
Outpost PMM And NTS Messaging

User Guide

April 2023
Version 3.7



Contents

1	ABOUT NTSMM	1
1.1	INTRODUCTION	1
1.2	WHAT IS NTS?	1
1.3	NTS AND OUTPOST	1
2	NTS MESSAGE MAKER	2
2.1	INTRODUCTION	2
2.2	MENUS AND TOOLBARS.....	2
2.3	NTS PREAMBLE	3
2.4	DESTINATION ADDRESS	5
2.5	MESSAGE TEXT AND SIGNATURE	6
2.6	CREATING AN NTS MESSAGE	7
2.7	FINISHING UP AN NTS MESSAGE	8
2.8	SELECTING AN ARL MESSAGE.....	9
3	ARL DATA.....	11
3.1	EMERGENCY, RELIEF MESSAGES.....	11
3.2	ROUTINE MESSAGES	12

1 About NTSmm

1.1 Introduction

This guide will introduce you to Outpost's NTS Message Maker program and describe how to create NTS messages that interact with the **Outpost Packet Message Manager** program.

1.2 What is NTS?

The following are excerpts from the ARRL site on NTS:

<http://www.arrl.org/chapter-one-national-traffic-system>

"The NTS is a field organization of the American Radio Relay League (ARRL®), the National Association for Amateur Radio™. ARRL was formed in 1914 to pass written personal messages around the United States, although its mission has expanded greatly over the years.

"Messages are sent in the standard ARRL Radiogram format, and relayed from Amateur Radio operator to another through a series of formal networks. The message is ultimately delivered to the addressee in about 24 to 36 hours by an NTS operator who lives fairly close to the recipient, either by telephone, mail, or hand delivery (uncommon)."

1.3 NTS and Outpost

Outpost supports NTS with the NTS Message Maker program that formats a standard ARRL Radiogram format for packet.

There are two components to NTS Messaging:

- **NTSmm.exe.** This is a standalone program that presents the user with a computer-based fill-in-the-blank form with fields that align with the NTS message form. It guides the user in creating a message using some pre-defined message fields values and then hands the message off to Outpost for sending.
- **Outpost.** Outpost continues to be the program that interacts with the BBS for sending and retrieving packet messages. Once an NTS message arrives, the Outpost operator completes the message and presses **Send**.

The rest of this document describes how to create and send NTS messages.

2 NTS Message Maker

2.1 Introduction

Outpost supports NTS with the NTS Message Maker. This tool formats an NTS message by presenting the user with a form that enforces the addressing and formatting rules required to comply with standard NTS-formatted packet messages.

This section describes the NTS Message Maker form and how it works. Refer to this figure as part of the example explained in subsequent paragraphs.

The screenshot shows the NTS Message Maker application window. It has a menu bar (File, Edit, Help) and a toolbar (ARL Msg, Check, Save, Clear Msg, Cancel). The form is divided into several sections:

- Menus and Tool Bar:** Points to the menu bar and toolbar at the top.
- NTS Preamble:** Points to the Preamble section containing fields for Mso No., Precedence, Handling Instr, Station of Origin, ARL Message, Check, Place of Origin, Time of Origin, and Date of Origin.
- Destination Address:** Points to the Destination Address section containing fields for Name, Call Sign, Address, City, State/Prov, Zip/Postal, Phone No., and E-Mail.
- Message:** Points to the Message text area.
- Signature:** Points to the Signature text area.

At the bottom, it says "Ready for NTS message entry".

2.2 Menus and Toolbars

The following controls are provided as part of the drop-down menus.

Menu	Description
File	Close: Closes the NTS Message Maker form without saving the message. Pressing the button will cause any message entered to be lost.
Edit	<p>Cut: Copies and deletes any highlighted text in any field. The text is placed in the MS-Windows clipboard.</p> <p>Copy: Copies any highlighted text in any field. The text is placed in the MS-Windows clipboard.</p> <p>Paste: Inserts text from the clipboard at the position where the cursor is located.</p> <p>Clear Message. Clears only the Address, Message, and Signature fields.</p> <p>Clear All. Clears all fields on the form.</p>

Additionally, the following toolbar controls are also provided.

