



Monthly Packet Message Passing Exercise Review

OpPeriod: 08/19/2026 09:00 to 08/25/2026 20:00



Santa Clara County ARES®/RACES

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Author: Andreas Ott, K6OTT

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My Notes

- . 23 signups! Thank you for playing packet radio!
- . “monthly”, almost! Plus PackItForms testing for 6 weeks
- . geared for new packet ops, no major gotchas this time
- . some more verbose explanations, help and coaching
- . courtesy messages were not needed! I am impressed!
- . Please do not use XNDEOC@WanyBBS or XND098 style tactical calls outside of practice events. This requires us SysOps to clean up manually. Please send from your FCC call to your own or to a friend’s FCC call instead.
- . software QA is happening all the time, multi-mode, multi-run; devops wants you to push on green
- . ping utility (hidden)
- . we have moved to Windows 11 and are feeling the pain

My Notes 2

- . you delivered the ICS-213 and Notable Report forms you received to your Info Booth Manager, right? Or didn't you?
- . did you share the content of the XND City update bulletin notice with your local Info Booth Manager? They should know about the NWS special weather statement...
(common operating picture)
- . ICS-309 log generation for a time period; deleted messages will still show up in the log (by design, FEMA official record keeping)
- . duplicate messages, in 309 logs (don't monkey with it)
- . offline operations: take your station to your patio or a park, message PDFs are available ahead of time
- . accessible PDFs - just ask
- . addressing FQDN .ampr.org, .scc-ares-races.org, @W1XSC
- . power brownout, W11 crashed 08/20 06:02-20:45

My Notes 3

- . city update bulletin Subject line paste error (my bad)
- . automatic mode New Message only offers plain, no forms (bug report filed)
- . lower - upper case “Wind response”, “mid shift” -fax
- . Sender Name in NIFC 213 in From Field or /s/ signature
- . archiving files from an incident, submitting paperwork to your supervisor
- . using the voice net without checking in/out

Practice Objectives

- Based on SCC documentation
 - SCCo ARES/RACES Packet Operations - Type III, Part A and Part B courses; Type II (this includes how to configure Outpost from scratch) **NEW**
 - How to Send a Packet Message with Outpost - 09/19/2013
 - Standard Packet Message Subject Line - 08/03/2022
 - Standard Packet Check-in/Out Message - 09/25/2024
 - Outpost Users Guide, Basics; Version 3.7 | March 2023
 - RACES Recommended Form Routing Cheat Sheet [Rev: 10-Apr-2026] **NEW**
 - new PackItForms [June-2026, see also: Video Presentation June-2026] **NEW**
- **Reading and Following Directions! Compulsory! IMPORTANT!!!**
- minimum version Outpost 165C and PackItForms 4.0 required
- Exercising simulated 3rd party and operator-to-operator messages
 - Some of our Veoci modeled forms have been updated again with field numbers!
 - Operator to operator messages: Check-In and Check-Out, receive plain text
 - Receiving ICS-213 and Notable Report forms from the EOC
 - XSCEVENT and XND@XSC City Notice retrieval and sending standard/plain messages
- Simulated paperwork Turn-in: ICS-309s (packet and voice is mandatory), we are asking you to turn in “everything”, the complete set; (plus ICS-214 for an activation); supervisor may have commented on your paperwork

Deployment workflow (virtual MPMP)

- ❑ assignment + travel + arrive on location
- ❑ set up
- ❑ check-in (voice net, agency manager, packet net)
- ❑ operate (loop)
- ❑ H&W checks as appropriate
- ❑ shift change or released/secure operations
- ❑ check paperwork for completeness, fill in missing info
- ❑ check out from packet, wait 2 Rx/Tx cycles
- ❑ electronically archive messages, logs, 309s, oparchive
- ❑ check out (agency manager, voice net)
- ❑ demobilize / travel

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Field Ops 3A

<https://www.scc-ares-races.org/training/role/field-ops-3a>

Cupertino ARES Packet Ebook checklist

<https://www.cupertinoares.org/docs/SCC-PacketT3-ebook.pdf>

Messages Passed Summary

Approximate number counts from the Xanadu EOC ICS-309 (as of 08/25-19:00)
Participants BBS: W1XSC - 16, W2XSC - 0, W3XSC - 10, W4XSC - 0

Assignments sent total (+ testers)		23 (+6)
Actual participating / dropped / MIA		22.5/3/3.5
Actual OP / PIFA/ PIFM / Fun+rerun		15/11/1
Content Messages exchanged/bulletins *		558
	ICS213 sent+received	116
	Resource Request	27
	Notable Report delivered	27
	Other	~ N*15

Thank you for participating in this exercise!!!!

