



# Monthly Packet Message Passing Exercise Review

Period: 10/19/2022 09:00 to 10/26/2022 17:00



Santa Clara County ARES®/RACES/CRU

Last Updated: 31 Oct 2022 (boo!)

Author: Mark Laubach K6FJC

ARES and Amateur Radio Emergency Service are registered service marks of the American Radio Relay League Incorporated and are used by permission.

# Simulated Shelters and Messages Passed

Approximate number counts from the Xanadu EOC ICS-309 (as of Wed.):

Shelters assigned (total):		22
Participating / staff:		14 / 2
Content Messages exchanged *:		236
	Form ICS-213 / Routine	21
	Form ICS-213 / Immediate	20
	Form Plain Text .csv	18
	Other	177
	Courtesy	0

Thank you for participating in this exercise!!!!

- Excluding DELIVERED. Overall including DELIVERED 476 messages

# 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 - 02/22/2022
  - 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: 19-Feb-2022]
- Exercise simulated 3<sup>rd</sup> party and operator-to-operator messages
  - Check-In and Check-Out using new form
  - XSCEVENT and XND@XSC City Notice retrieval
  - ICS-213, including one with Immediate
  - Plain Text .CSV
- In addition
  - Outpost configuration
    - Tactical Call
    - Message number setting via

# How did we do in general?

- More missing City Notice XND@XSC reads than expect.
- Message Numbering: most everyone use their assignment starting msg number
- ICS-213 Reference field – use it. Most check points did not
- Several messages missing \*\*\*\* this is exercise traffic \*\*\*\*
- More subject line errors and resends than expected
- Just a few “fax machine” errors
- .CSV info in a plain text message mostly went well. More practice is in our future.
- Reminder on notes to the radio operator that are brackets by “<” and “>”. Don’t send the brackets or the note text.
- We still have multiple problems with lining up information on the National ICS-309 form that is used by Outpost – tried to leave some hints in the instructions
- Also, reminder to send/received all the messages after the Check-out before building your ICS-309 data.
- Simulated voice radio traffic using Xanadu City voicemail box. Most everyone did fine, but we’ll look at the results in a later slide
  
- All in All – Nice!

# The Field Post Assignment:

Your tactical number: 21  
Your From ICS Position: Radio Operator  
Your From Location: "Xanadu City Halloween Parade Check Point 21". You can shorten to: "Check Point 21" where applicable.  
Your Tactical Call Sign is: XND021  
Your message prefix is: X21  
Starting message number: 2100  
Incident Name: Xanadu City Halloween Parade  
Activation Number:  
(also ICS-309 Task#) XND-22-1019P  
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 County EOC mailbox: [XDNEOC@W1XSC.ampr.org](mailto:XDNEOC@W1XSC.ampr.org) (primary)  
[XDNEOC@W4XSC.ampr.org](mailto:XDNEOC@W4XSC.ampr.org) (secondary)  
XND EOC activation period: From Wednesday, 10/19/22 09:00 until Wednesday, 10/26/22 17:00  
Simulate Voice communications with Xanadu EOC: For simulated voice net messages, call the EOC at **650-542-8987** and leave a voice message, SMS/MMS accepted, but voice messages are preferred. \*\*  
Ref: [2021 Packet Type III Part B course, slide "Standard Packet Subject Line"](#)  
You signed up as a: Primary\_Station\_test

\*\* New Information: instructions for notifying recipients of incoming Immediate messages have now been provided on the training page.

# How'd we do: City Notice

**only “OK”, 5 of 19 missed:**

- 4 of 19 no acknowledgement!
  - Based on last month with Andreas' review, about same
- 1 of 19 looked like a copy & paste re-use of XSCEVENT
- Even with the knowledge stimulation message:  
“Did you retrieve both XSCEVENT and XSC city notices?”  
could have gone back, retrieved and sent the requested message.

# How'd we do: Starting Status

- Check-in Ack & Welcome
- URL "handed to you" method explained
- Reminder on DD, HH, MM replacements
- Added +time instructions
- First URL message
- Note about "<" and ">" notes to you

Check-In to the Xanadu City Packet Net for this month's message passing communication exercise. You have these guidelines and assignments:

1) Please make sure each message you send has this somewhere in the message content:

\*\*\*\* This is exercise traffic \*\*\*\*

2) This month's practice will simulate forms being handed to you by your location's manager available as PDF via URL.

a) After they "hand" you the form(s), they walk away and are not available for updates/corrections.

Reminder: you are a FAX machine

b) You may need to complete the form using the Radio Routing Cheat sheet and your best judgement.

c) They don't know about Guideline 1). You will need to add to any form missing this. Add to an appropriate field within the form.

