

ARRL Message Form Instructions

Every formal radiogram message originated and handled should contain the following four main components in the order given. The numbers and letters refer to corresponding information on the example message on the next page.

1. Preamble

The Preamble includes information used to prioritize and track the message and ensure its accuracy.

- (A) **Number.** Assigned by the Station of Origin and never changed. Begin with 1 each month or year.
- (B) **Precedence.** Determines the order in which traffic is passed. Assign each message a Precedence of R (Routine), W (Welfare), P (Priority) or EMERGENCY. See the guidelines on page 39 of this manual.
- (C) **Handling Instructions (HX).** Optional, used only if a specific need is present. Handling Instructions are detailed on page 00 of this manual.
- (D) **Station of Origin.** The call sign of the station originating (creating) the message.
- (E) **Check.** The number of words or word groups in the text of the message. A word group is any group of one or more consecutive characters with no interrupting spaces.
- (F) **Place of Origin.** The location (city and state) of the party for whom the message was created, and not necessarily the location of the Station of Origin.
- (G) **Time Filed.** Optional, used only when the filing time has some importance relative to the Precedence, Handling instructions or Text.
- (H) **Date.** The date the message was filed. (If Time Filed is used, date and time must agree.)

2. Address

Name, address, city, state, ZIP and telephone number of the intended recipient, as complete as possible. Note that punctuation is not used in the Address section.

3. Text

The message information, limited to 25 words or less if possible. Normal punctuation characters are not used in the text. A question mark is sent as QUERY, while DASH is sent for a hyphen. The letter X is used as a period (but never after the last group of the text) and counts as a word when figuring the Check. The letter R is used in place of a decimal in mixed figure groups (example: 146R52 for 146.52).

4. Signature The name of the party for whom the message was originated. May include additional information such as Amateur Radio call sign, title, address, phone number and so on.

ARRL Message Precedence's

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. 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. On CW and digital modes, this designation will always be spelled out. *When in doubt, do not use this designation.*

PRIORITY—Abbreviated as P on CW and digital modes. This classification is for important messages having a specific time limit, official messages not covered in the emergency category, press dispatches and emergency-related traffic not of the utmost urgency.

WELFARE—Abbreviated as W on CW and digital modes. This classification refers to an inquiry about the health and welfare of an individual in the disaster area, or to an advisory from the disaster area that indicates all is well. Welfare traffic is handled only after all Emergency and Priority traffic is cleared. The Red Cross equivalent to an incoming Welfare message is DWI (Disaster Welfare Inquiry).

ROUTINE— Abbreviated as R on CW and digital modes. Most traffic in normal times will bear this designation. In disaster situations, traffic labeled Routine should be handled last, or not at all when circuits are busy with higher-precedence traffic.