



# Monthly Packet Message Passing Exercise Review

Period: 12/21/2022 09:00 to 12/28/2022 17:00



Santa Clara County ARES®/RACES/CRU

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# Simulated Shelters and Messages Passed

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

Toy Dropoffs assigned (total):		26
Participating / staff:		23 / 2
Content Messages exchanged *:		
	Form ICS-213 / Routine	104
	RACES-MAR	25
	Courtesy	0
	Plain text	lots

Thank you for participating in this exercise!!!!

- \* Excluding DELIVERED 413. Overall including DELIVERED 781 messages
- \*\* some error return messages were observed

# 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
  - Simulated handwritten message
  - RACES-MAR

# How did we do in general?

- “Bad Xanadu EOC” forgot to post XSCEVENT and XND@XSC notices
  - Thanks Thomas!
- ICS-213 Reference field – use it. Several posts did not
- Some “fax machine” errors
- “Dropoff” is one word
- Reminder:
  - If you get a Delivered receipt message back and no other messages, compare the Subject: line of the message you just sent against the instructions/directions/form content
  - If you suspect a problem email the Instructor promptly
  
- All in All – Nice!

# The Field Post Assignment:

**Simulated Scenario for this month's exercise:** you have been assigned as a packet radio operator for a Xanadu City Holiday Toys for Kids Dropoff location. Your Dropoff location is at a simulated intersection nearest your own home.

Your tactical number: 31  
Your From ICS Position: Radio Operator  
Your From Location: "Xanadu City Holiday Toys for Kids Dropoff 31". You can shorten to: "Toy Dropoff 31" where applicable. (this is also your Tactical Name for check-in/check-out)  
Your Tactical Call Sign is: XND031  
Your message prefix is: X31  
Starting message number: your\_choice  
Incident Name: XND Holiday Toy for Kids Drive  
Activation Number:  
(also ICS-309 Task#) XND-22-1221P  
Your BBS: Use your normal primary/secondary. There is no simulated-down BBS for this exercise  
Simulated physical location: Choose a street intersection near you that would be suitable for a simulated Dropoff location.  
Xanadu County EOC  
mailbox: [XNDEOC@W1XSC.ampr.org](mailto:XNDEOC@W1XSC.ampr.org) (primary)  
[XNDEOC@W4XSC.ampr.org](mailto:XNDEOC@W4XSC.ampr.org) (secondary)  
XND EOC activation period: From Wednesday, 12/21/22 09:00 until Wednesday, 12/28/22 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

# How'd we do: City Notice

- Everyone did fine - did not count lack of "read" message
- Xanadu EOC Packet Manager will try to avoid next month
- Thomas noted that one station tried to retrieve area notices using "XND01" instead of "ALLXSC"

# 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) for stating drill traffic in the message, 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:

a) Number of personnel present at your Toy Dropoff, including yourself. Answer with in the form:

Number of people present: NN

where NN is the total number of people at your position.

b) Brief description of packet station, please mention if you have a printer and also your approximate run time assuming you are on battery power, as well as the TNC make and model you are using.

c) Answer the question: What is the top item on your wish list for packet equipment this holiday?

Use the Subject: opening status for Toy Dropoff 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.

[20221221 1-check-in-ack]

# Getting variations on:

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

- Some with no asterisks
- One with “\*\*\*\* This is an exercise \*\*\*\*”

