A Beginners Guide to Voice Procedures for Traffic and Handling
By Ken Miller, VE7CTW

The following is a step by step procedure used to call another station and then send that station a message in using VOICE procedures. The station receiving here is ***VE7UBC*** and the sending station is ***VE7CTW***. As you follow this text and the accompanying commentary, you will see that the procedure is quite straightforward, and easy to learn. This example should help to explain how a message is prepared by an originating station and then sent on a point-to-point radio link. This procedure does not include net procedures, and for the purposes of this document it is safe to assume that both stations are already on their appropriate frequency either as assigned by a net control station, or by prior arrangement (a "sked"). This document also does not include the procedures necessary to acquire the data listed below, which will be covered in another document.

First establish that the stations in question are on frequency and ready to receive the traffic. The following call would do just that. This is then followed by the ***OVER*** Proword signifying that the sending station is done with the request and is awaiting an answer. That call would be sent as follows:

VE7UBC THIS IS VE7CTW I HAVE 1 READY TO COPY OVER

After the hearing the call the receiving operator then answers the call by sending
VE7CTW THIS IS VE7UBC GO AHEAD OVER
This would then inform the sending station that the receiving operator is ready to copy and that the sending station should begin the transmission..

The sending stations' operator would then begin by sending the preamble of the message. The actual contents of the preamble are as follows:

46 W VE7CTW ARL 7 RICHMOND BC 0842 FEB 3

However, to insure corect transmission of this message, standard voice procedures and International Phonetic Alphabet would be used to send this preamble as follows:

COPY NUMBER FORTY SIX INITIAL WISKEY GROUP HOTEL XRAY GOLF CALL VICTOR ECHO
SEVEN CHARLIE TANGO WISKEY GROUP ALPHA ROMEO LIMA FIGURE SEVEN RICHMOND I
SPELL ROMEO INDIA CHARLIE HOTEL MIKE OSCAR NOVEMBER DELTA RICHMOND GROUP
BRAVO CHARLIE FIGURES ZERO EIGHT FOUR TWO FEBRUARY FIGURE THREE

Before continuing with our example it is first necessary to insure that the reader understands the meaning and use of the Prowords (identified with the underline) in the above transmission fragment. The first Proword is ***COPY NUMBER***. This tells the receiving operator that the message is immediately following and that it will have the number that follows. Then the number is sent as single digits and using the International Phonetic Alphabet. For a full description of all the appropriate phonetics please refer to the "International Phonetic Alphabet" document.

The next Proword sent is ***INITIAL***. This tells the receiving operator that a single letter group will be the next thing transmitted. In the case of this message that is the W for message Precedence. A more detailed definition of Precedence follows in the text.

The Proword ***GROUP*** is next used to identify that the next element sent is a mixed group of letters and/or numbers. This must be used whenever there is an unusual abbreviation or contraction. Here it refers to the handling instructions for this message, which are fully explained below. Following the Proword GROUP, the sending operator would then "spell" out each individual letter or number using the phonetic alphabet.

CALL is the next Proword used. Although not really standard procedure from a military standpoint, it does help identify that the next piece of information transmitted will be an amateur radio callsign. Here too, the phonetic alphabet is used to "spell out" the letters and numbers of the originating stations callsign.

FIGURE or ***FIGURES*** are the Prowords used to identify that the next piece of information is a number or a group of numbers respectively.

The next identified Prowords are ***I SPELL***. This is used following the transmission of a word that is unusual or has a unique spelling. The procedure is to say the word, the say the Prowords ***I SPELL***, and then say each individual letter using the phonetic alphabet to "spell" the word. Then say the word once again to confirm it to the receiving station.
Now that the methodology has been explained, it is appropriate to discuss the makeup of the pieces of information that constitute the Preamble of this message.
The first group, or block of characters, is the message number. This Prowords are not copied down by the receiving operator but is used to signify the start of a message. Then the actual number of the message is sent.
The next group sent is the "Precedence" or priority of this message. The available levels are ***R*** for Routine, ***P*** for Priority, ***W*** for Welfare and ***EMERGENCY***. If the message had been an emergency, then the word EMERGENCY is ALWAYS spelled out. In this case it is a welfare message originating from within the disaster area telling someone on the "outside" that all is well. If there had been a problem and some form of assistance was being requested, then the Precedence of this message would have been ***P*** for Priority.
The next group are the Handling Instructions. This is an optional entry but it is good practice to include it so that the relaying stations in the network can act appropriately for the delivery or relay of the message. The available Handling Instruction values are:
HXA- (followed by a number) Collect landline delivery authorized by addressee within (number) miles. If no number is supplied then authorization is unlimited.

