



# TRI-COUNTY TRAFFIC TRAINING NET

## BASIC TRAINING



Thank you for showing interest in the **National Traffic System** (NTS) and the Tri-County Traffic Training Net (TCTTN). I hope you find the information included helpful on your journey to becoming a traffic handler. I have been active with the NTS for almost two years including Net Control Station (NCS) duties on the Ohio Single Side Band Net (OSSBN) and the CW Ohio Slow Net (OSN) CW net. I don't claim to have all the answers but hope the following information gets you on the road to an enjoyable future in traffic handling.

I would highly recommend that you obtain a copy of the [ARRL Net Directory](#) and the [Public Service Communications Manual](#) from which most of this information was obtained. They can be ordered or down loaded from the ARRL web ([arri.org](http://arri.org)) site, or purchased from Amateur Electronic Supply, and are valuable tools showing times and frequencies of most nets listed with the ARRL plus much more. The OSSBN web site has links to the ARRL web site and can be found at [www.qsl.net/ossbn](http://www.qsl.net/ossbn).

### TRAFFIC

Most of us know *traffic* as that thing we get stuck in at rush hour, and may be wondering how this net will help us get out of that mess. Well, it won't, and the word *traffic* in ham terms means *message*, kind of like sending a letter over the air. The National Traffic System is like the roads our traffic travels on to get from one place to another starting here, on a 2-meter net like a local street. From here our traffic will travel to an HF net like the OSSBN which is like a state route for our traffic and someone will then take it to the **8<sup>th</sup> Region Net** (8RN) which is like I-77 an interstate route. From here, depending on where it's going could end up on the **Eastern Area Net** (EAN) which is a super highway of nets; and then to another *area net*, and will end up on another state net traveling to a local 2-meter net and then to your sister in Florida. Look at *traffic* like cars and the NTS as a roadway for our traffic to travel over.

### RADIOGRAMS

A **Radiogram** is the form used to write this message (the *traffic*) on, and we will go into it in detail later, but for now let me say this about radiograms. Anyone one can originate one and they do not need to be a ham to do it, nor does it need to go to a ham. Your mom can send one to her sister, your neighbor can send one to their uncle, or you can send one to an old friend. We as traffic handlers take the message and put it into radiogram format, send it over this airwave highway of ours, and deliver it to the person on the other end, normally by phone. In a nutshell it would go like this: you take the message from your mom, convert it into message format, and bring it to the net. Our HF

liaison takes it to OSSBN and sends it on its way. It ends up on a state net in Florida. From there, it would work its way down to a local net like ours, and a local Florida ham would pick it up to deliver. The local ham would call your aunt and read her the message your mom wrote.

I will try to explain in plain English what a traffic net is and isn't; how to check into the net; pass and receive traffic on the net; and how it is delivered to the end party. In another package I also have training for those who wish to become net control stations. Let's get started with what is/isn't a traffic net.

## PURPOSE

A traffic net's purpose is to pass traffic, and in the case of the TCTTN, train traffic handlers. It is not a social or shop and swap net, although personal contacts can be made but should be kept short. Selling items on the net will not be allowed; that is best handled on other nets. The primary purpose of the National Traffic System is to have a group of organized and trained hams ready in the case of a national or local emergency that can step in at a moments notice and move messages into and out of an area using standard procedures when needed. Depending on training and the amount of traffic, a net should last about 10 to 30 minutes.

## DIRECTED NET

When the Net Control Station opens the net and reads the preamble, you will hear that this is a **Directed Net**, and may wonder what that means. A *directed net* means that all contacts during the net will be with the net control's permission, and go through the net control station. If you have a comment or feel you need to say something, say your callsign and wait to be acknowledged by the NCS; never just break-in with a comment. This is not an ego trip for the NCS, but the only way to keep the net organized, and help prevent doubling. The NCS has many things to keep tract of and your help in doing this is needed.

## PREAMBLE and CHECKING IN

To open the net and start the check-in process the NCS will read what is called the **Preamble**. The preamble is a standard introduction to the net, letting those listening know what net this is, the net controls name, call and location, and then on to taking check-ins. If I were the NCS, it would sound like this;

"Good evening and welcome to the Tri-County Traffic Training Net, a part of the Ohio section of the National Traffic System. We meet here 3 times weekly for training and to handle traffic. This is a directed net and net control will control the net. Your net control is KI8U. My name is Dennis and I'm located in Mentor. Stations wishing to break the net please use your callsign."

"Is there any priority or emergency traffic?"

"Any mobile or low power stations?"

"Do I have a HF liaison volunteer?"

“Check-ins with traffic only.”

“Now check-ins with or without traffic.”