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 ****
```

# ICS-213 on opening status for Toy Dropoff XX

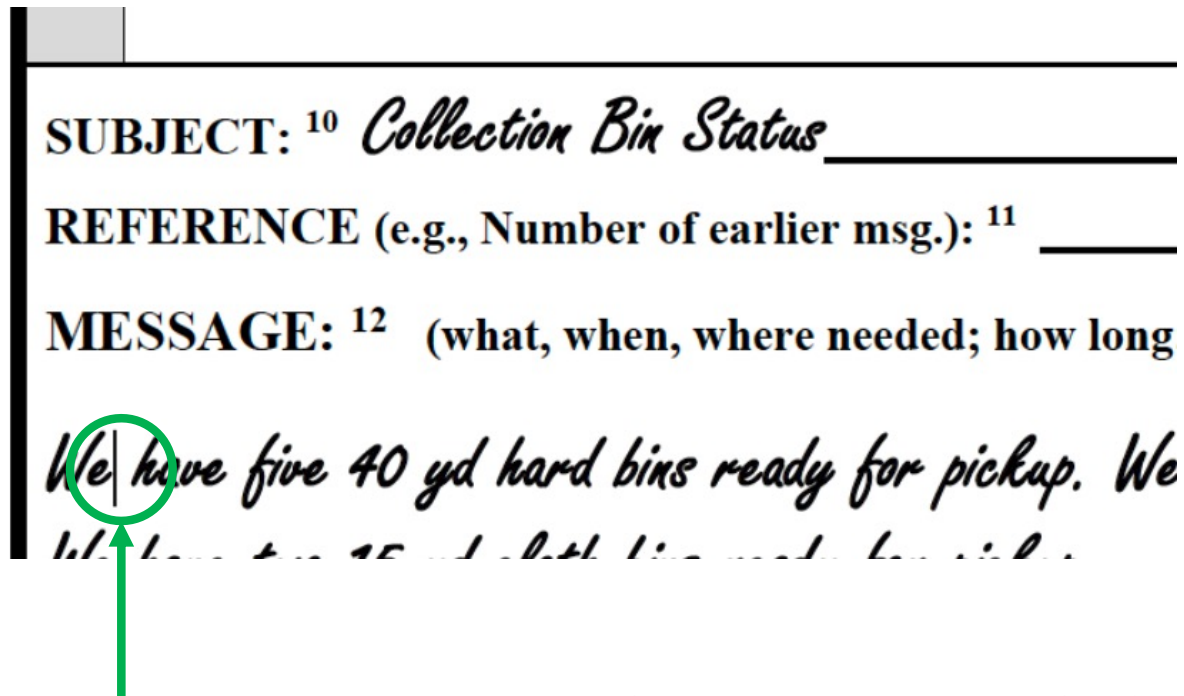
- 10 out of 22 Toy Dropoffs missed filling out the Reference field.
  - Yes, we will keep practicing this...
- Equipment lists varied, which is expected.
- Most messages contained a top packet equipment wish item

# Top Wishes

- Replacement USB connector on Kantronix unit
- Rebuild the Packet box
- printer
- Rigrunner (backordered to May 2023)
- Tiny VNA
- an additional LiPO4 batter to extend power capability.
- Packet wish list: Outpost/PackItForms that runs on a Mac
- an Off-Grid Solar Power kit (two 100W panels and a 100Ah LiFePo4 battery).
- a printer
- A better gain antenna
- a pop-up cover
- dual band packet mobile rig.
- a Yaesu 400XDR
- Nothing for equipment, but a handy helper for hauling it somewhere if needed in the field would be nice. Maybe Santa has an extra elf? Or maybe a really lightweight 4-foot folding table and chair.
- Portable (i.e. small) 12vdc laser printer
- Portable Printer
- HOA permission for better solar panel install location
- 32' telescoping mast with tripod
- Replace the extremely heavy SLA battery with a Lithium-Iron battery.
- A new portable computer running Windows 10.
- completed - a new power supply
- Fiberglass 32' portable Antenna

# ICS-213 on Collection Bin Status

- Good go!
- Some “fax” machine issues
- Three Toy Dropoffs noticed the cursor image in my screen grab of the form and included it in their message – bravo!



The image shows a screenshot of a form with the following fields:

- SUBJECT:** <sup>10</sup> *Collection Bin Status*
- REFERENCE** (e.g., Number of earlier msg.): <sup>11</sup> \_\_\_\_\_
- MESSAGE:** <sup>12</sup> (what, when, where needed; how long

The message field contains the handwritten text: *We have five 40 yd hard bins ready for pickup. We*. A green circle highlights the vertical cursor icon at the start of the first line of the message, with a green arrow pointing down to the text below.

- This was an instructor error and was not intended to be there, however should have been noticed by all

# Reminder on being a FAX machine

- All text and all fields that have been “filled out” should be “fax”d character by character. Also:
  - Punctuation should be the same
  - Capitalization should be the same
  - Check-boxes should be the same; e.g. Handling Order, Take Action, etc.
- Some flexibility:
  - Expanding a spaces to more than one space is ok to improve readability
  - Adding a blank newline when transcribing handwritten is ok
  - You have permission to include “\*\*\*\* This is exercise traffic \*\*\*\*” where-ever it makes sense to put it on the form

# Reminder on Handling Order

- There were no Immediate messages for this month's practice
- Two Toy Dropoffs bumped the Collection Bin Status ICS-213 from Priority to Immediate
  - Both did contact the Xanadu EOC via the simulated voice net
- Executed ok as Immediate, but no real need to up the Handling Order from what was on the form

# ICS-213 from Xanadu EOC on receipt of Collection Bin status message

- How many people noticed:
  - The Subject field of the ICS-213 didn't match the message Subject
    - ICS-213: Please Send Inventory Update
    - Message: next assignment
  - The Message subject line didn't contain "ICS213" form type designator
  - No one mentioned this
- The Packet Manager made an error
  - Will try to not do this in the future

# ICS-213 Daily Inventory Collection Inventory Report

*Radio Operator please send this in response to previous message from Xanadu city.  
Keep formatting as similar as possible to the below table.*

*Rudolph*

ICS To: Position & Location  
Name, ICS From: Position & Location  
Subject

*To: Recreation Services , Xanadu EDC  
From: Rudolph, Site Manager, Toy Dropoff XX  