HXB- (followed by a number) Cancel message if not delivered within (number) of hours of filing time and then send a service message back to the originating station noting that fact.

HXC- Report date and time of delivery back to the originating station.

HXD- Report to the originating station, the identity of the station from which this message was received along with the date and time received by return radiogram. In addition, report the identity of the station to whom this message was relayed also with the date and time. If the receiving station is also the delivering station, then report the date and time of delivery as well as the delivery method.

HXE- This is a request by the originating station that the delivering station get a reply from the addressee and originate a message back to the originating station. This is the same as including an ARL SEVEN message in the text.

HXF- (followed b a number) Hold delivery until (number) date.

HXG- This tells the delivering station that delivery by mail or landline toll call is not required, and that if this is the necessary case for delivery then cancel the message and send a radiogram back to the originating station of this.
The next group is the callsign of the station where the message originated, which in this example is VE7CTW.
The next group sent is the check number. The check is the number of words in the text portion of the message. it is interesting to note that punctuation IS considered to be a word. For the purposes of radiograms, the only punctuation that should be use is the letter X, which can be used to signify a break in thoughts which replaces the period.
The place of origin, which includes the city and state or province is the next group sent. Also, there is no comma between the city and state or province.
The last groups in the preamble are the filing time values which may include the optional local standard time in 24 hour, military time format, and then the required month and day.
Following the preamble, the next block transmitted is the addressee information. At the completion of each line of address information, the Proword ***BREAK*** is sent signifying that that is the end of that line in the address field and to continue on the next line. At the end of the entire address, the Prowords ***BREAK FOR TEXT*** is sent signifying that that is the end of the address and that immediately following will be the text of the message. For more explanation of the other Prowords used, please refer to the previous descriptions in this document .

The actual text appearing on the message blank is as follows:
John Doe

105 Anyold Road
Fairbanks AK 99999
Tel 907 555 1234
To properly send this to the receiving station, the sending station would transmit:

JOHN DOE I SPELL DELTA OCSAR ECHO DOE BREAK
FIGURES ONE ZERO FIVE ANYOLD I SPELL ALPHA NOVEMBER YANKEE OSCAR LIMA DELTA ANYOLD ROAD BREAK
FAIRBANKS I SPELL FOXTROT ALPHA INDIA ROMEO BRAVO ALPHA NOVEMBER KILO SIERRA FAIRBANKS GROUP ALPHA KILO FIGURES NINE NINE NINE NINE NINE BREAK
FIGURES NINE ZERO SEVEN FIVE FIVE FIVE ONE TWO THREE FOUR BREAK FOR TEXT

With all the address and record keeping now sent, it is finally time to send the text of the message. Our message here has only seven words, but it does provide an adequate example. The text for this sample message contains mostly ARRL Numbered Radiograms as that is all that is needed to convey the information. In addition, since these are "canned" texts, sending them in this manner is much more efficient than sending the entire text. A full description of all of these messages is contained in the ARRL Numbered Radiograms document. Also, at the end of this document is a "decoded" version of this message as it would be delivered to the recipient. The actual text for this message would appear on the message blank as follows:
ARL ONE ARL FOUR ARL SEVEN LOVE

The properly send this the sending operator would then transmit

GROUP ALPHA ROMEO LIMA ONE I SPELL OSCAR NOVEMBER ECHO ONE GROUP ALPHA ROMEO LIMA FOUR I SPELL FOXTROT OSCAR UNIFORM ROMEO FOUR GROUP ALPHA ROMEO LIMA SEVEN I SPELL SIERRA ECHO VICTOR ECHO NOVEMBER SEVEN LOVE I SPELL LIMA OSCAR VICTOR ECHO LOVE

BREAK FOR SIGNATURE

Here, the Prowords ***BREAK FOR SIGNATURE*** are used to identify the end of the text section of the message. It is also important to note that when sending ARRL Numbered Radiograms, that the entire word which designates the message "number" (in this example 1, 4, and 7) are spelled out completely. These messages may NOT be sent as simple numbers.