Now let's get you checked in. Notice that the check-in process is broken down into different groups; this keeps the NCS from having to deal with large amounts of check-ins at a time. After asking for *priority or emergency traffic*, the NCS will un-key and listen. This type of traffic is very rare, and trying to find out if OSU won is not considered emergency or priority traffic. The NCS will now call for *mobile or low power stations*. These are called for early in the net, because they may be getting out-of-range or low on batteries if using an HT. After asking, the NCS will again un-key and listen for check-ins. If you fall into this category you would check-in one of two ways,

- 1) “This is N8HFC, Bob, mobile/low power with traffic.”
- 2) “This is N8HFC, Bob, mobile/low power, no traffic”

Pretty painless; your call, name, mobile or low power and if you do or do not have traffic. After you un-key sit back and listen, after the NCS has taken the check-ins he/she will roger the stations heard into the net, something like this,

“N8HFC, Bob, mobile. KC8KL, Pat, mobile. And WD8JJI Carol, low power, all with no traffic ,welcome, any further mobile or low power stations check-in now.”

During check-in is the hardest time for the NCS. They are logging you in, trying to list traffic, and deal with doubling stations. Please be patient, and if the NCS did not recognize you just try again when they ask for more check-ins. If you checked in with the traffic, your check-in would go something like this,

*N8HFC*: “N8HFC, Bob, low power with traffic.”

*NCS*: “Good evening Bob, N8HFC please list.”

*N8HFC*: “Thank you Dennis, I have a single for Kingsville. N8HFC.”

*NCS*: “Thanks I have your Kingsville listed. Any further check-ins call KI8U.”

Always end your transmission with your callsign.

Pretty easy, you're now checked in. Your NCS may say “net hold” or “net wait” during the check-in process or at any time during the net. This is a signal for everyone on the net to **stop** transmitting and stand by. This will normally happen during check-in and the NCS needs time to get his log organized and ready for more check-ins or to slow the net down.

While we are talking about checking in there are a few other things I should mention regarding **I-F's** and **Announcements**. You could check in “with traffic” and when the NCS asks you to list your traffic, you could say “I have a net announcement,” or “I would like an I-F with K9DOG.” A net announcement is something that you may think is of interest to the net such as a silent key, propagation report, up coming hamfest or so on and ham related. Most announcements are ask for and passed before net traffic and would sound like this,

*NCS*: “KC8IOU, your net announcement please.”

*KC8IOU*: “Thank you Dennis, I would like to remind the net of the upcoming LCARA hamfest. KC8IOU back to net control.”

*NCS*: “Thanks Roger, this is KI8U taking check-ins for the TCTTN call now.”

In the case of an I-F, it normally is someone wanting a short personal contact with someone else on the net. This is low priority for the NCS, and will be handled at the end of the net or during a slow time. An I-F could sound like this,

*NCS:* "AA8FT call K9DOG for your I-F."

*AA8FT:* "K9DOG this AA8FT, could you stick around after the net for a minute?"

*K9DOG:* "Sure Patti, no problem, K9DOG."

*AA8FT:* "Thanks Sam, AA8FT back to net control thank you Dennis."

*NCS:* "Your welcome Patti and this is KI8U looking for any other check-ins, call now."

"Who was the red head you were with last night?" is not something for a traffic net.

For the most part that covers checking in and how to list your traffic. There are a few exceptions, but I will cover them a bit later. Just to recap a few things.

- 1) Give your name at check-in; this will help the members on the net remember you. Although this is not a social net many long lasting friendships have come from traffic nets.
- 2) Always end your transmission with your callsign
- 3) Be courteous. I can't emphasize this enough. If you notice in my above examples there are a bunch of Thank Yous, and Your Welcomes. We are all volunteers and doing our best.

Well, we got you through the check-in process, so shall we move on to filling out a *radiogram*. The radiogram is the standard format used by the NTS, and seems to be a mystery to most, but if we take it step by step you will see that it is laid out in a logical order, and other than learning some of the terms used, not really such a mystery. In the training package you should have received 6 blank radiograms, and copies of instructions from the ARRL Net Directory on how to fill them out. Actually, they are so good there isn't much I can add or say but may be able to offer a few tips and clarification on some points so let's start with the preamble.