Subject: Daily Inventory Collection Inventory report*

Message field

<i>Babies 1-3: 67</i>	
<i>Girls 1-3: 77</i>	<i>Boys 1-3: 68</i>
<i>Girls 4-7: 66</i>	<i>Boys 4-7: 73</i>
<i>Girls 8-11: 76</i>	<i>Boys 8-11: 80</i>
<i>Girls 12-15: 49</i>	<i>Boys 12-15: 52</i>
<i>Girls 16-17: 48</i>	<i>Boys 16-17: 39</i>
<i>Other Not Categorized: 175</i>	

# ICS-213 Daily Inventory Collection Inventory Report

- Yes, “Inventory” repeated twice in the required Subject line
- Two Toy Dropoffs turned in to a plain text csv file
- Three Toy Dropoffs entered csv style text into the ICS-213 Message field
  - Preference: Xanadu EOC likes to use Outpost’s “Save as, no headers” to avoid potentially altering the message content with a sloppy cut & paste
  - Easier to print and hand to the ICS recipient (with a routing slip stapled to it)
  - Best to keep csv content as plain text file in the future

	A	B	C	D	E
1	To: Recreation Services, Xanadu EOC				
2	From: Rudolph, Site Manager, Toy Dropoff 32				
3	Subject: Daily Inventory Collection report				
4					
5					
6	Babies 1-3:	67			
7	Girls 1-3:	77		Boys 1-3:	68
8	Girls 4-7:	66		Boys 4-7:	73
9	Girls 8-11:	76		Boys 8-11:	80
10	Girls 12-15:	49		Boys 12-15:	52
11	Girls 16-17:	48		Boys 16-17:	39
12	Other Not Ca	175			
13					
14					
15	**** This is exercsie traffic ****				

# RACES Mutual Aid Request

- Also a good go!
- Number of Toy Dropoffs has fax errors on the Number: field
  - Should be exactly: “XND-22-1221P”
  - Examples:
    - XND-22/1221P
    - xnd-22-1221P
    - XND-22-1221

# ICS-309

- Nicely done
- The use of “-” will be dropped in the Task Name for future practices until Outpost is updated
  - Some run time errors have been experienced
  - Will not count as a “nit” if you left out the “-” for this go
- Double check spelling in Task Names
- For those doing Manual Operation and sent in a session log, thank you!
  - For everyone, session log will be requested for all Manual Operation in future practices

# Discussions during 12/28/2022 Zoom meeting

- Considerations on Outpost "crashing" and losing configuration, be prepared to do the ICS-309 by hand
  - Noodle with ADECs and packet committee
  - This came up as a discussion topic as two users we having different problems with Outpost crashing, either couldn't open the ICS309 form builder or losing configuration
- How to deal with packet messages that have special characters (e.g. handwritten) that don't have an ASCII keyboard equivalent
  - We have the "unknown symbol" proword for voice messages
  - What can we use in packet messages – discuss with ADECs and packet committee
- Mark will update the training page for Manual participation for the session log requirements to make it recommended, but optional.

# Participation (reminder from last month)

- Participation is logged for everyone who completes all the sent PackItForms forms message requests and ICS-309
  - E. g. for this practice, 2 x ICS-213, 1 x RACES-MAR
- See my email from 12/16/22 on the packet list
- During Zoom call discussion, the consensus was to require a turned-in ICS-309 as part of meeting participation requirements. Mark will adjust Training Page information to include the ICS-309
- After the meeting Steve Roth sent Mark an email for considering adding in the Zoom office hours call as part of the volunteer hour cumulative reporting. On thinking about this Mark will come up with a method for including practice time (currently 1.5 hours), Zoom time (since not all participants attend the Zoom call), also include the instructor time for pre- and post-event processing, presentation and scorecard preparation.

# Summary

Nice participation for this go!

Next practice will be January 18th 2023 [!!!], 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday

- Event already posted for signup
- Scenario: T.B.D.

Next UP: Exercise Scorecard

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