

NTS MESSAGES ON THE DIGITAL NETWORKS

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Third party messages are routinely managed by the National Traffic System (NTS) which consists of organized traffic nets on CW and voice. Most deliveries are effected by a local telephone call from a ham to the non-licensed addressee. Between point of origin and point of delivery some NTS messages may be routed through the digital (packet) Bulletin Board (BBS) system. Participating BBSs in E. Central Florida include **KA4GDV** (Orlando BBS 145.07), **N3PPC** (Seminole County BBS 145.67 and 145.07), **N4GMU** (W. Volusia BBS 144.910), **N0IA** (HF Gateway/NTS switch 144.91), and **N4ZKF** (DAB BBS 145.05). All may be reached through the Layered Packet Network.

Special consideration must be given when placing an NTS message on a packet BBS in order to assure proper routing to destination. The digital message (i.e. packet message) is the "envelope" that carries the NTS message. The digital "envelope" has the digital routing information; the internal NTS message contains the mailing address and phone number of the addressee. After connecting to your local bulletin board, entering the packet message carrying the NTS message is in the form:

ST ZIPFIVE @NTSXX

Where ZIPFIVE is the five-digit zip code of the addressee and XX is the two-letter postal code for the addressee's state or province. An ST message without the destination ZIPFIVE will not be accepted by the bulletin board.

At the subject or title line of the packet message enter:

CITY PHONE

Where CITY is the addressee's city and PHONE the addressee's phone number.

EXAMPLE

ST 89120 @NTSCO
LITTLETON 345-7654

The "text" of the packet message must be the NTS message in standard NTS format, nothing more, nothing less; no extra lines.

PREAMBLE
ADDRESSEE
BT
TEXT
BT
SIGNATURE
AR

End of File (/EX on line by itself or CTRL-Z)

EXAMPLE of text of the packet message (i.e., the NTS message):

NR3R W4ABC 27 SANFORD FL JAN 12
MARY WHITE
345 EAST GRAFTON ST
LITTLETON CO 89120
303 345-7654
BT
GREETINGS FROM CENTRAL FLORIDA X
WE WILL BE HERE UNTIL
JULY 17 THEN MOVE ON
TO ATLANTA X PLEASE LET
JOHN AND AMY GORDON KNOW
X LOVE
BT
SILVIA
AR

To facilitate word count ("check"- 27 in the example preamble) each line in the text has exactly five words except the last line which may contain fewer. Note that "X" is used rather than a period between sentences and is included as a word in the check. An X is not placed after the last sentence.

SUGGESTIONS: Texts should be limited to no more than forty words. Remember someone has to read the message over the telephone to the addressee and many hams may have to relay the message on noisy voice nets which are not perfect "error correcting" transfers. The possibility of errors increases with the total length of the text. Keep texts short and "Western Union- telegram- like."

Details on NTS format including preamble organization, sequential message numbering, word count, and use of ARRL standard messages may be obtained from the ARRL. Ask for the famous "pink card" FSD-218 (2/91), The ARRL Operating Manual, or try these links:

NTS message format: <http://www.arrl.org/FandES/ead/teacher/kemp/appendixa.html>
ARRL numbered radiograms: <http://www.arrl.org/FandES/field/forms/fsd3.html>
International Third Party Traffic:
<http://www.arrl.org/FandES/field/regulations/io/3rdparty.html>

73,
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