- Excluding DELIVERED: received 222, sent 348, excluding other/debugging/broken 7
Overall total to/from Xanadu EOC: 1102 !
- in Special Folders: bulletins: 7, op-to-op: 117, Forms: 86, Delivery Receipts: 219

How did we do in general?

- My offer: simulate a complete standard field activation you can go through on your own pace. No deep bogs or tar pits, maybe you had to reference training.
- Forms! Are you getting used to them?
- Message Prefix: should be X98- only, never 098- or your FCC suffix XRL-
- From: when operating in manual mode, please set MYCALL to the **correct** tactical call, and remember to ID as your FCC callsign
- XSCEVENT and City Notice XND@XSC – missing read notice from 5 stations. When you operate manually, check bulletins at the start and once per hour! Always check for City (here: XND@XSC) bulletins!
- What do you do when you did not get a DELIVERED: receipt?
- ICS-309s: mandatory, like in a real activation (see SCCo Performance Standards), Field Ops Class, Packet Classes



How did we do in general? 2

- missing **** This is drill traffic **** should no longer be an issue as it was placed onto the forms by the originator (no need for you to add to form)
- Instructions to Radio Operator: on the same form you hand to agency staff (this is a practice/exercise artifact) because the script does challenge-response replies to keep the flow going
- Immediate voice net notification ! 1 late - 2 missing
- voice net check-in/out without using it further, but why???
- Script does now handle resends X98-###R_H_ better than before and will reply to your original and re-sent message if the remaining Subject line was formatted correctly per regex

Additional Observations...

- when operating in manual mode, are you using a checklist?
Are you sending callsign identification packets at session end?
- “**** This is...” is always a good body in any empty message
- Info Booth 98 vs. INFO BOOTH 98 vs. Infobooth 98: all OK
- line breaks (ignored), JNOS is not helping here
- The closing instructions referred to fields in the Outpost ICS 309 Comm Log Builder, clarified what should be there.

#DNRAFI

"Radio Operator" contains your "First and Last Name / your FCC callsign"

"Station ID / Callsign" contains your facility "tactical name / tactical call"

- Strong Suggestion: archive and clean out all Outpost messages before the event, restore later; create new incident

The Assignment:

You are receiving this email as you have signed up for the SCCo Monthly Packet Message Practice that opens at 09:00 this Wednesday 08/19/2026. This exercise continues for 6.375 days and closes on **Tuesday (08/25/2026) at 18:00.**

Please read this entire email, it contains important information!

The process begins by sending a properly formatted Check-In message to the Xanadu EOC using the tactical information that has been assigned to you below. Read and follow the directions in each received message from the XNDEOC. If you sent the correct response message you will receive the next message task in this exercise. A message with the Subject containing "Goodbye from the Xanadu Packet Net" will contain your final instructions.

Important: you must use the current packet forms (from Outpost 165C / PacketForms 4.0); any older versions of the forms will no longer be accepted. All methods of running the exercise, Outpost PM, PacketForms automatic or manual mode, are supported. If you are operating in barebones manual mode with a tactical call, please remember to send a proper FCC callsign ID packet at the end of each transmission.

Simulated Scenario for this month's exercise: The Xanadu City EOC has been activated in support of the Xanadu County Fair, with more visitors expected than were recorded at the National Mall State Fair in July. Your assignment is to provide packet radio communications for an information booth that has been established on the fairgrounds, where visitors can ask questions, get complimentary bottled water and info packets, or find nearby restrooms. There will be a CERT medical team at your location.

Offline operations: if you would like to practice how to operate without Internet access, please email me back and I will send you the message PDFs ahead of time.

Accessibility: If you need the accessible versions of any PDF, please let me know and I will make them available to you.

Voice Net: For an even more realistic voice net experience, when you have arrived at your simulated assignment location (and when you are ready to leave from it) you can call the same EOC number 408-475-3789 and do a voice net check-in or check-out. Just leave a brief voicemail "This is Info Booth XX, checking-in/out. *Your FCC callsign*". Your voice check-in/out is automatically acknowledged. The voice net participation and logging it to a separate ICS-309 are part of the practice this month.

This is a simulated incident for which we are using amateur radio like in any communications outage, despite most communications systems still working nominally at this time.

