

The RRI Amateur Radio “I Am Safe” Welfare Messaging Program

RRI offers a suite of documents and software that can assist in the transmission of welfare related messages from a disaster area. This material was developed as a cooperative effort between the Seattle Emergency Communication Hubs (<http://seattleemergencyhubs.org/>), Seattle Auxiliary Communication Service (ACS) (<https://www.seattleacs.org/>), Radio Relay International (radiorelay.org) and the Winlink Development Team (winlink.org). The Northwest Washington American Red Cross provided additional input with regard to the development of short message texts.

The program consists of the following elements:

An **Intake Form**. Developed by Seattle Emergency Communication Hubs, this is the form that is used by a client to provide contact information for a family member or other loved one. It also includes 14 short text messages and a provision to add additional text. Each short message has a number corresponding to the RRC codes. There are two forms per sheet with the short texts on the reverse.

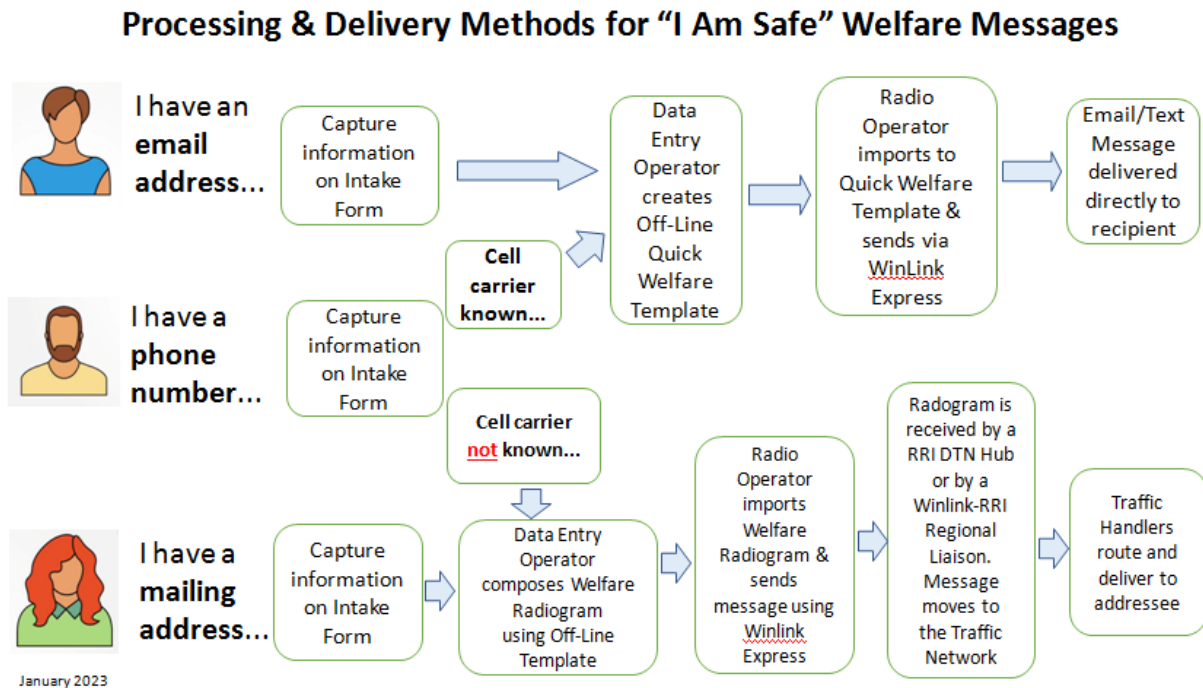
A **Winlink Express Welfare Radiogram Text Creator Template**. This is a special purpose adaptation of the general purpose Amateur Radio Radiogram Text Creator. It is fully compliant with the amateur radio radiogram format but excludes items that are not necessary as well as the 14 short texts. The composed radiograms may be sent to a RRI DTN Hub or to a Winlink-RRI Liaison station. This template is included in the Winlink Express Standard Templates.

An **Off-Line Winlink Express Welfare Radiogram Text Creator Template**. Realizing that message volumes may be high, we created an off-line version of the Welfare Radiogram template. This is an html file that typically will reside on a thumb drive. It will run on any operating system's browser and is intended to be used by volunteers with basic data entry skills. The output is a properly formatted text file that may be pasted into the Winlink Express message pane. Multiple files may be combined into a zip file that can be sent to a Winlink-RRI Liaison. This template is available on the RRI web site.

An **Off-Line Quick Welfare Message Template**. Winlink Express contains as a standard template a Quick Welfare Message Template. This is a plain text message template that can be sent to a person's email address via Winlink Express. The off-line version is a stand-alone like the off-line radiogram template described above. It has two enhancements. If the sender knows the mobile phone number and cell carrier, a text message can be sent via Winlink to the mobile number. Also, this template contains the same short messages that are included in the welfare radiogram. After composition, the message is exported to a file. The radio operator, using Winlink Express, can then import the file into the standard Quick Welfare Message template. While this template resides in the General templates, it also appears in the RRI Radiogram folder.

Process Flow and Decision Points

Please refer to this diagram when reviewing the various elements of the process.



The Intake Station

Here the client fills out, as well as possible, the information form: A volunteer provides guidance concerning privacy, no expectation of a reply, etc. as described in the template Help documents.

In the printed form, the 14 short messages are on the reverse side. The client picks 2 or 3 messages and writes the numbers in the provided spaces as numerals. Some brief added free text is permitted within the 25 words maximum.

The figure on the next page shows the front side of the Intake Form.