Controls	Description
ARL Msg	Brings up a form that allows the user to select a Routine or Emergency ARL message. Once a message is selected, the user is prompted for any embedded data needed to complete the message.
Check	<p>This button does the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Checks to make sure that all required fields are filled in. If a required field is missing, the field is highlighted. Reformats the Message Text to be consistent with NTS packet formatting rules. This includes replacing each period (.) with an "X" and reformatting the message so there are only 5 words per line. <p>The Preamble "Check" field is filled in with the number of words in the message.</p>
Save	Performs a Check of the message (same as above), then saves the message to the Message Form. The message form fields are filled in per the standard NTS packet message format.
Clear Message	Clears the Address, Message, and Signature fields.
Cancel	Closes the NTS Message Maker form without saving the message. Pressing this button will cause any message entered to be discarded.
Handling Instr Browse Button	<p>Located to the right of the Handling Instr field in the Preamble.</p> <p>Brings up a form that allows the user to select a Handling Instruction. Once a message is selected, the user is prompted for any embedded data needed to complete the entry.</p>

2.3 NTS Preamble

The following fields are part of the NTS Preamble.

Field	Description
Msg No.	This field defaults to "++" that causes Outpost to automatically assign the next Outpost message number. If you want to manage message numbers yourself, enter the number.

Field	Description
Precedence	<p>Required field. The Precedence is a single character to be entered in this field. The four categories of Precedence are:</p> <p>E - EMERGE CNY: Any message having life or death urgency to any person or group of persons. This includes official messages to welfare agencies during emergencies requesting supplies, materials, or instructions vital to relief of stricken populace in emergency areas. Use the abbreviation “E” in the packet message.</p> <p>P - PRIORITY: Important messages having a specific time limit. Official messages not covered in the Emergency category are covered here. Use the abbreviation “P” in the packet message.</p> <p>W - WELFARE: A message that is either (a) an inquiry as to the health and welfare of an individual in the disaster area or (b) an advisory or reply from the disaster area. Use the abbreviation “W” in the packet message.</p> <p>R - ROUTINE: Most traffic normally will bear this designation. During a disaster, Routine traffic should be handled last or not at all when circuits are busy with other traffic. Use the abbreviation “R” in the packet message.</p> <p>DEFAULT: R</p>
Handling Instr	<p>Optional field. Handling instructions (HX) serve to convey any special instructions to handling and delivering operators. The following definitions apply:</p> <p>HXA <u>number</u> – Collect landline (phone calls) delivery is authorized by the addressee within <u>number</u> miles (if no number, authorization is unlimited). When prompted, enter the number of miles.</p> <p>HXB <u>number</u> – Cancel message if not delivered within <u>number</u> hours of filing time; service the originating station. When prompted, enter the number of hours.</p> <p>HXC – Report date and time of delivery (TOD) to originating station.</p> <p>HXD – Report to originating station the identity of station from which received, plus date and time. Report identity of station to which relayed, plus date and time, or if delivered report date, time, and method of delivery.</p> <p>HXE – Delivering station get reply from addressees, originate a message back.</p> <p>HXF <u>number</u> – Hold delivery until <u>number</u> (date) . When prompted, enter the date.</p> <p>HXG - Delivery by mail or landline toll call is not required. If toll or other expenses are involved, cancel message and service originating station.</p>

Field	Description
	HINT: Use the Handling Instruction Browse Button to the RIGHT of the field to see the definitions and prompt for all required information.
Station of Origin	Required field. This is the first amateur station to handle the message. Typically, this would be you and your call sign if you are transmitting the message.
ARL Message	Optional Field. This is a check-box indicating this is an ARL message. These messages include an ARL message number in the body of the text. Check this box if an ARL message number is used. This box is automatically checked if the ARL Msg button is used to select an ARL message.
Check	<p>Required Field. This is the number of words in the text of the message.</p> <p>This field will automatically be updated whenever the Check or Save buttons are pushed. If you enter a value in this field, it will be overwritten.</p>
Place of Origin	<p>Optional Field. This is the general location where the message originated (not necessarily location of station origin) and is usually a <u>city and state</u>, or occasionally an event, such as <u>2009 Moffett Air Show, CA</u>.</p> <p>If the City and State tags are filled in on the Report Settings form, then this field automatically will be set with <city>, <state>.</p>
Time of Origin	Optional field. This field is automatically set to UTC time in the format hhmm (i.e.: 1230).
Date of Origin	Required field. Usually is mmm dd format (i.e.: Sep 18) and must correspond with date that this message was first entered into the NTS system.

2.4 Destination Address

The following fields are part of the NTS Message Destination Address.

Field	Description
Name	Required field. The name of the individual to whom this message is to be delivered.
Call Sign	Optional field. If the recipient is an Amateur Radio Operator, enter his or her call sign here.
Address	Optional field. Street address if available.
City	Required field. The city where the recipient lives.