### PREAMBLE

- 1) The **message number** is a sequential number given the message by the originator (you) starting with number 1 on Jan. 1 each year. Each message you originate will carry the next higher number until Jan. 1 of the next year: then start over again with message number 1. If you are originating your tenth message it should be number 10.
- 2) For the most part the **precedence** will be routine (**R**), and the other precedence's are explained in the example.
- 3) **Handling Instructions** are normally "**G**" or "**C**". You will find the definitions of the handling instruction codes, also known as **HX** codes, in this packet. "**G**" basically means that if you deliver the message to the addressee, the process is over. If the message cannot be delivered, some reason, a message should be sent back to the sender, telling them so (more on this later). "**C**" means that the originator wants you so send them a message stating the date and time the message was

delivered (more on this later). Another precedence that comes up pretty often is “**F**” followed by a number. You will see the “**F**” used mostly for birthdays or anniversaries, and simply is a request to deliver the message on a certain date. If you receive a message sent Feb. 13<sup>th</sup> with a F19 HX code it means they would like the message delivered on the 19<sup>th</sup> of Feb. You may on occasion hear a message without a HX designator and this is ok but check with the sender in case they may have forgotten to say it

- 4) **Station Of Origin**. This is the amateur station that first wrote the message.
- 5) **Check**, or sometimes known as the “dreaded check”, will be covered later, but is basically the word count in the text of the message. Before accepting a message, you should always count the words in the text, and they should match the check number.
- 6) **Place Of Origin** is the actual town or place where the message started from, not necessarily the location of the station of origin. For example, if you send a message for a person in a town that is not your own, you use that person’s own town. Otherwise, use your own location in this box.
- 7) **Time Filed** is almost never used, except for messages with Emergency or Priority precedence.
- 8) **Date** is the month and day the message was written.

Here is what the preamble in the example would sound like over the air,

“Please copy number three four seven, routine, hotel x-ray golf, kilo seven alpha bravo tango, twenty five, Phoenix Arizona, December four”

Wow, it didn’t look like that on paper, you say. Read on, and I’ll try to explain. I spelled out the message number, because once you get into triple digits in numbers it is better to say it as individual numbers rather than 347 (three hundred and forty seven). However, you see the check is read as “twenty five” and that’s fine.

When writing the precedence, it is okay to just put the letter “**R**” but over the air the word “routine” is used.

Now a word or two on the use of **phonetics** in traffic messages. The general rule is not to use phonetics unless conditions are very bad, or asked for. Most handlers will use phonetics for callsigns as I did, and some use them for the HX code. The handling instructions could also have been said like this, “Handling Instructions G”.

The **state** and **month** should always be said in full.

## ADDRESSEE

The **addressee** is pretty much straight forward, and not much to say about it other than make it as complete as you can. If the message is going to another ham, include their callsign after the last name. If at all possible, include the phone number; after all that’s how it’s going to be delivered. If you don’t know the phone number, a good place to look is on the internet. I use [www.411.com](http://www.411.com) with good results. If you can’t find a phone number, the ham trying to deliver the message will try a local phone book but your message may not get delivered. The address in the example would sound like this over the air:

“Going to Albert middle initial M Cousins,” *(short pause)*,  
“Three three west mixed group three eight tango hotel street,” *(short pause)*  
“Bridgeport Connecticut zero six six four five” *(short pause)*  
“Two zero three” *(short pause)*  
“Three three four” *(short pause)*  
“Five six seven eight” *(short pause)*  
“Break, text follows”

Note that you say “middle initial” before the middle initial. This is to let the receiving station know that it is only going to be a single letter, and not the beginning of the last name. If any of the information in the address is hard to pronounce or not a common spelling, feel free to spell it out by first trying to pronounce it, then spell it and then say it again as best you can. Notice that when you’re done with the addressee info you say “Break, text follows”, and then pause. This to let the receiving station you’re done with the address, and moving on to the text of the message. It gives them a chance to ask a question if needed.

## TEXT

The **text** is the meat of the message, and explained very well in the example so I’ll just touch on a few things. Try to keep the message as short and to the point as possible, staying with in 25 words. I have seen some longer than 25 words but it is rare and generally not done. Punctuation is not used, but the letter “**X**” (or “X-RAY”, phonetically) is used like a period to separate thoughts in the message. The word “**figures**” is said before numbers to alert the receiving station that numbers are on the way and the words “**mixed group**” are said before something containing numbers and letters like the “339<sup>TH</sup>” in the example.

A phone number is broken up into three words, and helps keep the receive station in sync with you.

There are other things like email addresses, and ARL Numbered Messages to consider, but we will leave those for another time and just keep it to basics here.

Over the air the text in the example would sound like this;

“Dear Dad arrived safely *(pause)* mixed group figures three three nine tango hotel composite bomb group *(pause)* Flagstaff December mixed group figure two November delta x-ray *(pause)* tell Sherry I’m ok x-ray *(pause)* phone figures six zero two figures three four five figures nine eight seven six *(pause)* send flak jacket love *(pause)* break signed” *(pause)*

Boy, it sure never looks the same in writing does it? Remember: the station you are sending the message to is trying to write it down, so go slow and give them a chance to catch up with a pause once in awhile. A good rule of thumb when your learning is to write the message again as you send it. This will help you slow down and keep pace with the receiving station. Sending too fast will cause the receive station to ask you to repeat parts of the message, and waste more time then going slow to start with. The “**break signed**” at the end of the text lets the receiving station know you’re done with the text and about to move on the signature.

