Traffic Handling

Routing basics.

David Bogner, W7EES, ARRL Oregon STM – September 7, 2024

Traffic Net Order

(Refer to the Area, Region Map.)

Modeled after the ARRL's National Traffic System, this is how traffic flows in the manual network.

Level 1 - Local Level Nets serve localities, cities or small counties. Local Level Nets liaison to Section Level Nets.

Level 2 - Section Level Nets serve entire States or large portions thereof. Washington Section is divided into two portions, Western and Eastern. Section Level Nets liaison to Region Nets.

Level 3 - Region Nets serve several Sections. Region 7 is comprised of Alaska, British Columbia, Alberta, Montana, Idaho, Oregon and Both Eastern and Western Washington Sections. Region Nets liaison to Area Nets.

Level 4 - Area Nets serve several Regions in a continental area. The United States and Canada are divided into three Areas, Eastern, Central and Western. Traffic from lower levels is routed to the appropriate Area of the destination by experienced operators who maintain daily schedules of their choosing. This group of operators is known as the Inter Area Traffic Network (formerly known as the Transcontinental Corps of which I am a former member.)

This order is followed in a cycle which starts at Level 1 through Level 4 and reverses back to Level 1 to complete the cycle in a three hour time frame. This occurs 4 times a day. Cycle 1 begins at 18:00 UTC, Cycle 2 at 21:00, Cycle 3 at 00:00 and Cycle 4 at 03:00. Most of the net activity at the Section level occurs in the evening hours with cycle 3 traffic coming into the local areas from section level nets. Outbound traffic is then routed to cycle 4 section nets from the local level.

Local level nets only liaison with Section level nets. To maintain order in the network, net liaisons do not skip over Levels. There must be accountability for each message handled, providing for traceability from origination to delivery. This also means that net operational methods and practices follow a uniform set of rules, insuring that net operations are the same from coast to coast. Shortcuts and substitutions are discouraged.

Liaisons should not bring traffic to the local net that it can not service. They should know to route traffic at the section level accordingly and not stuff undeliverable traffic on the local net. Routing

outbound traffic from the local net should only be done through the Section net liaison. Do not bypass this step! Breaking the net level chain of events makes message tracing more difficult.

Understanding the order of net levels and the cyclic operation of the national network is essential to maintaining a smooth flow of traffic from coast to coast. This is the stuff traffic handlers are about.

The Digital Traffic Network operates 24/7 and is maintained by dedicated amateur radio operators who maintain their own equipment capable of automatically forwarding high volumes of traffic from coast to coast with higher speed and accuracy than the manual network. These operators practice advanced technical skills and posses resources to conduct long distance operations in emergencies. Operators follow the same routing ruless as the manual network. As participation in manual nets is declining, reliance on the digital system is on the rise. Operators are encouraged to join the DTN.