Field	Description
State/Prov	Required Field. The state or province where the recipient lives.
ZIP/Postal Code	Required Field. The 5 U.S. digit zip code or the 6- or 7-character Canadian Postal Code where the recipient lives.
Phone Number	Highly Desirable (but optional) Field. If a phone number is known, enter the Area Code, exchange, and number.
Email Address	Highly Desirable (but optional) Field. May be an alternate means to deliver this message.

2.5 Message Text and Signature

The last two fields hold the body of the message and the signature.

Field	Description
Message text	Required Field. If possible, the text should be limited to 25 words.
Signature	<p>Required Field. This is the signature (and call sign if the message was sent from another Amateur radio Operator) of the person sending the message.</p> <p>This is not necessarily the person who is sending the message by packet.</p>

2.6 Creating an NTS message

The general steps for using the NTS Message Maker are:

1. From the Outpost main menu, press **New** to open the Message form.
2. From the Message form, select **File > NTS Message Maker**.

3. Fill in the fields. When done, press **Check** to validate the entries and complete the message formatting. If any required fields are missing, that field will be highlighted.
4. When done, press **Save**. The Message form is filled in with a correctly formatted NTS message.
5. From the Message form, press **Send**.

2.7 Finishing up an NTS message

Once the message is composed and all fields are filled in (per the figure above), press the **Check** button and Outpost updates the Preamble's "Check" and Message fields. Also, the status line indicates the results of the check. The following is what the above message would look like after **Check** is pressed.

The screenshot shows the NTS Message Maker dialog box with the following fields and values:

- Preamble:**
 - Msd No: ++
 - Precedence: R (R, W, P, E)
 - Handling Instr: [empty]
 - Station of Origin: KN6PE
 - ARL Message: [empty]
 - Check:** 25 (indicated by an arrow: "Check" field is calculated and updated)
 - Place of Origin: CUPERTINO
 - Time of Origin: 1714 UTC
 - Date of Origin: Apr 06
- Destination Address:**
 - Name: BOB SMITH
 - Call Sign: [empty]
 - Address: 5204 EAST RANCH ROAD
 - City: SACRAMENTO
 - State/Prov: CA Zip/Postal: 95825
 - Phone No: 916 555 1212
 - E-Mail: bobs@email.org
- Message:** CANNOT ATTEND THE MEETING THIS WEEK X ALL AIRPORTS ARE CLOSED X PLEASE ADVISE THE PACKET COMMITTEE THAT THE BBS (indicated by an arrow: Message is reformatted)
- Signature:** BOB
- Status:** Message looks good! (indicated by an arrow: Status)

Next, press the **Save** button. Outpost writes the contents of the NTS Message Maker back to the Message form. Note the Message Type is set to **NTS Message**.

The screenshot shows the QTC 1 R SACRAMENTO CA 916 555 (PM:620) window with the following fields and values:

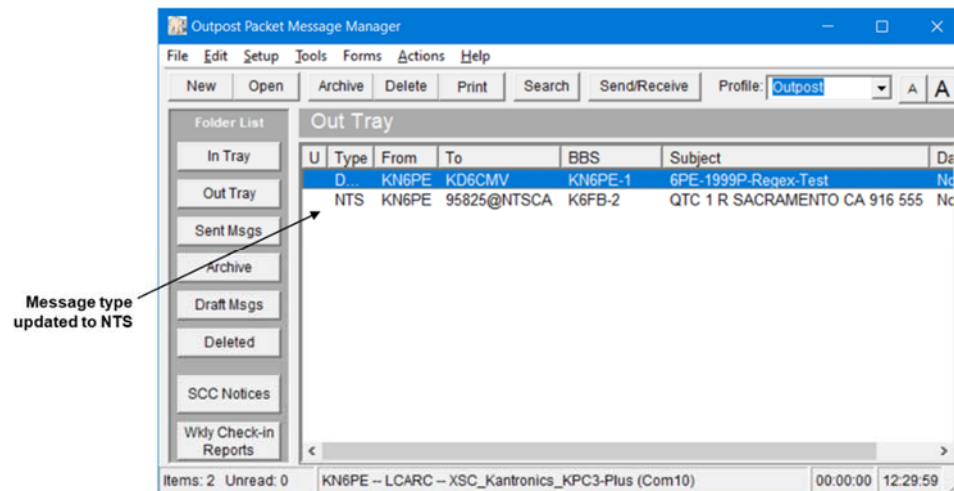
- Message Type:** NTS Message
- Bbs:** K6FB-2
- From:** KN6PE
- To...** 95825@NTSCA
- Subject:** QTC 1 R SACRAMENTO CA 916 555
- Message Content:**

```

2140 R KN6PE 25 CUPERTINO APR 06
BOB SMITH
5204 EAST RANCH ROAD
SACRAMENTO CA 95825
916 555 1212
BOBS@EMAIL.ORG
BT
CANNOT ATTEND THE MEETING THIS
WEEK X ALL AIRPORTS ARE
CLOSED X PLEASE ADVISE THE
PACKET COMMITTEE THAT THE BBS
PROJECT IS ALMOST COMPLETE X
BT
BOB
AR

