

**National Traffic System
Pacific Area**

GUIDANCE ON ORIGINATING ROUTINE VOLUME MESSAGES

I. BACKGROUND

Over the past several years, NTS circuits have faced a simultaneous dilemma: decreasing third-party messages, coupled with increasing messages in volume originated by stations addressed to amateur radio operators with the intent of offsetting declining third-party traffic through the system.

This dilemma prompted a recent NTS policy change to help moderate routine traffic flow and to provide for implementing practices.

Section 3.16 of the ARRL *Public Service Communications Manual* now states:

Volume Routine Traffic

Originating routine traffic in volume has the potential to lower delivery percentages thereby diminishing the viability of the system as a back-up for emergency use, simply because "operating enjoyment" becomes "work" and amateur radio operators with limited time are generally willing and able to cope with only finite quantities of routine messages. While in emergencies these amateur operators would be willing to move volumes of traffic at a sacrifice of time in the interest of public service, the origination and transmission through NTS of large volumes of routine messages over an infinite period of time, especially those with common texts to addressees unknown to the originator and absent of time value, can be counter-productive to the system's purpose and structure."

While such routine messages are welcome and indeed necessary for the continued training and practice of operators and for maintenance of the system, it may be necessary for NTS Area Staff Chairs, in consultation with their respective staffs, to establish guidelines for volume traffic in order to maintain the over-all health of the system.

Section II below establishes "best practices" to be observed in the origination of routine third party messages over NTS circuits of the Pacific Area. Such messages not adhering to these practices may be serviced back to the originating station noting the specific practice sought under these guidelines.

II. GUIDANCE

A. Daily Limit on Number of Messages

Originating stations should limit routine volume messages to no more than one volume (up to 10 addressees) for delivery within the Pacific Area per day. ARES drill messages are an exception to this limitation.

B. Limitation on Size & Organization of Message Books

Book messages should be limited to ten (10) addressees and organized, where possible, by at least destination states in order to retain message books during relay.

C. Use of Special Handling Instructions

The Handling Instructions (HX letter-series) are intended in special circumstances for relay and delivering operators. An HX should be used sparingly with routine volume traffic, not just to create more message traffic to merely test whether messages are delivered. Only a single HXG should be used in the preamble of volume routine messages.

D. Use of ARL Numbers

The use of appropriate ARL Numbers in message text is encouraged.

E. Length of Text & Standardization

Text lengths shall adhere closely to the not-to-exceed-25-count limit.

F. Accuracy of Addressees, Addresses

Originating stations shall assume full responsibility for the accuracy, currency and completeness of destination names and addresses. The use of out-of-date databases is unprofessional and reflects poorly on the Amateur Radio Service and NTS.

G. Telephone Numbers Required

A destination address is incomplete without an up-to-date telephone number.

H. Timing of Originations -- Holidays or During Critical Periods

Originating stations should avoid placing this routine volume traffic into circuits in advance of major holidays or during and immediately after critical periods involving a stress on the NTS or when in conflict with emergency or health & welfare messages in the system.

Robert Griffin, K6YR
Chair, NTS Pacific Area

[Effective Date]