3) In any messages you are asked to transmit:

a) If you see an "XX" (double-X), replace the XX with your assigned tactical number.

b) Replace any "DD" with the actual day value that you are transmitting the form for the exercise.

c) "HH" and "MM" with current 24-hour clock hour value and the current minutes value

d) If you see a "+time" add the correction to the current time. For example, if the form has "HH:MM+3h", use your current time plus 3 hours, or "08/DD/2022+tomorrow", would be enter tomorrow's date for the DD replacement.

4) Please prepare and send a routine ICS-213 to Operations at Xanadu City EOC describing your packet station used for this exercise:

Make and model of radio(s), power output, coax cable type, length of coax, make/model of antenna, and the height of the antenna above ground.

If you set up in an alternate location, approximately where is it located relative to your primary location?

Use the Subject: Packet equipment for Check Point XX

5) Note: This exercise may put some notes into the forms for various fields. A note to you is bracketed by "<" and ">" signs. For example, you may see:

"<enter your simulated field post address>"

Simply, replace the brackets and the note text with the requested text for that field.

[20221019 1-check-in-ack]

# ICS-213 on Packet equipment for Check Point XX

- Mostly great equipment listing
- Many missed using the Reference field
  
- We'll practice some more on this in the coming months.

# ICS-213 on Lost Child backup report

- Normally, we wouldn't expect to send a packet follow-up to what appeared to be successful voice communication.
- But yes, this was totally contrived to:
  - Force an ICS-213 form to be used
  - Practice handling Handling Order Immediate messages
- Then again, we are a communicator and if our supervisor/manager hands us a form to transmit, we do it.

# Immediate Message instructions on training page

From time to time, packet operators may need to send a message with a Handling Order of **Immediate** [1]. When sending an Immediate message, please follow this checklist:

1. If you are just handed an Immediate message and are already entering a lower priority message, stop working on the lower priority message:
  - If a PackitForm, switch windows to Outpost.
  - If an Outpost text form, hit "Save" to save the message to the Draft folder.
2. Open the new message/Form.
3. If a formal message, make sure the Handling Order of Immediate is checked (clicked) before submitting to Outpost.
4. Make sure the "Urg" flag is set for the Outpost message indicating "Urgent: Private Message"
5. If there are any other non-Immediate messages in the Outpost Out Tray, for each message right click on the message, and select "Move to.." the Draft folder.
6. Perform a "Send Only" Action in Outpost before entering any other non-Immediate messages that might be in your "stack".
7. When the Immediate message has been transferred to the intended BBS, contact the recipient via an appropriate voice method, e.g. Command Net, Phone Call [2], etc.
8. Your message should be short and concise. Follow this example for a voiced message:

*"Recipient this is tactical call. You have an immediate packet message to retrieve from us with message number msg number. FCC callsign"*

For example for Check Point 31 and X31-223P:

*"Xanadu EOC this is Check Point 31. You have an immediate packet message to retrieve from us with message number "Xray"31-223"Papa". K6FJC" [3]*

9. For any message moved from the Out folder -> Draft folder, go back and re-open each message and click Send

NOTE [1]: Only use this procedure for Immediate handling order messages and not for Priority or Routine messages.

NOTE [2]: Voice is preferred, but if SMS is available for the recipient, you can type the same message and send via SMS.

NOTE [3]: Keep the proword voicing as simple as possible, no need for "Mixed Group" as each side knows it is a packet message number already.

## Immediate Handling Order Messages:

# VM Message Statics

	VM Time	VM Words	CP		Words/Sec
Min	12	16			0.7
Max	55	84			1.9
Average	27	33			1.3
CPs			16		
Golden	15	22	21		1.5

# During meeting discussion: Immediate

- Andreas pointed out that we're structuring the exercise for this event to gather feedback on using a simulated voice frequency for tell the recipient they need to pick up an Immediate message.
- One intent of this exercise is to focus on simulating an actual voice radio net with a PTT, essentially:
  - Think about the Immediate pickup notification message
  - PTT
  - Say the message clearly and concisely using the minimum number of words – as if on a voice net.
  - Release PTT

# Plain Text CSV file

- Better than expected.

# More work in Outpost ICS-309 instructions and form generation.

- Given the differences in field names and positions on the forms between the national ICS-309 used by Outpost and the SCCo ICS-309 we use in the county, future instructions will be made more explicit:
  - What to put in the Task ID box:
    - The event activation number – if one has been assigned
  - What to put in the Task Name box:
    - Shortened event name, a dash (“-”), followed by the shortened tactical name
      - E.g. Xanadu Halloween Parade – Check Point 99
- There was also some differences about where to enter the above information:
  - Forms -> IC3-309 Communications Log
  - Tools -> Report Settings -> ICS-309 tab
  - The text on the report settings page says “These fields are required by the ICS-309 Comm Log report and can be entered here or on the report form directly.”
  - Will provide examples on both in the future

# Summary

Nice participation for this go!

Next practice will be November 16 2022, 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday

- Maybe this time there will be pumpkins?

Next UP: Exercise Scorecard

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