```
- Status:** 297

Finally, press the **Send** button. The NTS message shows up in the Outpost Out Tray and will be sent during the next Packet Session.



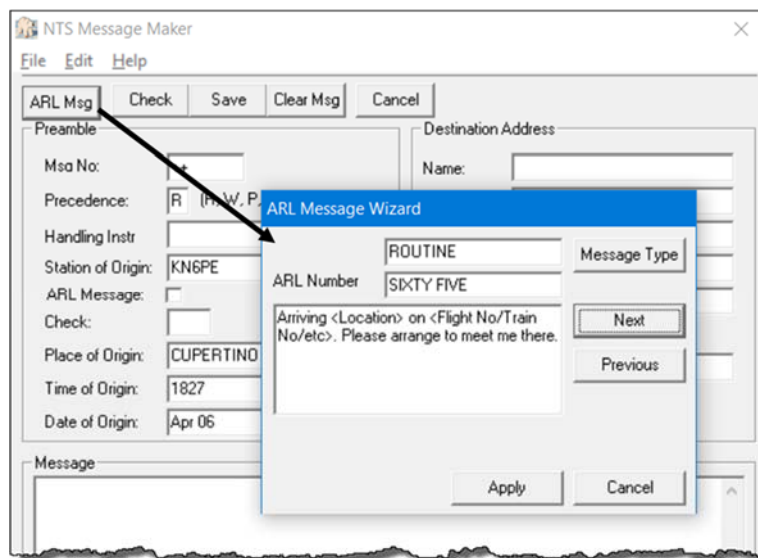
2.8 Selecting an ARL Message

Outpost lets the user select and apply one or more ARL standard messages to an NTS message. This works as follows:

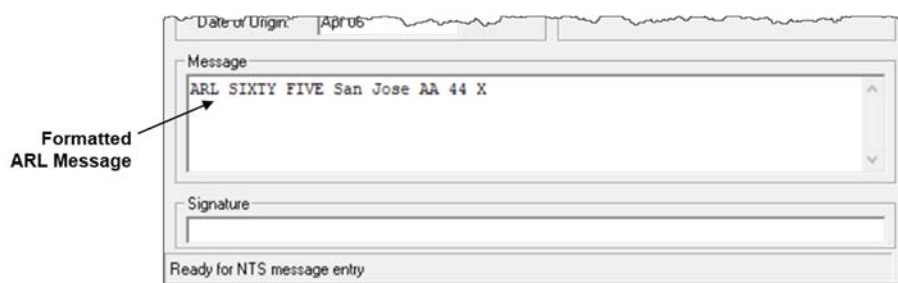
1. From the Outpost main menu, press **New** to open the Message form.
2. From the Message form, select **File > NTS Message Maker**.
3. Fill in the Preamble and Destination Address fields as described above.
4. Press the **ARL Msg** button. The ARL Dialog box opens. The controls and fields associated with this dialog box are as follows:

Controls	Description
Message Type	Toggles between the list of Routine and Emergency ARL messages.
Next, Previous	Selects the next or previous ARL message based on the type selected.
Apply	Takes the ARL message and applies it to the NTS message.
Cancel	Cancels this operation.

Field	Description
ARL Number	The literal ARL number of the selected message.
Message Text	The message text associated with the selected ARL number. Some ARL messages require additional information to be provided by the user to complete the message. This information can be found between the "<" and ">" characters.



5. Select the Message Type (either Routine or Emergency). Using the **Next** and **Previous** buttons, select the desired message. Press **Apply** when done.
6. If additional information is required to complete the message, the user will be prompted for the fields that are required. In the above example, 2 additional prompts are issued: one for "Location", and one for "Flight No/Train No/etc".
7. After the field is filled in (not shown here), the message is inserted into the NTS Form.
8. Complete the balance of the NTS message as previously described.