Your role:	Packet Radio Operator
Your Additional ID text	Info Booth 98 (This is your facility's tactical call for any voice nets and logging.)
Your facility's packet tactical call sign:	XND098
Your facility's message prefix is:	X98
Starting message number:	your choice
SCC Event Position[**]:	Primary_Station; you signed up in category "Primary_Station_tester" [**]
Incident Name:	Xanadu County Fair August 2026
Activation Number:	XND-26-08191P
Your BBS:	Use your normal primary BBS, if not available use your secondary.
Simulated physical location:	Toro Ave @ Vaca St (County Fairgrounds)
Xanadu EOC mailbox:	XNDEOC@W1XSC.scc-ares-races.org (primary) XNDEOC@W4XSC.scc-ares-races.org (alternate)
XND EOC activation period:	From Wednesday 08/19/2026 09:00 PDT until Tuesday 08/25/2026 18:00 PDT
Participation credit requirements	Packet messages: Check-in, Check-out, ICS-213, Resource Request, Notable Report, operator to operator plain text messages Email to instructor, completed: ICS-309 form(s)
Simulated Voice communications with Xanadu EOC:	For any simulated voice net messages, call the Xanadu EOC at 408-475-3789 and leave a succinct voicemail message; SMS/MMS text messages are also accepted.

Check-In Ack

Read the entire doc, all the way to the last line!
Every Document!

- Substitution rules
- XX, DD, HH:MM
- -30minutes
- Do not replace DD with literal "XX"
- Subject Line reminder

Check-In acknowledged to the Xanadu City Packet Net for this monthly packet practice. You have these guidelines and assignments:

2. Your local Info Booth Manager will "hand" you messages to process,

and will receive any incoming messages from you.

3. In any messages you are asked to transmit:

- a) If you see an "XX" (double-X), replace the XX with your assigned tactical number.
- b) Replace any "DD" with the actual day value that you are transmitting the form for the practice.
- c) Replace "HH" and "MM" with current 24-hour clock hour value and the current minutes value
- d) If you see a "+time" or "-time" add or subtract the correction to/from the current time. For example, if the form has "HH-1hour:MM", use your current time minus 1 hour, if it says "NOW+02:00" use your current time plus 2 hours, or "08/DD+tomorrow/2026", you would enter tomorrow's date for the DD replacement.
- e) Replace any "##" with an integer number.

4. All messages you send out should follow the standard for the Packet Message Subject line

<SenderMsgNbr>_<HandlingOrder>_<MsgSummary>

Examples of a plain and a PackItForms message:

X98-127P_R_Status of sandbag supplies

X98-127P_R_IC5213_Status of sandbag supplies

**** This is drill traffic {20260819-check-in-ack}****

Msg 1

ICS213

- **** on form
- Reminder: fill in top and bottom boxes (take received Msg# from DELIVERED: message)
- see separate report ?

ICS-213 Message Form 2.3				Word: 20260512	
Radio Operator Only:		1. Origin Msg #:		2. Destination Msg #:	
This Section to be Completed by Sending Agency: (Underlined=Required)					
3. <u>Date</u> : 08/DD/2026		4. <u>Time</u> : HH:MM		5. <u>Handling</u> : ☐ Immediate (ASAP) ☐ Priority (<1 hr) ☒ Routine (<2 hr)	
T O	6. <u>ICS Position</u> : Planning			F R O M	10. <u>ICS Position</u> : Info Booth Manager XX
	7. <u>Location</u> : Xanadu City EOC				11. <u>Location</u> : Info Booth XX
	8. Name:				12. Name:
	9. Contact Info:				13. Contact Info:
This message requests you to:			14. Take Action: ☒ Yes ☐ No		
			15. Reply: ☒ Yes ☐ No		
			16. Reply By: NOW+02:00		
Message					
21. <u>Subject</u> : Mid shift report					
22. Reference: XND-808P					
23. <u>Message</u> : As of 14:00 today: info packages distributed - 79 water bottles distributed - 123 CERT medical team responses - 3 (see separate report) ****This is drill traffic ****					

Msg 2 ResReq

- ICS To:
pulldown
- Priority _I_
- use voice net!
- Reminder: fill
in top and
bottom boxes
(take received
Msg# from
DELIVERED:
message)
- checkboxes!