## THE CHECK

Or better known as *the dreaded check*. I'm not sure why, but this seems to give most new (and old) handlers problems. It is nothing more than the word count (or groups) in the text of the message. I highly suggest using the radiogram form when first learning; it will be a great help with the check number. Looking at the form: it is broken down into 5 lines of 5 words each, giving you a possible total check of 25. After the message is sent to you, look at the check number in the preamble and it should match the number of blanks you have filled in the text. In this example the check is 25. Note that the X-RAY we send to break up the text counts as a word. Never acknowledge (roger) a message if the check number does not match your word count. Tell the sending station that the check does not match and to resend it at reading speed. **Reading Speed** means they will re-send it without the pauses as if they were just reading it. Pay attention and you should be able to pick up the missing word or words. Many times it is just a missing X-RAY that threw you off. Accuracy is our prime objective here; the message should be received as sent, word for word. After getting the hang of this check thing, and traffic in general, many use a note book to copy traffic and not the radiogram form. I highly recommend you use the form—I still do. The forms can be ordered from the ARRL web site and at \$2:00 for a pad of 70. You can also use a scanner or copy machine to make copies.

We are almost done and I hope things are coming together for you. Remember the TCTTN is a great place to ask questions. Email me directly at [KI8U@arrl.net](mailto:KI8U@arrl.net) or call at 440-974-1087.

## SIGNATURE

Not much to say here, the signature is just that, the way the sender does it may differ and the example has some kind of number in it but not a big thing. Some will say “Love Mom”, “Bill and the Kids” or “Bob KC4FYI” or whatever. Over the air the example would sound like this;

“Billy figures zero four three figures eight nine figures nine zero seven eight break end of message KI8U.”

The numbers in this signature are broken up into three groups so you would say the word “figures” between each group to let the receive station know that is not one long number. At the end of the signature you say “break end of message” to let the receive station know your done with the message and your callsign to identify. The receive station would do that check thing and then come back to you with something like this:

“I roger your three four seven, thank you, K9DOG.”

You would say:

“Thank you, this is KI8U, back to net control.”

You're done and congratulations, you have just sent or received your first message.

I have tried to keep this to basics and hope that with the enclosed examples I have taken the cloak of mystery off of the message process, and the NTS. On some of the following pages, I will try to explain some of the exceptions to the rules and ARL message numbers. For now, you're ready to get your feet wet. When you feel comfortable, key up that mic and send me a message something like this:

TO: DENNIS V BROSTEK KI8U  
7187 MAPLE ST  
MENTOR OH 44060  
440 974 1087

I HAVE COMPLETED THE TCTTN BASIC TRAINING AND AM READY TO  
GET STARTED WITH THE NTS X 73

We will also be starting a **net roster**. If you wish to be included in the roster, please send a message to the net manager (me) giving this information:

- Full name
- Address
- Phone number
- Email address

It would look something like this;

TO: TCTTN NET MANAGER KI8U

PLEASE ADD ME TO THE NET ROSTER X DENNIS BROSTEK 7187 MAPLE  
ST MENTOR OH 44060 440 974 1087 KI8U AT ARRL DOT NET 73

If you got a check of 25, you did good.

If you're not comfortable with giving out your phone number, or any of the other information, just omit it. The purpose of the roster is to have a record of active members and contact information. I will try to send out an updated copy monthly via email to active members. If you don't have email please send a #10 Self Addressed Stamped Envelope and I'll get a copy off to you. Being on the roster in no way obligates you to take or send traffic at any time. The NTS and this net are staffed by volunteers, and the amount of time you wish to be involved is up to you.

### OTHER STUFF

Well, we can now send a message, receive a message, but how is it delivered to the addressee? After all this work, it's not much use if we don't know what to do after we get it, so here is what you do to deliver a message. If your message has the phone number, dial it up, if not, take a minute and try to find it in your local phone book or on the Internet. Often in small towns like we have here in N.E. Ohio, you may know the person, or they may be a ham in your local club. When delivering a message containing an ARRL standard text (we will cover this next), please remember to decode it first and deliver the message in plain English. Here is an example of the first sentence you should say when the addressee answers the phone;

**“Mrs. Jones, my name is Dennis and I am an amateur radio operator here in Mentor. I have a greeting radiogram for you and Mr. Jones from Aunt Grace in Baltimore.”**

She now has my name and town (which may be the same as hers) and she knows I am a ham and not trying to sell anything. She also knows I have some connection with her Aunt Grace in Baltimore, and therefore can't be all bad. When delivering a message, you must let them know all the pertinent information immediately so they will have an idea of what's going on. After delivering the message always try to get a return message. What you are doing is building public relations for ham radio and traffic handling. In most cases the recipients will be thankful and happy to receive the message but there may be an occasional less responsive reply. In the case of a Silent Key (SK), or someone just not interested, be polite and send a message back to the originator requesting they do not send messages to this addressee again. You always have the option to refuse a message if you know the addressee does not wish to receive them.