3 ARL Data

The following is the listing of ARL codes and <prompts> that can be selected.

3.1 EMERGENCY, RELIEF MESSAGES

ONE:	Everyone safe here. Please don't worry.
TWO:	Coming home as soon as possible.
THREE:	Am in <Hospital Name> hospital. Receiving excellent care and recovering fine.
FOUR:	Only slight property damage here. Do not be concerned about disaster reports.
FIVE:	Am moving to new location. Send no further mail or communication. Will inform you of new address when relocated.
SIX:	Will contact you as soon as possible.
SEVEN:	Please reply by Amateur Radio through the amateur delivering this message. This is a free public service.
EIGHT:	Need additional <Equipment Type> mobile or portable equipment for immediate emergency use.
NINE:	Additional <Operator Type> radio operators needed to assist with emergency at this location.
TEN:	Please contact <Name>. Advise to standby and provide further emergency information, instructions or assistance.
ELEVEN:	Establish Amateur Radio emergency communications with <Name/Call Sign> on <Frequency> MHz.
TWELVE:	Anxious to hear from you. No word in some time. Please contact me as soon as possible.
THIRTEEN:	Medical emergency situation exists here.
FOURTEEN:	Situation here becoming critical. Losses and damage from <Event Name> increasing.
FIFTEEN:	Please advise your condition and what help is needed.
SIXTEEN:	Property damage very severe in this area.
SEVENTEEN:	REACT communications services also available. Establish REACT communication with <Name> on channel <Channel Number>.
EIGHTEEN:	Please contact me as soon as possible at <address/phone>.
NINETEEN:	Request health and welfare report on <Name, address, telephone number>.
TWENTY:	Temporarily stranded. Will need some assistance. Please contact me at <telephone number>.
TWENTY ONE:	Search and Rescue assistance is needed by local authorities here. Advise availability.

TWENTY TWO:	Need accurate information on the extent and type of conditions now existing at your location. Please furnish this information and reply without delay.
TWENTY THREE:	Report at once the accessibility and best way to reach your location.
TWENTY FOUR:	Evacuation of residents from this area urgently needed. Advise plans for help.
TWENTY FIVE:	Furnish as soon as possible the weather conditions at your location.
TWENTY SIX:	Help and care for evacuation of sick and injured from this location needed at once.

3.2 ROUTINE MESSAGES

FORTY SIX:	Greetings on your birthday and best wishes for many more to come.
FORTY SEVEN:	Reference your message number <message number> to <addressee> delivered on <date> at <time> UTC.
FIFTY:	Greetings by Amateur Radio.
FIFTY ONE:	Greetings by Amateur Radio. This message is sent as a free public service by ham radio operators at <Event Name>. Am having a wonderful time.
FIFTY TWO:	Really enjoyed being with you. Looking forward to getting together again.
FIFTY THREE:	Received your <message/gift/etc>. It's appreciated; many thanks.
FIFTY FOUR:	Many thanks for your good wishes.
FIFTY FIVE:	Good news is always welcome. Very delighted to hear about yours.
FIFTY SIX:	Congratulations on your <accomplishment name>, a most worthy and deserved achievement.
FIFTY SEVEN:	Wish we could be together.
FIFTY EIGHT:	Have a wonderful time. Let us know when you return.
FIFTY NINE:	Congratulations on the new arrival. Hope mother and child are well.
SIXTY:	Wishing you the best of everything on <birthday/anniversary/etc>.
SIXTY ONE:	Wishing you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.
SIXTY TWO:	Greetings and best wishes to you for a pleasant <Holiday Name> holiday season.
SIXTY THREE:	Victory or defeat, our best wishes are with you. Hope you win.
SIXTY FOUR:	Arrived safely at <Location>.
SIXTY FIVE:	Arriving <Location> on <Flight No/Train No/etc>. Please arrange to meet me there.
SIXTY SIX:	DX QSLs are on hand for you at the <District> QSL Bureau. Send <number> self addressed envelopes.
SIXTY SEVEN:	Your message number <message number> undeliverable because of <type of difficulty>. Please advise.
SIXTY EIGHT:	Sorry to hear you are ill. Best wishes for a speedy recovery.

SIXTY NINE:	Welcome to the <Club/Organization/etc>. We are glad to have you with us and hope you will enjoy the fun and fellowship of the organization.
-------------	---