



Sending Field Day SM Messages with Outpost

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1 First, stating the obvious

(A) Whether it is for EMCOMM, general message passing, or even sending email, the messaging steps are roughly the same:

- 1. Create the message,
- 2. Send the message,
- 3. Receive the message,
- 4. Deliver the message.

This also works great for packet. In this case, we can send the message but receiving and delivering it will still be up to someone else.

(B) The Field Day rules are pretty clear on awarding points:

7.3.5. Message Origination to Section Manager: 100 bonus points for origination of a formal message to the ARRL Section Manager or Section Emergency Coordinator by your group from its site. You should include the club name, number of participants, Field Day location, and number of ARES operators involved with your station. The message must be transmitted during the Field Day period and a copy of it must be included in your submission in either standard NTS or ICS-213 format (or have the equivalent content) or no credit will be given. The message must leave or enter the Field Day operation via amateur radio RF.

The main points are underlined above. Like with all message passing, there is someone at the receiving end who needs to retrieve and deliver the message. However, the key take-away for me is that you get the points for sending it, not delivering it. But what fun is that?!

(C) The same applies for the 100 points for formal message origination (7.3.6).

In Santa Clara County, we are essentially an NTS island for packet messaging, and I cannot comment on the extent of HF NTS Traffic that may flow into and out of the SF Bay Area. So, if we are going to the effort to create and send a message for points, it would be great to actually ensure it is delivered as well. The following are the ways we scored (7.3.5) 100 points sending the Section Manager message and (7.3.6) 100 points for 10 formal message originations.

2 Creating the Message

For Create the Message / Send the Message, packet is ideal. Whether it is plain text, a formatted NTS message, or an ICS 213 formatted message, they all can be created and sent by packet. Per the rules, doing that plus including copies of the message is all that is required. Getting the message created can be done by one of 3 ways:

2.1 Plain Text Message

This is the easiest as long as you have all the required content: **club name, number of participants, Field Day location, and number of ARES operators involved with your station**. You can freeform the content any way you want.

2.2 NTS Message

The present-day National Traffic System (NTS) evolved out of an eighty-year history of public service and disaster communications tradition. NTS is sponsored by the American Radio Relay League. It features an orderly method of reliably moving messages across the continent on a daily basis as a public service through a system of voice nets, CW nets, and Packet Radio BBS forwarding systems.

If you have an active NTS community, then this is ideal. Create an NTS message with Outpost's NTS Message Maker, send it, someone else picks it up, and delivers it... DONE! See the [NTS Message Maker Users Guide](#) for details. Here is a summary of the steps:

1. Set your radio to the frequency where NTS forwarding occurs, or any BBS/PBBS if you intend to service it yourself later.
2. Start Outpost
3. Click New
4. In the new window, click File->NTS Message Maker
5. Leave the “++” in the Message field; Outpost will replace it with the next message number
6. For Precedence: R for routine
7. Station of Origin: Enter your call sign: i.e., KN6PE
8. Check the check-box for ARL Message -- a new dialog box appears
 - a. Message Type should be "ROUTINE"
 - b. ARL Number should be "FIFTY"
 - c. Click Apply, this dialog box closes and “ARL FIFTY X” text is inserted in the message field.
9. Place of Origin: Enter your City
10. Under Destination Address: See example below
11. Phone Number or email: You should have either if you really want the message to be delivered.
12. Fill in the rest of the message after the ARL FIFTY text per the Field Day requirements. See my example below.

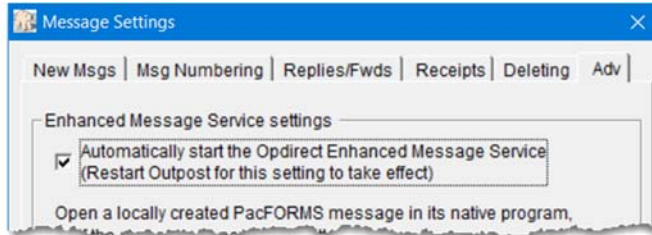
13. When done, press CHECK to format the message, and then SAVE. The NTS form closes and an Outpost message form opens.
14. Make sure the BBS and frequency are set correctly.
15. Press Send, and then Send/Receive.

Feel free to send any other NTS messages to anyone else, family or club members (for more points). Don't forget to include the email address or phone number if you really want it delivered.