We did our best to try and find a phone number but no luck, now what do I do? You have given it your best shot but this does happen, just send a message back to the Station Of Origin saying something like this:

YOUR MESSAGE NUMBER 123 NOT DELIVERED X NO LOCAL NUMBER  
FOUND

**or**

YOUR MESSAGE NUMBER 123 NOT DELIVERED X KE8DOA SILENT KEY  
PLEASE CORRECT YOUR RECORDS

I keep a stack of 13-cent post cards here, and some times will jot the message on the card and send it to the addressee depending on the message. You are never under any obligation to make long distance calls or send a post card.

### **ARRL STANDARD TEXT**

Other than the Check Number, this is the biggest stumbling block for new traffic handlers. The **ARRL Standard Text** is nothing more than a type of shorthand we use in radiograms. Remember that we want to keep the text of the message at 25 words or less, and this short hand helps us do this with some standard numbers. In that mess of paper I sent you, find the sheet titled *ARRL Numbered Radiograms*, and take a look at the right hand column (the left column is rarely used). At the top of the list is ARL FORTY SIX and contains 12 words; in the text of a message it is sent as ARL FORTY SIX , only taking up the space of 3 words, saving room for you to put something personal and not running over the 25 word limit. Pretty cool! Notice that some of them have a blank to insert a word or words of your choice. Lets take a look at number SIXTY NINE and see if we can find a use for it. If you were the chairman of a local chapter of the QCWA and got a new member you could send them a message using this one and in the text, it would look like this;

ARL SIXTY NINE QCWA

When read to the addressee it would go like this:

“Welcome to the QCWA. We are glad to have you join us and hope you will enjoy the fun and fellowship of the organization.”

That's what's meant by **decoding** before reading it to the addressee, and our form of short hand to save time and space on a radiogram. If sent as is, the above example would have a word count of 4 and not 24 if written long hand. Now take a look at ARL SIXTY SEVEN; this one is used at time for that one you got without a phone number, or maybe a silent key. OK, let's stick with our ARL SIXTY NINE QCWA message and finish this up. When using ARL codes in the text you add **ARL** to the check number in the preamble; in this case your entry in the preamble check field would be ARL 4 and said as "ARL four" when reading the check. So far so good, and here is the mystery part that confuses people. In the text of the message, ARL numbers are spelled out and not sent as figures. I'm sorry, but I really don't know why; it's one of those "that's the way it is" things. If sent as a figure, it would be one word, 69. Just try to remember that other than ARL FIFTY and SIXTY, they are all counted as two words to keep your count right. When sent over the air you may hear a number of versions, the two most popular are,

- 1) "ARL sixty with a sierra nine"
- 2) "ARL sixty s-i-x-t-y (*sixty spelled out*) nine"

These are the most common and done this way to help keep the check number straight. I hope this helps you with the ARL code mystery, and as always feel free to ask on the net or drop me an email.

### COMMON TEXT TRAFFIC

Lets stick with the above example of the QCWA message as I explain what common text traffic is. Perhaps the QCWA got three new members, one in Mentor, one in Chardon and one in Ashtabula and they want to send the same welcome message to all three. When checking into the net they would check-in with traffic and when the NCS asks them to list the traffic they would say,

"I have common text for Mentor, Chardon and Ashtabula".

This tells the NCS that the text of the message is the same on all three, but it is going to three different people and there will be three different message numbers. The NCS would than ask the net for volunteers to take the traffic; with any luck he will get all three and with better luck, the station that has the traffic will have been listening. The NCS now calls the station with the traffic and asks if he heard his receive stations and with any luck, he will say yes. The NCS will than say "Call your stations and pass your traffic." and the sending station will say something like this:

"All stations please copy common parts".

Now in common text everything will be the same *except* the Message Number and the TO: information, so he would read the preamble, omitting the message number than say "Break, text follows", then continue with reading the text and signature. When done, he would say, "Break end of common parts, any fills?" What he is doing is giving the receiving stations a chance to break in and get anything they may have missed. If nothing is heard he will call his first station and pass the first of three like this:

"N8JKI, are you ready?"

