



MARS COMEX INTEROPERABILITY EXERCISE OCTOBER 2020

Background:

The Military Auxiliary Radio System (MARS) in cooperation with Radio Relay International and the ARRL, will be conducting an interoperability exercise throughout the month of October. The purpose of this exercise is to test and enhance interoperability between MARS and the traffic system (national messaging layer).

Scope of Exercise:

The scope of the exercise will be limited. The primary metrics collected will involve accuracy and delivery success. Message propagation time through the network will be a secondary statistic to be treated qualitatively. Approximately 90 ICS-213 messages addressed primarily to ARRL officials will be originated within the MARS system and transferred to traffic networks between October 1 and October 30. These messages will be converted to standard radiogram format for relay to their destination section/local net.

While traffic relay will be somewhat sporadic, operators should anticipate the possibility of a greater quantity of messages being originated during the ARRL Simulated Emergency Test, which takes place October 3 and 4.

Traffic System Configuration:

The [RRI National Emergency Communications Response Plan](#) specifies two general traffic system configurations, one of which is *routine*, and the other of which is *emergency*. Due to the relatively small quantity of messages to be relayed and the duration of the activity, the traffic system will remain in routine configuration. However, we respectfully request a level of heightened awareness.

Two primary relay/gateway methods will be utilized:

1. Relay by individual MARS operators to local or section traffic networks.
2. Relay by MARS personnel to the RRI Radiogram-ICS213 template available through the Winlink system.

Note: These are not specific requirements. MARS and traffic system operators are at liberty to inject the MARS messages into the traffic network or traffic layer deemed most expeditious.

Recommended Actions:

Winlink-RRI Gateway Operators: We are not specifying a connect/download frequency for this exercise. However, we do recommend a more frequent connect/download schedule at the discretion of each gateway operator. The gateway operator should exercise discretion to ensure expeditious relay to a qualified, experienced operator for final routing or delivery.

RRI Digital Traffic Stations: We are not specifying a connect/download frequency for this exercise. However, we do recommend a more frequent connect/download schedule at the discretion of each Digital Traffic Station. The gateway operator should exercise discretion to ensure expeditious relay to a qualified, experienced operator for final disposition or delivery.

Section Traffic Managers: Share this exercise plan and associated documents below with your net managers.

Net Managers: Identify three to five operators in your section net who you believe have sufficient experience to accurately receive and deliver the exercise traffic and, when necessary, originate a timely reply.

MARS and Traffic Operators: Please review the following documents. Note that some of this information is designed primarily for MARS operators who are unfamiliar with the traffic system, but may nonetheless be helpful to RRI/NTS operators:

<http://radio-relay.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Instructions-for-Radiogram-ICS213-Relay-and-Delivery-2020-9-5.pdf>

<http://radio-relay.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/MARS-COMEX-ICS213-to-Radiogram-2020-10-ARRL.pdf>

<http://radio-relay.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/MARS-NTS-COMEX-2020-10-ARRL-Overview-Slides.pdf>

<http://radio-relay.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/RRI-NECRP-2020-8-1-Final-Approved.pdf>

Radiogram Forms and Radiogram ICS213 Forms:

A variety of Radiogram and Radiogram-ICS213 forms are available on the Radio Relay International "Publications Page." Here are two options for use by traffic operators during the exercise:

Standard Radiogram: <http://radio-relay.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/RRI-Radiogram-form-1801-B-ACP-Final-Approved.pdf>

Radiogram-ICS213: <http://radio-relay.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/RRI-Form-1703-ICS-2017-5-1.pdf>

Record Keeping:

Traffic operators who handle these MARS messages at any stage in the relay process are asked to log the messages on the following form:

<http://radio-relay.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Exercise-Message-Log-2019-2-1-Approved.pdf>

At the end of the month, please mail your log to:

Radio Relay International
C/O Emergency Preparedness Services, LLC
PO Box 43
Niles, MI. 49120

The log may also be scanned and transmitted by e-mail to: james.wades@radio-relay.org

Questions or Concerns may be directed to:

James Wades
Emergency Management Director,
Radio Relay International
833-377-0722 x 700
james.wades@radio-relay.org