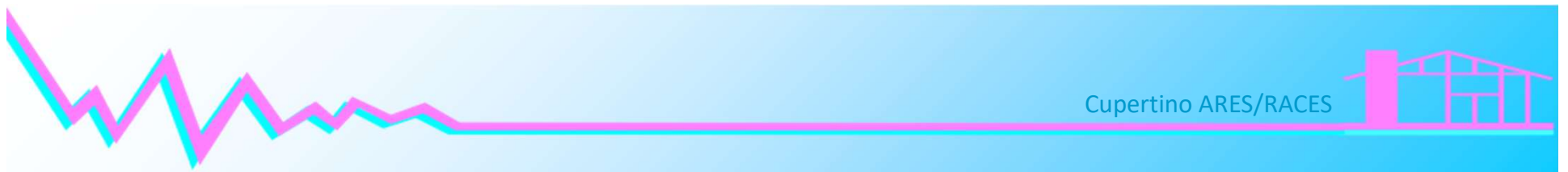


# Informal Messages

November 7, 2024  
Judy KK6EWQ

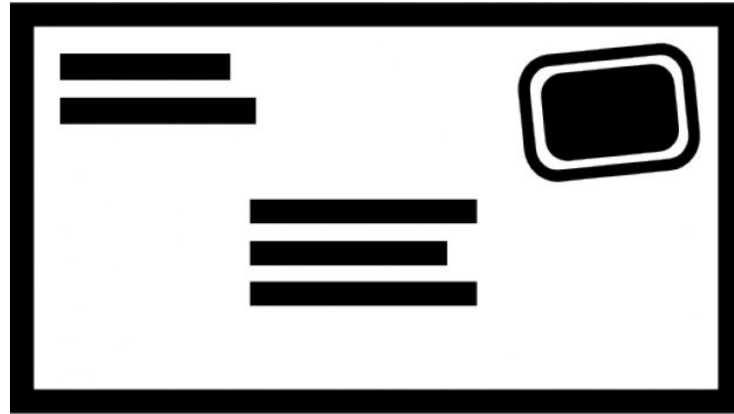


# Three types of messages

- Formal messages – from one 3<sup>rd</sup> party to another
  - Use specific forms – ICS-213, Resource request, Shelter Status, etc.
- Operator-to-operator messages – check in, health & welfare
- Informal messages – info to be given to a 3<sup>rd</sup> party, e.g., earthquake damage that we (or maybe a CERT) observes
- Some informal messages may not need to be written if they're short and simple and can be sent immediately
  - “Creekside ARK is ready to operate”
- The basics of composing and sending the message are the same whether the message is written or oral
- Informal messages must be logged on your ICS-309, just as formal messages are. Even the oral messages.

## Forms? Message numbers?

- Informal messages don't have message numbers
- CARES's half-page message form is handy for informal messages
- A plain piece of paper also works well
- Some informal messages may not need to be written if they're short and simple
  - “Monta Vista ARK is ready to operate”
- The basics of composing and sending the message are the same whether the message is written or oral
- ALL informal messages must be logged on your ICS-309, just as formal messages are. Even the oral messages.



# Composing and Sending Informal Messages

# Composing and sending a message

- Get the information that you need to include
- Compose the message, write it down
- Decide on the priority
- Plan how you will send the message
- Send the message
- Log the message

# Composing the message - what to include

- You may need to ask the person giving you information some questions to get all the information that's important
  - What is the address?
- Keep it short – include only the information that will be useful
- Things you might need to include
  - What
  - Where
  - When
  - Possibly
    - Is anyone injured or currently in danger
    - Are any roads blocked

## What to include?

A house is on fire. The fire started about 15 minutes ago. There was a family inside, but they all got out safely. The family's dog was also able to get out. They don't know how the fire started, but they think it may have been that the earthquake shook some hot embers from the fireplace onto the wood floor. Please send the fire department as quickly as possible. Where? They live at 645 N. Alpine Road.

House fire at 645 N. Alpine Road. No one is inside. It started at 10:45.

# Composing the message – write it down

Why write it down?

- You might have to wait a while to send the message
- You may get one or more other messages to send while you're waiting your turn to send
- You need a written copy to send it clearly and carefully
- It's hard to repeat part of the message without having it written
- You'll have a written record of what information you sent
- The receiver will almost always be writing it down
- But... a very simple, short message may be an exception if you can send it immediately



## Composing the message - are these good messages?

A tree has fallen on top of the Creekside ARK. You can still get through the ARK and get to the supplies, but this is going to need a lot of repair work.