N8JKI says, "Ready"

Sending station goes on like this "Please copy number three three four going to...", then reading the addressee. When done with the addressee, he would say

“Break, end of Mentor.”

N8JKI would say, “I roger your number three three four, N8JKI”

The sending station would then call the next station and send the traffic in the same manner and then on to the third. When done he would say;

“Back to net control.”

In long messages, this saves much time on the net with having to read the text only once. I went over this pretty fast but once you hear it on the net it will become clear what’s going on. You may hear the term **Book Traffic**, and is the CW term for Common Text traffic. On phone nets, common text is preferred and you may be told that.

### HANDLING INSTRUCTIONS

These are pretty self-explanatory; just make sure you pay attention to them.

**HXC** – If you deliver the message, that means you’re the one that picked up the phone and called the addressee you need to send a message back to the originator stating the date and time you made the call. Nothing long; just a note like this;

YOUR MESSAGE NUMBER 123 DELIVERED ON MARCH 15 2004 AT 230PM  
LOCAL 73

**HXG** – Let’s say I pick up a message on the OSSBN for N8PIG North Dung, Ohio, which is in Ashtabula County, thinking I can pass it here on the TCTTN, but no one takes it from me to deliver. Ashtabula is a long distance call for me, and I decide not to send a post card, so I would send a message back to the originator saying something like this;

YOUR MESSAGE NUMBER 123 NOT DELIVERED X NO LOCAL OUTLET 73

### SERVICING A MESSAGE

Another new term here and then we will wrap it up, I think. **Servicing** a message is a term used for what you do if you have a message that cannot be delivered within a reasonable amount of time, normally 5 days. The example above for North Dung, Ohio is a good one for this term. You took the traffic thinking you could pass it on to the addressee on this net, but after trying for 5-7 days, no one from that area checked in who could take it from you. Well, you tried your best, but this does happen some times. No matter what the HX code is, an undelivered message should always be serviced. This is also a situation where you could use the ARL SIXTY SEVEN message.

### EMAIL ADDRESSES

An email address in the text of the message is broken into 5 word groups, if you look at my Email address [ki8u@arrl.net](mailto:ki8u@arrl.net) it would look like this in the text of a message:

KI8U AT ARRL DOT NET and read as such. Some debate comes up from time to time as the right way to do an email address, but this is the excepted way.

# Tri-County Traffic Training Net (TCTTN)

## Frequently Asked Questions

- Q** I do not belong to the ARRL, can I still work with the National Traffic System (NTS)?
- A** Yes, you can! No affiliation with any organization is needed to pass traffic.
- Q** Do I have to take a test to pass traffic?
- A** No, the TCTTN has a training package but no test is given. A willingness to learn is all that's needed.
- Q** Are there any other publications that would be helpful?
- A** Yes, I highly recommend you have a copy of the **ARRL Net Directory** and the **ARRL Public Service Communications Manual**. These can be ordered from the ARRL web site at [arrl.org](http://arrl.org). Blank Radiogram forms may also be ordered from the ARRL site. Besides my personal experience, much of the training is taken from these books.
- Q** Are there any other web sites of interest?
- A** The [Ohio Single Sideband Net](http://www.ohioqsl.net) has a good web site with links to many other sites, including the ARRL. It can be found at [www.qsl.net/ossbn](http://www.qsl.net/ossbn).
- Q** I can't make it to every net, is that a problem?
- A** No, the amount of time you spend on the net is up to you.
- Q** If I check into the net do I have to take or send traffic?
- A** No, all participation is voluntary. You participate at whatever level you feel comfortable.
- Q** I want to check-in but can't stay for the whole net, what should I do?
- A** There will be times when you may have to leave the net early or check-in, knowing you can't stay. When checking in knowing you can't stay just tell the NCS you are "Short Time" and they will say, "You may close at your leisure". If something comes up during the net try to break in with your call and let the net control station know you're securing. In the case of an emergency please close your station; the net control station will figure it out.
- Q** What is a Net Control Station?
- A** The **Net Control Station** (NCS) calls the net to order, takes check-ins and directs the flow of traffic.
- Q** How do I become an NCS?
- A** Along with the basic training package, you will receive a NCS training package. When you feel ready to try a NCS position send a Radiogram to the Net Manager and let him know what days you are available.

