Start: 1951 L – Stop: 2000 L

Message Content, Security, Precedence

1.1 Overview.

Thank-you Bob. Good evening to the net. Tonight, we'll be reviewing message content, security, and Precedence.

1.2 Message Content and Security

Since Part 97 prohibits the use of encryption or any other method that would obscure the meaning of an amateur radio transmission, ACS/ARES® operators cannot guarantee that the information they exchange will not be intercepted by individuals other than the intended recipient. Users and served agencies should assume that the public and various news organizations may be monitoring amateur radio frequencies during an activation event. With this in mind, two types of information should not be transmitted by amateur radio.

a. Personally, Identifying Information (PII) – Example, death of a named individual, social security number, passport number, driver's license number, patient identification number, etc.
b. Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) data – Example, any part of an individual's medical record.

As ACS volunteers, we are not expected to be experts in PII or HIPAA. Although it is not the responsibility of the ACS/ARES® operator to determine if the information contained in a served agency message contains PII or if the information is compliant with HIPAA, the operator should remind the message originator that information exchange by amateur radio may be monitored by others and that they should have no expectation of privacy.

1.3 Message Precedence

During an activation event, prioritizing the flow of information is a critical component of network management. Precedence is the message attribute that enables the Net Control

Station (NCS) to prioritize messages properly. All message traffic, whether informal or written, should be assigned a message precedence.

The ARRL® National Traffic System (NTS)™ defines four levels of message precedence. The definitions in this briefing are sourced from various ARRL® NTS™ and Radio Relay International (RRI) documents and are presented in highest to lowest priority order.

a. **EMERGENCY**: Any message having life and death urgency to any person or group of persons, that is transmitted by Amateur Radio in the absence of regular commercial facilities. The use of this precedence should generally be limited to traffic originated and signed by authorized partner officials. This includes official messages of welfare agencies during emergencies requesting supplies, materials, or instructions vital to relief efforts for the stricken populace in emergency areas. Due to the lack of privacy on radio, EMERGENCY messages should only be sent via Amateur Radio when regular communication facilities are unavailable. ***When in doubt, do not use it***. Valid uses of the EMERGENCY precedence include but are not limited to the following events.

   (1) Requests for Emergency Medical Services (EMS) or Ambulance
   (2) Requests for Police assistance
   (3) Requests for Fire assistance

b. ***PRIORITY***: Any official message having a specific time limit, or any emergency-related message not covered by the EMERGENCY precedence. This precedence is usually only associated with official traffic to, from, or related to a disaster area.

c. ***WELFARE:*** Any message concerning the whereabouts or health and welfare of an individual in the disaster area, or a message from the disaster area that indicates all is well. Welfare traffic is handled only after all EMERGENCY and PRIORITY traffic is cleared. Welfare Traffic is normally only tolerated outbound (e.g., Individuals giving their welfare status) for the first 72-hours after a disaster. And then after that, the network would consider inbound Welfare

Traffic/queries. The Red Cross equivalent to an incoming Welfare message is a Disaster Welfare Inquiry (DWI).

d. ***ROUTINE***: Messages unrelated to any emergency. As a general rule, during activation events ROUTINE messages *will not* be sent or received by Pinellas ACS/ARES®.

1.4 WINLINK MESSAGE PRECEDENCE

Four precedence levels are defined within Winlink. From highest to lowest priority order, they are FLASH, IMMEDIATE, PRIORITY, and ROUTINE.

The Winlink Precedence of IMMEDIATE should be assigned to any message that meets the ARRL® NTS™ criteria for an EMERGENCY precedence. The Winlink precedence of PRIORITY and ROUTINE should be assigned to any Winlink message that meets the corresponding NTS™ criteria for PRIORITY and ROUTINE precedence. Winlink does not have a message precedence that corresponds to NTS™ precedence of WELFARE. If a welfare message is sent by Winlink it should be assigned a precedence of ROUTINE.

Messages generated by Pinellas ACS/ARES® will only be assigned a Winlink precedence of ROUTINE, PRIORITY, or IMMEDIATE. Under no circumstances will any message be assigned a Winlink precedence of FLASH.

1.5 SUMMARY

Finally, let me finish my discussion of precedence with a quote from some of the Winlink documentation I've reviewed (Winlink Frequently Asked Question Document).

> *"Best practice shows that the radio operator should not set the precedence. Operators transmit and receive message traffic as part of their duties and should avoid composing the message. Message composition falls to the message originator, as does setting precedence. The operator certainly can advise the originator as to which precedence may be best suited for a given message. If no precedence is given, the operator should assume ROUTINE."*

1.6 QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS

I'd like to pause here for a minute and ask if anyone has a comment or question about tonight's presentation. If you have a comment or question, please provide me with your call sign, slowly, clearly, and phonetically so I don't make a mistake when I respond. And then ask your question or provide me with your comment.

This is WA1RYQ.

ACTION - PAUSING FOR QUESTIONS

1.7 CONCLUSION.

That's all I have for this week's training session. Let me conclude with a couple of reminders.

1. There is no Winlink Training this week. The next Winlink Training net is scheduled for Wednesday, March 1st, 2023, at 1930 hours local. This will be a mixed voice and data net with the voice segment taking place on the W4ACS repeater.

   A Winlink bulletin describing the planned net activities will be sent to all registered Winlink net participants prior to the net. A copy of the bulletin and detailed instructions for creating the planned messages exchanged during the net will also be posted on the Pinellas ACS Website.

2. I strongly encourage everyone who has not done so to login to the Groups.io website and become a member of the Pinellas County ACS group. It's probably the easiest way to post messages and exchange information with other members of Pinellas ACS. There is also a link to this group on the Pinellas ACS website's home page.

3. As always if you have any comments or training suggestions, I can be contacted at WA1RYQ@ARRL.net. Or you can post a message on the PinCo ACS Groups.io website.

Now with that, I'll turn it back to Net Control.

1.8 QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS.

The following table contains a summary of the comments and questions provided by the membership during the presentation.

No.	Call Sign	Comments	Response
		No Additional Questions or comments	