"I Am Safe" message / YOUR Name:

Entered

Who would you like to contact?	
Email address?	
Phone number?	
Circle one: Cell phone Landline If cell phone, do you know their carrier?	
Street address:	
City, State, Zip code	

Number(s): _____ (see back side) 25 total word limit for entire message

Additional text _____

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A volunteer checks forms for legibility and sorts the incoming messages according to email/text or radiogram depending on the completeness of the addressee information.

For radiograms that are going to be sent via Winlink-RRI Liaisons, it is desirable to sort by RRI region.

Off-Line Data Entry

The Off-Line Quick Welfare and Radiogram Template files should be installed on portable media e.g. thumb drives. They are stand-alone and will work on any operating system/browser.

- Email Address and/or Cell Phone + Provider – Use the Off-Line Quick Welfare Template
- Mailing Address (complete or incomplete) and/or Telephone Number – Use the Off-Line Welfare Radiogram Template

If it is believed that a phone number can accept texts but the provider is unknown, it should be noted in the radiogram Address OP NOTE that the phone number will accept text messages. A traffic handler outside of the affected area can use an on line search tool to verify SMS or MMS capability and provide the full address.

Radiogram files are saved to the thumb drive or other media. There is a default time stamped file format or the operator may change the file name as appropriate. The format is in accordance with standard radiogram formatting and may be placed directly into the Winlink Express message pane using copy and paste.

Note that multiple radiogram text files for a given regional liaison may be combined as a compressed (zip) file and sent together to any single RRI Winlink-RRI Liaison address. The files are best combined at the Data Entry station. This will improve the efficiency at the transmission site providing the files can be grouped by region.

The Quick Welfare Message files are in a format that can be read by the Quick Welfare template that is included with Winlink Express when the file is selected and imported by the radio operator.

Note: The Help documents for each of these tools may be downloaded separately. Each template also has the corresponding Help file included within the template.

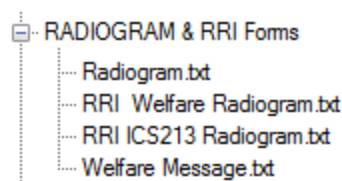
Note: In low volume situations, this step and the next step may be eliminated for Welfare Radiograms and Quick Welfare email messages. However, only the Off-Line Quick Welfare Template has the feature for formatting a text address.

Transfer Thumb Drive with Files to the Radio Operator

If data entry and radio station are collocated, the thumb drive with message files may be simply transferred to the radio station. In some cases, the radio facility may be off-site. In these cases the contents of the thumb drive could also be transferred using appropriate VHF/UHF or microwave data modes.

Transmit using Winlink Express

The Welfare Radiogram and (Quick) Welfare Message templates may be found in the Standard Templates list.



The following sections cover the preparation process for the transmission of radiogram formatted messages and for the transmission of the Quick Welfare messages.

Sending a Welfare Radiogram:

If the off-line template was used to create formatted radiogram files, the contents of each file are copied and pasted into the Winlink Express message pane. The operator must add the To and Subject lines for each message.

If sending to a DTN Hub, the To line will be of the form NTS:xxxxx@NTSyy where xxxxx is the five digit zip code and yy is the two letter state code. The Subject line would be W City Area Code Exchange/Prefix. As an example:

To:NTS:04854@NTSME
Subject: W OWLS HEAD 207 123

Replace the phone number information with NO PHONE if there is no phone number available.

Before any emergency, your group should establish a relationship with at least one RRI DTN Hub if it has not already done so. Select one, or preferably two hubs that can be reliably connected to and are beyond what would likely be the affected area. Hubs do not operate on Winlink RMS gateway frequencies and are therefore not on the Winlink Express channel lists. Standard hub modes are Pactor and Vara HF.

If sending to a Winlink-RRI Liaison tactical address, the To line would be the applicable regional address:

Region 1 CT, MA, ME, NH, RI, VT
Region 2 NJ, NY
Region 3 DC, DE, MD, PA
Region 4 FL, GA, NC, SC, VA, PR, VI
Region 5 AL, AR, LA, MS, OK, TN, TX
Region 6 CA, NV
Region 7 AK, ID, MT, OR, WA, AB, BC
Region 8 MI, OH, WV
Region 9 IL, IN, KY, WI
Region 10 IA, KS, MN, MO, ND, NE, SD, MB, SK
Region 11 NB, NS, ON, PQ
Region 12 AZ, CO, NM, UT, WY
Region HI Hawaii

The Subject line should start with QTC 1 W as this is a flag for the liaison operators to differentiate radiogram traffic from other Winlink messages. The above may be followed by TOWN STATE if desired.

As noted previously, messages going to a Winlink-RRI Liaison may be combined into a single compressed zip file. For radiograms, this file could contain up to a few dozen messages. Each zip file should be to a single region. The Subject line of the Winlink message should be QTC W X where X is the number of messages in the file.

For messages that are sent to a DTN Hub, multiple messages may be combined in a “batch file.” The preparation of batch files is beyond the scope of this document.

For radiograms that are originated using the Welfare Radiogram Text Creator that is included in Winlink Express the features for addressing to a Winlink-RRI Liaison tactical address are included within the template. No manual addressing is required.

If the radiogram is to go to a DTN Hub, the required addressing (To and Subject lines) will have to be manually entered.

Sending a Quick Welfare (Winlink to Email/Text) Message

If the message file is received from a Data Entry operator, open template and import each thumb drive file to the embedded Quick Welfare template. Transmit to a functioning, internet connected, Winlink RMS.

As noted previously, the Quick Welfare Message template within Winlink Express does not have the capability to generate a text address as does the off-line template.

Subsequent Handling

Radiograms sent to a RRI DTN Hub or to a Winlink-RRI liaison will be handled as would be appropriate for Welfare precedence messages. They may be delivered directly by phone or USPS, injected into a DTN hub, or taken to regional or local traffic nets.