- Q** OK, I want to try being an NCS, will I have to conduct the training also?
- A** No, the Net Manager or Training Officer will conduct the training for you. After taking the check-ins and passing any traffic you would turn the net over to one or the other for training. If you had a subject or a question you would like as the topic for training that could be used also.
- Q** What and who is the Net Manager?
- A** The **Net Manager** is responsible for all aspects of the net, such as having net control stations to run the net, overseeing the net operation, training, and more. The TCTTN Assistant manager is Gregg WB8YYS, [wb8yys@arrl.net](mailto:wb8yys@arrl.net)
- Q** I would like to be an NCS but can only do it once a month on Fridays, is that a problem?
- A** No, the net manager will make every effort to fit you in. The purpose of the net is to give everyone a chance to learn and participate as much as they can.
- Q** What is the OSSBN net I hear so much about?
- A** The **Ohio Single Sideband Net** (OSSBN) is a High Frequency (HF) net that passes traffic into, out of and around the state of Ohio. They have liaisons to the 8th Region Net (8RN) who in turn has liaisons with the Eastern Area Net (EAN).
- Q** What is a "liaison" station?
- A** A **liaison station** is a station that takes traffic from one net to another. If we had a message on the TCTTN that needed to go to Florida we would pass it to our OSSBN liaison, who in turn would take the message to OSSBN, who has liaisons to other traffic nets around the country. If you look at it like a street system, we here on the TCTTN are a small side street. We need a way to get on the interstate to get to Florida. Our liaison stations take our traffic to these interstate nets. The Flow Chart in the examples may help answer this question.

## NTS Net Frequencies

### Phone

**Ohio Single Sideband Net (OSSBN)**

3.972.50 @ 10:30am, 4:15pm, 6:45pm daily

**Eighth Region Net (8RN)**

7.240 @ 12:30pm Alternate Freq: 3.865

**Eastern Area Net (EAN)**

7.243 @ 2:30pm Monday-Friday

### 2-Meter Repeater Nets

**Burning River Traffic Net (BRTN)**

147.150 @ 9:30pm daily

**Tri-County Traffic & Training Net (TCTTN)**

147.015 @ 9:30pm

Tuesday, Friday, Sunday Alternate Freq: 146.850

### CW Nets

**Buckeye Net (BN)**

3.577 @ 6:45pm, 10:00pm daily

**Eighth Region Net (8RN)**

3.530 @ 7:45pm, 9:30pm daily

**Eastern Area Net (EAN)**

3.670 @ 5:30pm, 8:30pm daily

**Ohio Slow Net (OSN)**

3.708 @ 6:10pm daily

**Maryland Slow Training Net (MSN)**

3.717 @ 7:30pm daily

All HF frequencies are ± QRM or QRN. Many more phone and CW nets are listed in the [ARRL Net Directory](#) (also available as an interactive online database).

## Precedence Codes

The precedence will follow the message number. For example, on CW 207R or 207 EMERGENCY. On phone, "Two Zero Seven, Routine (or Emergency)."

**Emergency**—Any message having life and death urgency to any person or group of persons, which is transmitted by Amateur Radio in the absence of regular commercial facilities. This includes official messages of welfare agencies during emergencies requesting supplies, materials or instructions vital to relief of stricken populace in emergency areas. During normal times, it will be *very rare*. On CW, RTTY and other digital modes this designation will always be spelled out. When in doubt, *do not* use it.

**Priority**—Important messages having a specific time limit. Official messages not covered in the Emergency category. Press dispatches and other emergency-related traffic not of the utmost urgency. Notifications of death or injury in a disaster area, personal or official. Use the abbreviation P on CW.

**Welfare**—A message that is either a) an inquiry as to the health and welfare of an individual in the disaster area b) an advisory or reply from the disaster area that indicates all is well should carry this precedence, which is abbreviated W on CW. These messages are handled *after* Emergency and Priority traffic but before Routine.

**Routine**—Most traffic normal times will bear this designation. In disaster situations, traffic labeled Routine (R on CW) should be handled *last*, or not at all when circuits are busy with Emergency, Priority or Welfare traffic.

## Handling Instructions (Optional)

**HXA**— (Followed by number) Collect landline delivery authorized by addressee within....miles. (If no number, authorization is unlimited.)

**HXB**— (Followed by number) Cancel message if not delivered within.... hours of filing time; service originating station.

**HXC**—Report date and time of delivery (TOD) to originating station.

**HXD**—Report to originating station the identity of station from which received, plus date and time. Report identity of station to which relayed, plus date and time, or if delivered report date, time and method of delivery.

**HXE**—Delivering station get reply from addresses, originate message back.

**HXF**— (Followed by number) Hold delivery until...(date).

**HXG**—Delivery by mail or landline toll call not required. If toll or other expense involved, cancel message and service originating station.

For further information on traffic handling, consult the [Public Service Communications Manual](#) (available for download), or the ARRL Operating Manual, both published by ARRL.

