Emergency Response

The Health and Welfare Radiogram

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When disaster strikes, we need a plan to provide messaging services to our neighbors. This article presents one way to do this.

When the SHTF event happens and the grid is down, posting a yard sign that says something like RADIOGRAMS SENT HERE will let your neighbors know that you are able and willing to provide them with simple Radiogram messaging services.

You should have printed ICS-213 Radiogram forms (RRI form 1701, thru 1704) on hand to give to your neighbors for filling their Health and Welfare messages to their families and friends outside of the disaster area. You will be responsible for transcription of their plain text messages to RCC Numbered Radiogram format. You COULD print the text table below for them to use to compose their message, but to reduce circuit congestion, you may need to trim the word count, preserving the intent of the message. Do this in the presence of the originator for their approval.

RRI Numbered Radiograms for Health and Welfare messages reduce word count in the actual message sent over the air. These texts are shown in the table below.

27	*TWENTY SEVEN*	I am safe and well.
28	*TWENTY EIGHT*	Household safe and well.
29	*TWENTY NINE*	Currently at shelter.
30	*THIRTY*	Currently at home.
31	*THIRTY ONE*	Currently at family/friend's house.
32	*THIRTY TWO*	Currently at hotel.
33	*THIRTY THREE*	Safe but moving to a safer location.
34	*THIRTY FOUR*	Evacuating to a shelter.
35	*THIRTY FIVE*	Evacuating to family member/friend's house.
36	*THIRTY SIX*	Evacuating and safe.
37	*THIRTY SEVEN*	At home and plan to remain here.
38	*THIRTY EIGHT*	Will contact you when able.
39	*THIRTY NINE*	All communications are down.
40	*FORTY*	Share this message with others.

A typical message may be formatted as follows:

42 W W7XYZ RCC 9 YOURTOWN ST 0315 APR 1
TO NAME

ADDRESS
CITY ST ZIP
TEL NUMBER
EMAIL
{FROM FULL NAME}
{ADDRESS}
{CITY ST ZIP}
{TEL NUMBER}
{EMAIL}
BT
RCC TWENTY EIGHT RCC THIRTY
SEVEN RCC THIRTY EIGHT
BT
MOM AND DAD

{} Bracketed lines are ICS-213 form "From" person and address information for message origination identification and return responses. While there is no requirement for "From" information in the standard Radiogram form, it is strongly suggested that it be included in all disaster area messages.

This example reduced the word count from 19 to 9. (Counting X periods in the plain text.)

Note that there are no periods ("X") used in RCC abbreviated texts.

Remember message routing rules. Bring your Radiogram traffic to the Local area net for relay. Don't bypass the organized traffic network.

Make sure the message precidence is W, welfare. Do not include handling instructions in the header. Responses to these messages adds to network congestion. Standard operating procedures hold Health and Welfare traffic at the Local/Section level at least 72 hours from the beginning of an event reserving network use for Emergency and Priority traffic. Include the time the message was originated in the message header. Times should be UTC (Z).