Resource Request 1.1			Veoci: 20250715 DOC: 20260503
Radio Operator Only:	1. Origin Msg #:	2. Destination. Msg #:	
This Section to be Completed by Jurisdiction Personnel: (Underlined=Required)			
3. <u>Date</u> : 08/DD/2026		4. <u>Time</u> : HH:MM	
5. <u>Handling</u> : ☒ Immediate (ASAP) ☐ Priority (<1 hr) ☐ Routine (<2 hr)			
T O	6. <u>ICS Position</u> : Logistics		F 10. <u>ICS Position</u> : Info Booth Manager XX
	7. <u>Location</u> : Xanadu City EOC		R 11. <u>Location</u> : Info Booth XX
	8. Name:		O 12. Name:
	9. Contact Info:		M 13. Contact Info:
Resource Order			
21. <u>Title</u> : bottled water			
22. <u>Requesting Agency</u> : County Fairgrounds OpsCo			
23. <u>Date</u> : 08/DD/2026		24. <u>Time</u> : HH:MM	
Item 1	31a. <u>Item Name</u> : cases of bottled water		31b. <u>Quantity Requested</u> : 5
	31c. <u>Description</u> : case 35 x 16 fl. oz.		
	31d. <u>Includes Items for Demobilization?</u> ☐ Yes ☒ No		
Item 2	32a. Item Name:		32b. Quantity Requested:
	32c. Description:		
	Resource Request Radio Origin Msg #: _____		
Priority			
41. <u>Priority</u> : ☒ a. Urgent (As soon as possible) ☐ c. Medium (1 - 2 days) (Pick One) ☐ b. High (within 24 hours) ☐ d. Low (2 - 3 days)			
Requested By Details			
51. <u>Requested By Name</u> : Judi Elder		52. <u>Signature</u> : <i>Judi Elder</i> ☐	
53. <u>Requested By Phone</u> : 408-256-2327		54. <u>Requested By Email</u> : judi.elder@xanadu-county.org	
55. <u>Requested By Position</u> : Booth Manager			
Incident Details			
61. Name of the Jurisdiction's Incident: Xanadu County Fair			
62. Name of the County Incident:			
Comments			
**** This is drill traffic ****			

Resol

Msg 3

"Form1" ->

ICS-213

- recommended form routing sheet
- cheat code PDF
- Reminder: fill in top and bottom boxes (take received Msg# from DELIVERED: message)
- keep all paperwork

GENERAL MESSAGE (ICS 213)		
1. Incident Name (Optional): <u>Xanadu County Fair August 2026</u>		
2. To (Name and Position): <u>Operations @ Xanadu City EOC</u>		
3. From (Name and Position): <u>Dept. Booth Manager XX</u>		
4. Subject: <u>wind response</u>	5. Date: <u>08/DD/2026</u>	6. Time: <u>HH:MM</u>
7. Message: <u>We have secured the booth structure with ratchet straps and additional weights.</u> <u>**** This is drill traffic ****</u>		

ICS-213 Message Form 2.3			Word: 20260512
Radio Operator Only:	1. Origin Msg #:	2. Destination Msg #:	
This Section to be Completed by Sending Agency: (Underlined=Required)			
3. Date: <u>08/DD/2026</u>	4. Time: <u>HH:MM</u>	5. Handling: ☐ Immediate (ASAP) ☐ Priority (<1 hr) ☒ Routine (<2 hr)	
T O	6. ICS Position: <u>Operations</u>	F R O M	10. ICS Position: <u>Dept. Booth Manager XX</u>
	7. Location: <u>Xanadu City EOC</u>		11. Location: <u>Info Booth XX</u>
	8. Name:		12. Name:
	9. Contact Info:		13. Contact Info:
This message requests you to:		14. Take Action: ☐ Yes ☐ No	
		15. Reply: ☐ Yes ☐ No	
		16. Reply By:	
Message			
21. Subject: <u>wind response</u>			
22. Reference:			
23. Message: <u>We have secured the booth structure with ratchet straps and additional weights.</u> <u>/s/ Manuel Neuer</u> <u>****This is drill traffic ****</u>			

ICS-309 forms turned in

- Some good, voice 309s not optional this time; missing: 0
- your supervisor would ask you to turn in missing paperwork at the end of the shift. When your are using a voice net (like, almost always!) please make a voice ICS-309.
- Otherwise, will be scored based on instructions
- **#DNRAFI** for filling in fields
- Operational period, base for time stamps. If date change, make an “empty” line entry with the new date.
- during an incident or activation: do not rely on computer “fillable” PDF forms, please use paper and turn them in.
Risk: loss of data, unable to print.
- Outpost “Time” field is actually “MM-DD HH:MM”

Summary

- Very Good go! Look at all the green on the scorecard!
 - Especially for first time operators and those that became unstuck on their own
- Next “monthly” practice: Saturday 19 September 2026 county wide drill - sign up for “Operator w/equipment”
County-wide Communications Exercise - Packet
- XNDEOC on (business) travel in Sep/Oct. I am trying to do the monthlies in October and November

Next UP: Exercise Scorecard

- Reminder, there is no pass or fail, only green-yellow-red, I am applying county standards 90% or better for participation credit; blue or white (blank fields) means missing data or needs review
- The scorecard is a tool for indicating areas for improvement