## ARL Numbered Messages

The letters ARL are inserted in the preamble in the check and in the text before spelled out numbers, which represent texts from this list. Note that some ARL texts include insertion of numerals and text. Example: NR 1 R W1AW ARL 5 NEWINGTON CONN. DEC 25 DONALD R. SMITH AA 164 EAST SIXTH AVE AA NORTH RIVER CITY MO AA PHONE 73-3968 BT ARL FIFTY ARL SIXTY ONE BT DIANA AR. For additional information about traffic handling, consult *The ARRL Operating Manual*, published by ARRL, or the *NTS Methods and Practices Guidelines*, [www.arrl.org/FandES/field/nts-mpg/](http://www.arrl.org/FandES/field/nts-mpg/).

### Group One—For Possible “Relief Emergency” Use

ONE	Everyone safe here. Please don't worry.
TWO	Coming home as soon as possible.
THREE	Am in _____ hospital. Receiving excellent care and recovering fine.
FOUR	Only slight property damage here. Do not be concerned about disaster reports.
FIVE	Am moving to new location. Send no further mail or communication. Will inform you of new address when relocated.
SIX	Will contact you as soon as possible.
SEVEN	Please reply by Amateur Radio through the amateur delivering this message. This is a free public service.
EIGHT	Need additional _____ mobile or portable equipment for immediate emergency use.
NINE	Additional _____ radio operators needed to assist with emergency at this location.
TEN	Please contact _____. Advise to standby and provide further emergency information, instructions or assistance.
ELEVEN	Establish Amateur Radio emergency communications with _____ on MHz.
TWELVE	Anxious to hear from you. No word in some time. Please contact me as soon as possible.
THIRTEEN	Medical emergency situation exists here.
FOURTEEN	Situation here becoming critical. Losses and damage from _____ increasing.
FIFTEEN	Please advise your condition and what help is needed.
SIXTEEN	Property damage very severe in this area.
SEVENTEEN	REACT communications services also available. Establish REACT communication with _____ on channel _____.
EIGHTEEN	Please contact me as soon as possible at _____.
NINETEEN	Request health and welfare report on _____. (State name, address and telephone number.)
TWENTY	Temporarily stranded. Will need some assistance. Please contact me at _____.
TWENTY ONE	Search and Rescue assistance is needed by local authorities here. Advise availability.
TWENTY TWO	Need accurate information on the extent and type of conditions now existing at your location. Please furnish this information and reply without delay.

- TWENTY THREE Report at once the accessibility and best way to reach your location.
- TWENTY FOUR Evacuation of residents from this area urgently needed. Advise plans for help.
- TWENTY FIVE Furnish as soon as possible the weather conditions at your location.
- TWENTY SIX Help and care for evacuation of sick and injured from this location needed at once.

Emergency/priority messages originating from official sources must carry the signature of the originating official.

### Group Two—Routine Messages

- FORTY SIX Greetings on your birthday and best wishes for many more to come.
- FORTY SEVEN Reference your message number \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ delivered on \_\_\_\_\_ at UTC.
- FIFTY Greetings by Amateur Radio.
- FIFTY ONE Greetings by Amateur Radio. This message is sent as a free public service by ham radio operators at \_\_\_\_\_. Am having a wonderful time.
- FIFTY TWO Really enjoyed being with you. Looking forward to getting together again.
- FIFTY THREE Received your \_\_\_\_\_. It's appreciated; many thanks.
- FIFTY FOUR Many thanks for your good wishes.
- FIFTY FIVE Good news is always welcome. Very delighted to hear about yours.
- FIFTY SIX Congratulations on your \_\_\_\_\_, a most worthy and deserved achievement.
- FIFTY SEVEN Wish we could be together.
- FIFTY EIGHT Have a wonderful time. Let us know when you return.
- FIFTY NINE Congratulations on the new arrival. Hope mother and child are well.
- \*SIXTY Wishing you the best of everything on \_\_\_\_\_.
- SIXTY ONE Wishing you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.
- \*SIXTY TWO Greetings and best wishes to you for a pleasant \_\_\_\_\_ holiday season.
- SIXTY THREE Victory or defeat, our best wishes are with you. Hope you win.
- SIXTY FOUR Arrived safely at \_\_\_\_\_.
- SIXTY FIVE Arriving \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_. Please arrange to meet me there.
- SIXTY SIX DX QSLs are on hand for you at the \_\_\_\_\_ QSL Bureau. Send \_\_\_\_\_ self addressed envelopes.
- SIXTY SEVEN Your message number \_\_\_\_\_ undeliverable because of \_\_\_\_\_. Please advise.
- SIXTY EIGHT Sorry to hear you are ill. Best wishes for a speedy recovery.
- SIXTY NINE Welcome to the \_\_\_\_\_. We are glad to have you with us and hope you will enjoy the fun and fellowship of the organization.

\* Can be used for all holidays.