

To: ARRL Section Managers and ARRL Section Traffic Managers

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The following article introduces and interprets the new criteria for the Public Service Honor Roll. A listing of the new criteria, point by point, is at the end of this article. A shorter version of this article will be appearing in the Public Service column of April, 2002, QST. The following article is also posted on the ARRL Web site at <http://www.arrl.org/FandES/field/pshr/>. 73!

A New Season for Public Service Honor Roll

Starting May 1, 2002, a new season for the Public Service Honor Roll (PSHR) begins! It has been eleven years since the qualification criteria were last revised. The idea behind updating the PSHR program was initiated largely by the comments and opinions of Amateur Radio operators who are active in all areas of public service communications.

Under the guidance of the ARRL Volunteer Resources Committee, a study was conducted and a survey was taken. (See March, 2001, QST's Public Service Column, p. 96). Many ideas and suggestions that covered everything from generalities to specifics about the program were received and incorporated into the thought and discussion process.

An ongoing challenge with PSHR is how to effectively balance the many different facets of Amateur Radio public service communications. It seemed that areas such as traffic handling, net operations, on-the-scene emergency response, public safety and support communications all needed to be covered. Leadership and management roles within Amateur Radio public service communications and the ARRL Field Organization also heeded recognition. The assignment of point values was a delicate task, too. The resulting criteria attempts to present a balanced program without being too complicated.

What does it all mean?

1) Participation in a public service net -- 1 point, maximum 40.

A public service net is one that is regularly scheduled and handles Amateur Radio formal messages. Here are examples of public service nets: Local and section nets that are affiliated with the National Traffic System (NTS); NTS region, NTS area, and independent nets that handle traffic; ARES, RACES, SKYWARN nets that meet on a regular basis; net sessions that are activated during emergencies and threats of potential emergencies; public service and safety nets; nets that are established for training radio amateurs in public service and emergency communications.

2) Handling formal messages (radiograms) via any mode -- 1 point for each message handled; maximum 40.

A "handled" message is defined as a message that is originated or sent or received or delivered. PSHR will follow the same method as Brass Pounders' League to count an individual operator's traffic total (also known as station activity report) to reach the figure for the new PSHR Category 2. There is one point granted for each message handled; maximum 40 points per calendar month.

Here is a reference from the Public Service Communications Manual on how to count messages. [Section 2, NTS Chapter 10.2] <http://www.arrl.org/FandES/field/pscm/sec2-ch10.html#2>

Originated--One point for each message from a third party for sending via your station. This "extra" credit is given for an off-the-air function because of the value of contact with the general public.

Sent--Every message sent over the air from your station to another amateur receives a point in this category. Thus, a message that is eligible for an Originated point as above receives another point when it is sent on the air.

Likewise, a message that is received on the air conveys a Sent point when it is relayed to another station. A message that you initiate yourself, while it gets no Originated point, gets a Sent point when cleared. All Sent points require on-the-air sending.

Received--A message received over the air gets a Received point, whether received for relaying (sending) or for delivery to the addressee. Any message received which is not eligible for a Delivery point (such as one addressed to yourself) is nevertheless eligible for a Received point.

Delivered--The act of delivery of a message to a third party receives a point in this category, in addition to a Received point. This is strictly an off-the-air function and must be coupled with receipt of the message at your station. Thus you can't get a Delivered point unless you first get a Received point.

Further example for clarification: If I send a message originated on behalf of myself, I know I get only one point for a message SENT. However, if I originate a message on behalf of a third party, and then send it, I get TWO points, (origination and sending), even though ONE message was handled.

3) Serving in an ARRL-sponsored volunteer position: ARRL Field Organization appointee or Section Manager, NTS Net Manager, TCC Director, TCC member, NTS official or appointee above the Section level. -- 10 points for each position; maximum 30.

ARRL Field Organization appointees (in alphabetical order) include the following: Assistant Section Managers, District Emergency Coordinators, Emergency Coordinators, Local Government Liaisons, Net Managers, Official Bulletin Stations, Official Emergency Stations, Official Observers, Official Observer Coordinators, Official Relay Stations, Public Information Coordinators, Public Information Officers, Section Emergency Coordinators, Section Managers, Section Traffic Managers, State Government Liaisons, Technical Specialists.

The Section Manager is the ARRL-member elected League official the section. NTS Net Managers would include the following nets: NTS Region and NTS Area. TCC (Transcontinental Corps) Director is in charge of organizing his/her TCC membership roster of operators that comprise the corps. TCC members are those operators that are assigned to relay traffic from one NTS area to another, conducting liaison with NTS nets to do so. NTS official or appointee above the Section level includes NTS Area Staff Chairs, NTS Area Digital Coordinators and NTS Digital Stations.

More information about the structure of the NTS and the positions and nets that are mentioned in this article may be found in the ARRL's Public Service Communications Manual. It is ARRLWeb at <http://www.arrl.org/FandES/field/pscm/>

4) Participation in scheduled, short-term public service events such as walk-a-thons, bike-a-thons, parades, simulated emergency tests and related practice events. This includes off-the-air meetings and coordination efforts with related emergency groups and served agencies. -- 5 points per hour (or any portion thereof) of time spent in either coordinating and/or operating in the public service event; no limit.

