<1 hr)		
	Low (12+ hrs)	Routine (<2 hrs)		

- The form's "High (0-4 hrs) priority maps to an Immediate Handling Order
- Some common issues:
  - Missing "this is exercise traffic"
  - ICS To Position should be "Planning Section" or just "Planning".  
Number of checkpoints sent to "Logistics".
  - FAX issues on Qty: "8", Resource: "barricades for street control"
  - ICS From Position and Location should have defaulted to assignment

Requested by: Eddie Munster, Local Parade Official, Xanadu City, eddie@themunsters.tv, 555-8675309; Prepared by: you; Approved by: Eddie Munster; Qty: 8; Resource: barricades for street control; Arrival: +2 hours from now (when you started this form); Priority: High; Deliver to: Eddie Munster; Location: your street intersection; Special instructions: barricades must be in place by HH:MM and then taken after HH:MM and anything else you want in this field.



# How did we do ? EOC213RR – Voicemail?

- 10 voicemails were recorded from Checkpoints out of 26
- For voicemail messages left at the simulated Xanadu City Voice net:
  - Thank you for leaving them!!!!
  - However, most of them were way too many words, and didn't simulate actual Voice Net (e.g. Command Net) traffic.
- In an actual voice net conversation, something like this:
  - > Net Control this is Checkpoint XX with an Immediate message
  - < Go Ahead Checkpoint XX
  - > You have an Immediate packet message to pick up from us on your BBS. This is <your FCC call sign>
  - < Thank you Checkpoint XX, this is <XNDEOC's FCC call sign>
- So to make this work in this simulated environment:
  - Something like: This is Checkpoint XX. You have an immediate packet message to pick up from us on your BBS. This is <your FCC call sign>

# Correction Pkt 3B posted 2/19: proper page 70

## Standard Packet Subject Line

**[OriginatorMsg#]\_[HandlingOrder]\_[Subject]**

**Example: XND-200P\_R\_Packet 3B Class Exercise Instructions**

### **[OriginatorMsg#]**

- 3-character message prefix for the originator, a hyphen, followed by a message number.
- Outpost adds a P suffix if it generates the message number

### **[HandlingOrder]**

- 1-letter indicator as follows:
  - **I = Immediate**
  - **P = Priority**
  - **R = Routine**

### **[Subject]**

- Short description of the contents of the message
- Autofilled by PackItForms or entered by you

### **NOTE on Immediate's:**

**Immediate** messages usually are sent by voice. But, if an **Immediate** has to be sent via packet, send it PLUS send/receive asap, and also contact the TO: party by a voice net (e.g. command net, message net) to let them know an **Immediate** message is coming their way via packet.

# How did we do ? Estimated Crowd Count

- Modeled after Los Altos Festival of Lights crowd counts
  - Checkpoints report average "rows of people" standing watching the parade
  - Number is typically half steps from 1 to 5, e.g. 3.5
- Our packet exercise
  - Some missing "this is exercise traffic"
  - Some reporting total people not rows deep

<b>T O</b>	ICS Position: <sup>7</sup> Radio Operator	<b>F R O M</b>	ICS Position: <sup>8</sup> Planning
	Location: <sup>9</sup> All Xanadu City Checkpoints		Location: <sup>9</sup> Xanadu City EOC
	Name:		Name:
	Telephone #:		Telephone #:
Subject: <sup>10</sup> please prepare and send a crowd estimation count			
Reference: <sup>11</sup>			
Message: <sup>12</sup> The Xanadu EOC is estimating the number of people that are viewing the parade. Please send an routine ICS-213 message to Planning with a simulated average number of rows of people around your intersection. This is to simulate you standing at one corner of an intersection, and you look left then right and average the number of rows of people on both sides of the street. Please use the subject "Estimated crowd count for Checkpoint XX".			
[**** This is exercise traffic [20220216 1-ics213-2] ****]			

# How did we do ? ICS-309

- Gentle reminders for some:
  - If the event has an Activation Number (real or simulated), that number should go in the “Task #” box
  - The Task Name was instructed to be “Xanadu City Checkpoint XX – Monthly Message Exercise” with a Reminder to replace the XX with your tactical number.
    - Probably some cut and paste errors
- An Internet-originated email was sent to [XDDEOC@W4XSC.ampr.org](mailto:XDDEOC@W4XSC.ampr.org)
  - It contained an ICS-309 mime attachment, 283K bytes, way too big to go over radio
  - Our sysops noticed this and we were able to deal with it over an Internet session
  - Also won’t count as turned it in even if sent to primary BBS for XDDEOC as it can’t be opened and won’t transfer
- Note for future: avoid large messages sent from the Internet to our BBS system.
- Otherwise nice!