The final section of the message is the signature block. The text in our example is:
BOB SMITH

It would be sent as follows:
BOB I SPELL BRAVO OSCAR BRAVO BOB SMITH I SPELL SIERRA MIKE INDIA TANGO HOTEL SMITH END OF MESSAGE

NONE TO FOLLOW OVER

The Proword ***END OF MESSAGE*** is used to identify the end of the signature block and the end of the message.
In our example, there was only the one message to send, thus the sending operator needs to tell that to the receiving operator using the Prowords ***NONE TO FOLLOW***. If there had been more messages to send, then the sending operator would send the number of messages remaining instead of ***NONE TO FOLLOW*** followed by the Proword ***OVER*** signifying that the sending station is done. Continuing this example, the receiving operator then sends back:
VICTOR ECHO SEVEN CHARLIE TANGO WISKEY THIS IS VICTOR ECHO SEVEN UNIFORM BRAVO CHARLIE CONFIRM RECEIPT NUMBER FOUR SIX OUT

If the receiving operator had copied all of it perfectly, then he would send back confirmation of that fact through a call like the one above. All receiving operators should also count the number of words received in the text and verify that it is the same as the number that was identified in the "Check" of the message. If there is a discrepancy, call it to the attention of the sending operator and go over each word again to make sure that it is correct. If the Check was wrong, then change that as appropriate. A confirmation begins with the call of the station which sent the message followed by the Proword ***THIS IS*** **and the call of the receiving station. This is then followed by the words *CONFIRM RECEIPT*** meaning "I acknowledge receipt for" followed by the number of the message that is being acknowledged. Then finally to return control to either the sending station, or any other station wishing to use the frequency, the receiving station would then send the Proword ***OUT***. When the sending operator receives this, he can then mark on his message blank, the one that contained the original message, that the message was received by VE7UBC and the current standard time and date. This is referred to as servicing the message. Now that the message has been sent and serviced the procedure is complete and the sending station has completed the transfer.

If however, the operator at VE7UBC had missed the last word of the text due to static, fading, etc. instead of sending the above he could send the following :

VICTOR ECHO SEVEN CHARLIE TANGO WISKEY THIS IS VICTOR ECHO SEVEN UNIFORM BRAVO CHARLIE SAY AGAIN

WORD AFTER SEVEN BREAK

This tells the sending station to send the "Word After" the word SEVEN in the text again. The sending station should then respond with the following:

I SAY AGAIN WORD AFTER SEVEN LOVE I SPELL LIMA OCSAR VICTOR ECHO LOVE BREAK

The ***BREAK*** Proword signifies that the other station can begin to transmit immediately and not to resend the called and calling station callsigns. The text sent is a repetition of the request followed by the word in question. The sending station the turns control back to the receiving station by sending the Proword ***BREAK*** once again. This allows the receiving station to ask for any other missed or questionable text on their copy of the message. If the receiving station now has the message correct, then they would send the confirmation to the sending station and the transfer would now be complete and the sending station should then "service" the message at that end.

Now here is a copy of the message as it would appear on the typewriter or message blank at station ***VE7UBC***

46 W HXG VE7CTW ARL 7 RICHMOND BC 0842 FEB 3

JOHN DOE
105 ANYOLD ROAD
FAIRBANKS AK 99999
907 555 1234
ARL ONE ARL FOUR ARL SEVEN LOVE
BOB SMITH

When this message is delivered to the addressee, the ARL message numbers would be converted back into their respective text and would be read as follows:
"… Everyone safe here. Please don't worry. Only slight property damage here. Do not be concerned about disaster reports. Please reply by Amateur Radio through the amateur delivering this message. This is a free public service. Love Signed Bob Smith."

by Ken Miller VE7CTW
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