This category recognizes the value of public safety communication events that Amateur Radio is often called to participate in. Simulated emergency tests, exercises, and drills are covered by this category. Points are gained by the amount of time that an Amateur Radio operator spends directly involved in operating the event. This also recognizes the value of off-the-air time it takes to meet with the organization or public service agency to plan and coordinate Amateur Radio involvement.

5) Participation in an unplanned emergency response when the Amateur Radio operator is on the scene. This also includes unplanned incident requests by public or served agencies for Amateur Radio participation. -- 5 points per hour (or any portion thereof) of time spent directly involved in the emergency operation; no limit.

This category recognizes an Amateur Radio operator who is directly involved in an actual emergency operation. This includes the operator who is on the scene or out in the field, in the shelter, at the emergency operations center, at the hospital, or other served agency's headquarters or their temporary command center.

The second sentence of Category 5 invites the Amateur Radio operator who is an active participant in an unplanned incident -- or in other words, an emergency operation-- to take credit for his/her participation even though he/she is not physically at the emergency scene.

The intent behind Category 5 is to also include the Amateur Radio operators -- like net controllers, net operation and other radio amateurs that support communications in unplanned incidents-- that are not actually on the emergency scene or at the shelter, etc, but are spending time and efforts for supporting the same emergency communication efforts.

As an example, if the National Weather Service activates SKYWARN, Amateur Radio operators serve as weather spotters from their home (or car, or work, or other locations) during the weather event. Then, a tornado strikes and the Red Cross calls out the ARES members to serve in shelters and to provide support for damage assessment communications. These operators would be among those to qualify for points under Category 5.

There would likely be several net control operators, net liaison operators, traffic handlers, etc, who are away from the disaster scene, but are spending time to support the Amateur Radio emergency communication effort on behalf of the served agencies (Red Cross and National Weather Service, in this example). They, too, would qualify for points under Category 5.

6.) Providing and maintaining

a) an automated digital system that handles ARRL radiogram-formatted messages;

b) a Web page e-mail list server oriented toward Amateur Radio public service -- 10 points per item.

The portion, "a," is a carry-over from the previous PSHR criteria as this sub category recognizes the efforts it takes to provide and maintain an automated digital system (like a packet bulletin board or a PACTOR system) that handles ARRL radiogram-formatted messages.

The portion "b," is a new item. Since the last time PSHR criteria were revised, newer technologies like Web pages and e-mail list servers have become popular and effective ways to communicate news and information to the community of radio amateurs that are involved in emergency and public service communication operations and preparedness.

Starting May 1, 2002

The new PSHR qualification criteria goes into effect on May 1, 2002. Therefore, the August, 2002, QST will be the first month to report the results under the new criteria. If an Amateur Radio operator is presently in the middle of his/her quest for qualifying for the PSHR certificate under the old criteria, those months will continue to count toward the certificate.

If you qualify for PSHR during a given month, send your results to either your Section Traffic Manager or Section Manager. These leaders, in turn, will forward the PSHR qualifiers to ARRL Headquarters for notation in the monthly PSHR listing in QST. Further questions about the program may be sent to Steve Ewald, WV1X, at ARRL Headquarters (sewald@arrl.org).

Public Service Honor Roll Criteria Effective May 1, 2002 (Summary)

This listing is to recognize radio amateurs whose public service performance during the month indicated qualifies for 70 or more total points in the following 6 categories (as reported to their Section Managers). Please note the maximum points for each category:

1.) Participating in a public service net, using any mode.

-- 1 point per net session; maximum 40.

2.) Handling formal messages (radiograms) via any mode.

-- 1 point for each message handled; maximum 40.

3.) Serving in an ARRL-sponsored volunteer position: ARRL Field Organization appointee or Section Manager, NTS Net Manager, TCC Director, TCC member, NTS official or appointee above the Section level.

-- 10 points for each position; maximum 30.

4.) Participation in scheduled, short-term public service events such as walk-a-thons, bike-a-thons, parades, simulated emergency tests and related practice events. This includes off-the-air meetings and coordination efforts with related emergency groups and served agencies.

-- 5 points per hour (or any portion thereof) of time spent in either coordinating and/or operating in the public service event; no limit.

5.) Participation in an unplanned emergency response when the Amateur Radio operator is on the scene. This also includes unplanned incident requests by public or served agencies for Amateur Radio participation.

-- 5 points per hour (or any portion thereof) of time spent directly involved in the emergency operation; no limit.

6.) Providing and maintaining:

a) an automated digital system that handles ARRL radiogram-formatted messages;

b) a Web page e-mail list server oriented toward Amateur Radio public service

-- 10 points per item.

Amateur Radio stations that qualify for PSHR 12 consecutive months, or 18 out of a 24 month period, will be awarded a certificate from Headquarters upon written notification of qualifying months to the Public Service Branch of Field and Educational Services at ARRL HQ.