Future Exercise Stuff

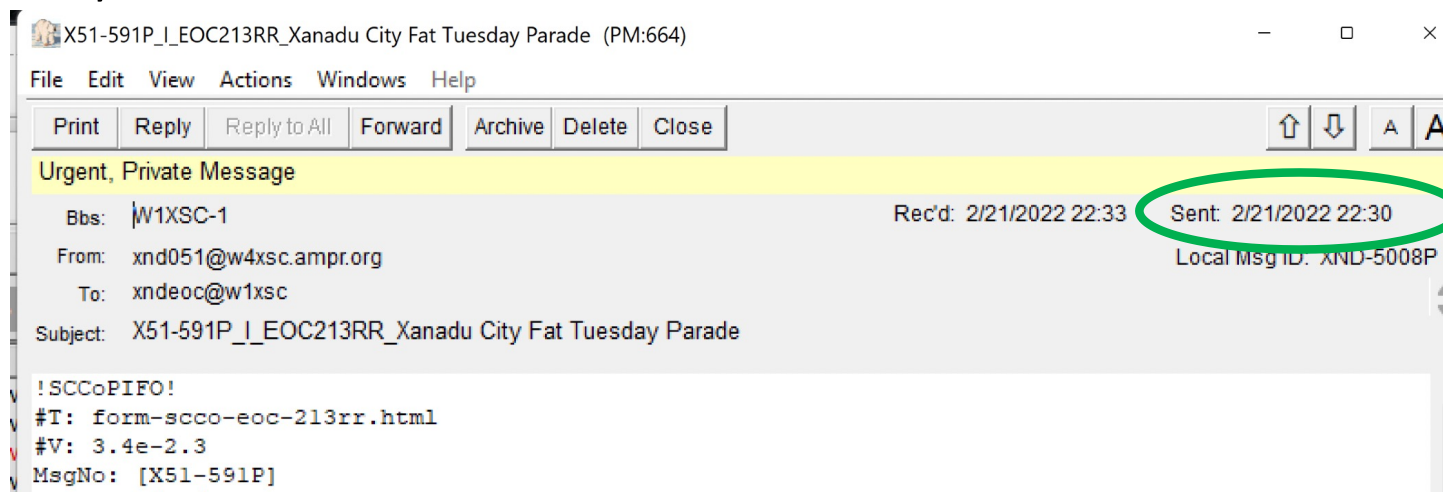
# **SCC MONTHLY PACKET MESSAGE PASSING EXERCISE**

# ICS-213 Field 11?

11. **Reference:** If the message is a response to an earlier message, indicate the original message number if available.
- Only a few checkpoints filled in this ICS-213 field when taking action from instructions in an XNDEOC message.
  - Future: start filling this out “if available”
    - It will become a future score card item for ICS-213 responses
  - What about other forms? -> optional as there is no field.
    - Plain text responses? Suggest: add a separate line beginning with “Reference: “ and add the appropriate number anywhere in the message content.
    - Other forms that don’t have a “Reference” field. If there is a field box that permits extra text, e.g. the same place you would be stating “\*\*\*\* this is exercise traffic \*\*\*\*”

# Handling order: Immediate Packet Message processing

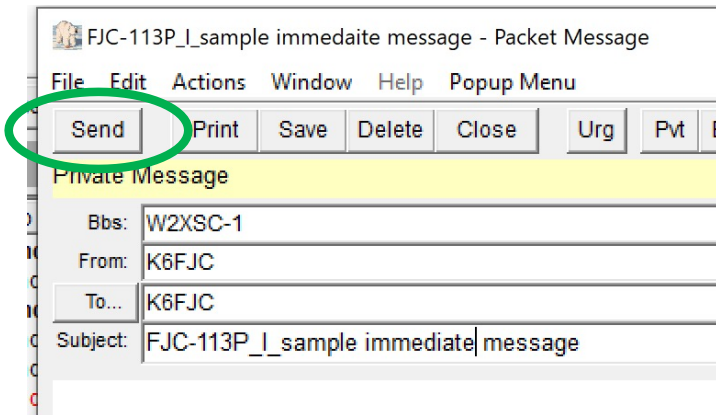
- Future exercises may include Immediate packet messages
- The Xanadu City voice net simulation using a voice mail box will be available for each exercise if provided in your assignment.
- The time of voice mail message will be compared to the packet message “Sent” time as viewed by Xanadu EOC:



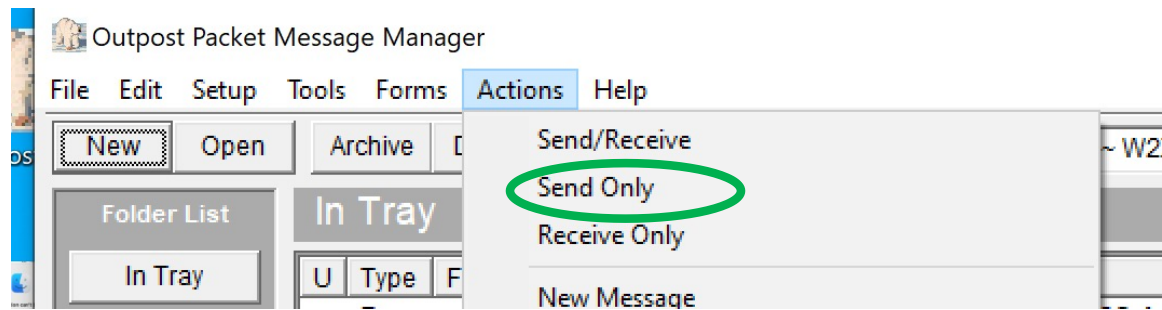
- Aim for no more than 3 minutes delta from Sent time to Voicemail start time.
- Reminder: “voice” the message as if it actually over a voice net, e.g., “This is “<ICS Location>”. *You have an Immediate message to pick up from us on your BBS. This is <your FCC call sign>*”, or something similar

# Handling order: Immediate Packet Message processing

- Suggestion: If you are using Outpost and if you are typing in an Immediate message, after you complete the message, click the usual Send:



- Then promptly do a send only:



- When BBS session is complete, inform your supervisor. They (or you) should contact recipient via a voice method and tell them to pick up their immediate message.

# Future Scoring:

- Green – everything good
- Yellow – nits
- Orange – EOC/message processing problems:
  - Proper sorting ordering based on Handling Order for multiple messages
  - Incorrect RACES Radio Routing Cheat Sheet information, e.g.:
    - Incorrect Handling
    - Incorrect To ICS Position or To Location
  - “FAX Machine” items:
    - Activation numbers and incident names
    - Qty’s, resources names, part numbers, etc., in forms
    - Delivery locations
    - Contact information
    - “Auto-correcting” “typos”
    - Etc.

NOTE: minor update to cheat sheet -> Rev: 19-Feb-2022, to clarify that during real events, use the sheet unless told different by message originator, for exercises follow the exercise instructions. Biggest impact “County EOC” -> “Xanadu City EOC” for this practice.

# Future: Efficient and Sufficient

- We don't teach this in our courses at this time.
- In a real world event, many jurisdictions will be using the packet system.
- There will likely be significant “competition” for getting packet messages transmitted over RF resources
  - Need to keep the amount of characters down to what is necessary
- A “good citizen” approach would be to use the RF resources effectively and minimize time “on the wire” to communicate exactly what is needed and nothing more – be efficient.
- This is in balance with providing sufficient information in each message.
- For packet exercises, consider:
  - For forms:
    - Fill out the fields as filled out in what was given to you.
    - Use “common sense” to fill out any additional fields – no need to fill out everything.
  - For plain text and operator-to-operator:
    - Stick to the requested information and format requested.
- This will be a nit point for the future.

# More fun for folks wanting to challenge themselves in the future

Current event sign-up positions are:

- Primary
- Alternate

Will be adding a 3rd:

- Manual

This is for folks wanting to work on P2 material for packet message passing without using Outpost (just PackItForms) and those wanting to get practice working towards a future P2 eval. This is NOT for everyone. The intent is to complete the entire monthly message passing practice without using Outpost at any time.

Note: you will need hand fill out the ICS-309, scan and email

# Summary

- Nice job again, great participation for this go!
- Areas for continued practice have been identified

## Next practice starts:

- Wednesday, 16 March, 2022 at 09:00
- SCC Event will be posted in the near future

## Next UP: Exercise Scorecard

- Reminder, there is no pass or fail
- The scorecard is a tool for indicating areas for improvement