The generator fuel has arrived.

The traffic light at the corner of Stelling and Stevens Creek isn't working. It just flashes yellow, and there's a big traffic jam.

## Short, simple messages are easy to send

- Short: no more than about 5-7 words
- Simple
  - nothing that needs to be spelled
  - no numbers with more than 2 or 3 digits
  - just words in plain English
- Easy for the recipient to remember

The ARK is fully staffed.

The Senior Center is open.

The streetlights on DeAnza are out.

## For longer or more complicated messages

- Write down the message
- Plan how you will send the message
- Send numbers properly, spell words when needed
- Send five words at a time, then wait to be told when to continue with the next five words
- Use tools and techniques to avoid misunderstandings or wrong spellings

# Tools you'll need

- Know the phonetic alphabet
  - alpha, bravo, charlie, delta, echo, foxtrot, golf, hotel, india,...
- Use Procedural words ("Prowords") to avoid misunderstanding or misspelling words
  - A group of letters that aren't a word
    - Use the proword "initials"
    - Read one letter at a time
    - EOC is read "initials, echo oscar charlie"
  - Read numbers one digit at a time
    - Use the proword "figures"
    - 20457 is "figures, two zero four five seven"

# Common prowords

- Initial(s)
- Figure(s)
- I spell
  - Pronounce the word, say “I spell”, then spell it
  - We are at Fitzmeyer Avenue.
    - “We are at fitzmeyer, I spell, foxtrot india mike zulu echo yankee echo romeo, avenue, period”
- Punctuation
  - Comma, Period, Hyphen, Question Mark, Apostrophe,...

# Basic techniques for sending messages

- If the information was given to you orally, write out the message you'll send.
- Send it five words at a time. Mark the message into groups of five words to make this easy.
  - There are 24 AAA batteries/on the shelf, behind the/FRS radios.
- Mark any place you'll need to use a proword
  - There are 24 AAA batteries/on the shelf, behind the/FRS radios.
- Don't speak faster than the receiver can write
  - "Air write" the message as you send it.
- Upper case and lower case don't usually matter, so don't waste time with case unless it's important

# How soon does the message need to be sent?

- There are three possible Handling orders
  - Immediate (a.k.a. Emergency) – Life threatening
  - Priority (a.k.a. Urgent) – Property threatening
  - Routine – Everything else
- Immediate – The message needs to be sent as soon as possible, e.g., life-threatening injuries, building on fire with people trapped inside
- Priority – The message needs to be sent very soon, but the situation isn't life threatening, e.g., a building on fire with no one inside
- Routine – Everything else

# Sending the message

- Tell the recipient you have an message and its priority
  - "Net Control, this is Team 2 with an emergency message."
  - "Lawson Ark, this is Net Control with a routine message."
- Wait until the receiver tells you to continue
  - You may have to wait for your turn
  - Listen and be ready when you're told that it's your turn



# Sending the message

- “This is an informal message” (often this is not needed)
- Read the first 5 words, say “break”
- When you’re told to continue, read the next 5 words, say “break”
- Always wait until you’re told to continue
- Read slowly enough that the receiver can write down each word of the message (try air-writing)
- At the end of the message, say “end of message”

## Receiving a message

- Write the message as you hear it
- Say “go” or “continue” when you’re ready for the next phrase
- Upper and lower case don’t usually matter
- If you miss something, ask for a “fill”
- When the sender says “end of message”, give your tactical call sign, then your FCC call sign
- Informal messages don’t have message numbers

## Asking for a fill – “Say again”

If you don't understand a word (or words) or don't know how to spell it, leave space for it and continue with the rest of the phrase. When the sender breaks, ask for a “fill”.

Say again word after \_\_\_\_\_

Say again word before \_\_\_\_\_

Say again words between \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

Say again all after \_\_\_\_\_

Say again all

If you wrote “Go to 524 \_\_\_\_\_ Street “

”Say again word before Street”.

## Asking for a fill

If you have “Meet me at \_\_\_\_\_”

“Say again all after at”

If you have “\_\_\_\_\_ Lawson ARK”

“Say again all before Lawson”

If you have “Bring \_\_\_\_\_ Quinlan Center”

“Say again all between Bring and Quinlan”

If you have “There are \_\_\_\_\_ people here”

“Say again word after are”

# Where to practice

CARES exercises and drills

Public service events (maybe)

Bunny Fun Run

Los Altos Art and Wine Festival

Questions?