

Logs: Accenting the Message & Comms Ctr. Logs

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Intro. This is KM7TMS. Those who can please go to the club's website now. Last week I covered the 213 Message Form. During the week I posted to our SLCARC.org website under the Exercise\Drills button a list of various activates people like yourself might consider doing as part of tomorrow's SLCARC 2021 ShakeOut Exercise. Please check that out. This week I principally review the Message Log and touch upon the Comm Ctr Log, Staffing Log and the ubiquitous ICS 214 Activity Log. Find those log sheets now at slcarc.org. Hit the top page button marked Ham Documents. Scroll down past the 213 images to find Message Log. Basically, a Message Log exists to provide a radio station operator a list of 213s sent and received. It is one of several logs a ham might have. Let me deal with the other logs, before focusing on the Message Log.

Various Logs. In a sizable communications center, a Comm Ctr managers should have a Comm Ctr Log. The active radio operators/stations who work under that manager, also have them. They are basically a station log. Like the general usage 214 Activity Log so common in the JIT KITS, these two logs exist to record important activities worthy of note. The Comms Ctr Log is a specialized 214 created for the Comms Ctr. They are our general station logs.

Chain of Custody In a Sizable Comms Ctr. If you're the Comms Ctr Manager, that is if you supervise a multi, operator facilitate, like the HRR or a big Hub, this log is where you must track the coming and going of the 213s in and out of the Comms Center. For instance, if a runner brings you a 213, you receive it, log it and assign it to a station operator as traffic. For instance, if a station operator receives a reply to a 213 that was sent out of this center, that operator receives in over the air and writes it onto the back side of the original sent 213, in the reply section. Then that operator logs it into the Message Log. Then he files it or else gives it directly to the manager for transport to the receiving party. As that reply is given to the manager who will send it out of the center, the manager logs those two transfers in his own Comms Ctr Log. The operators and managers track this change of custody in their logs. Don't create breaks in the chain by failing to log. This is where the dictum; "If a transaction is not recorded it did not happen," comes into play. Make communications things happen step by step, as sometimes we must recheck these records to work out problems.

In a Small Comms Post. In a small station post there will be no manager, so you need to do things a little differently. You may be working alone, but whenever possible have scribes and runners. Use your Message Log to record the over the air arrival and departures of 213s. It is a log dedicated to just those events. Use your Comms Ctr Log to track other important things, For instance, you may choose to make a Comms Log note that a 213 arrived at your station to be sent or one just left toward the party the message was to go to. That is, you are tracking messages in and out of your post in a Comms Log, whereas the Message log tracks the formal 213 air traffic transfers. Other things of import that can be entered in a Comms Log are things like station opening and closings, or staff changes, etc. Don't forget to have and use, if traffic gets heavy, the filing folders I mentioned last week.. That is, messages received awaiting delivery, Messages Sent, Messages Sent Awaiting reply. A typical Elementary School Hub station will be moving messages around to/from EOC, to from internal Hub operations, to rally point operations. Not all that traffic is going to require 213 level messaging. Things that go to the EOC must be brief, succinct and important. Saturday's practice will be much more laid-back, than the rigor I describe here, because for many of you this will be your first 213.

Staffing Log, If you manage a sizable operation with people rotating in and out, a separate Staffing Log becomes a useful tool. It is another specialized activity log, better controlled by a manager, than a busy radio operator. If you don't have such a log, do this in your Comms Ctr. Log. When you run out of these specialized log sheets, create them or resort to a 214 -- if such are available. Now let's focus on the Message Log.

Message log. Pull-up the club's website scroll to the Message Log. It has two sides with a little instruction section on the bottom of the backside. Let's start on the front side. The smaller top section is self-explanatory. Number your pages and keep track of that running list of numbers for these log sheets. When moving to a new sheet, have a file folder or binder for storing your now filled out Message Log sheets. Create station work space or desk space for these paper records. The main body of the Message Log contains seven columns. In voice comms like we practice Saturday, the first two columns are filled in by the operator or scribe taking the Message # off the received or sent 213s. If your 213 does not have this and other kinds of critical info, it needs to be sent back to its creator for correction. Those people need to log what they do and keep track of their message numbers. Let us not say that runners around a Hub or Comm. Ctr., etc. are unimportant. They are very important. When you need them, you need them and they are widely used in an SN operations.

Similarly, the other columns have important information. Let us quickly go through them. We have an originating station. All our elementary schools have abbreviated tactical call signs I posted under the SN Gen button on the club site. If you're in a big Hub you will need to develop internal tactical call signs like those used in the 2017 Bonneville exercise. See such under the website's Exercise button. Space is small so we use tactical abbreviations. Also herein, have a tactical location abbreviation for who is to receive the message. These can get tricky as they are not so standardized. Hub Comm Ctr managers coordinate these. There is a radio operator time of action column. This time entry will be different than the time from the one recorded when the 213 was created. If written properly it should be using local MDT or MST, as seasonally appropriate, as volunteer responders usually can't handle things like Zulu time. There is a precedent priority column. Refer to the 213's for that basic data and bring it over to this Message Log entry. Refer to the second to the last paragraph below for definitions of this priority scale. Lastly, there is a subject column. That is also a copied over from the 213. This log has much from the original 213, allowing us to ID 213s at issue, quickly. Because 213's should leave the radio room and go to others we are primarily concerned with 1) tracking their arrival, their time with us and their departure from us, and 2) having them accurate.

A typical small radio station operator must be both the manager and the radio operator. Use a Comms Ctr Log, and the Message Log and various file folders, etc. to storage and move about the 213's. If you're running some digital traffic we would use digital filing, but here we want our radio operators to learn a basic, time-worn voice communications practice, as you pass one 213 to the HRR station. Learning this complexity will take a time and in few months from now we will practice this again. Unfortunately, we don't yet have infrastructure to have an Elmer at every field station. Fortunately, we do not have infrastructure to have an Elmer at every station, and you can learn as you wish. The short 213 forces you to reduce my afore mentioned list of exercise activities under the websites exercise/drill button, to something really simple.

Precedence Definitions. The life, etc. column is where the priority code from the 213 is noted. Basically, these options are defined as follows: Emergency Traffic = life threatening and/or highest priority send ASAP, Priority =significant injury/property importance is high so send as soon as you can behind emergency traffic. Welfare is an important item that does not arise to the first two levels. Send it as able. Routine = traffic to be passed when other messages are completed. As you may have a higher priority, but no one yet to receive it, shuffle as needed to meet precedence and traffic needs.

Communications are often life-and property saving activities. Thank you for what you undertake to do. This is challenging activity. There are relatively few hams who seriously engage disaster practice, and many who fail to train. This training will be posted to the Net Training button. Please excuse the typos, etc.

Are there any Questions or Comments?