2.3 ICS 213 Formal Message

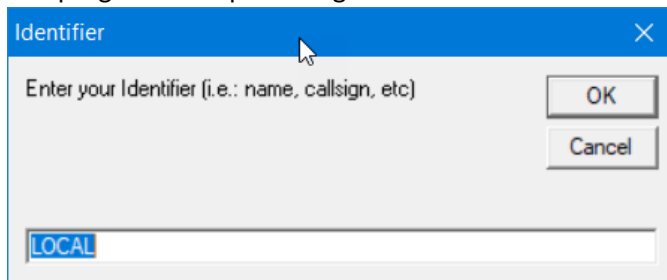
If you use Outpost with its ICS213 Message Maker, creating an ICS message is easy. Setting up includes a few steps with both Outpost and the ICS213mm program. See the [Ics213mm User Guide](#) for the details, but here is a summary of the setup.

1. From Outpost, **Tools > Message Settings < Adv Tab**, Check the **Automatically start...** box. Press **OK**, and then restart Outpost.



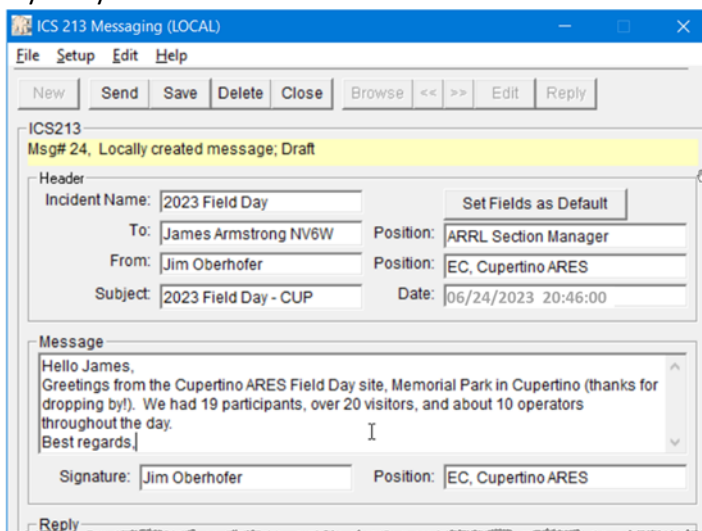
You will see the Opdirect program running and listed in the tool bar.

2. From Outpost select on, **Forms > Generic ICS-213 Message Form**.
3. The program will open along with an Identifier form.

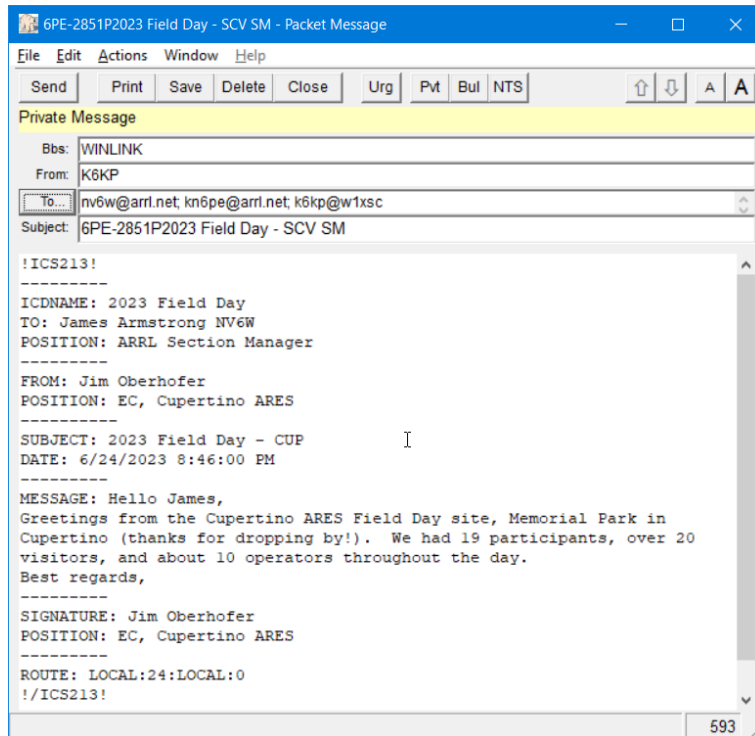


Leave the default setting as **Local** and click **OK**. The ics213mm program will do a test connection to Outpost and verify everything is working correctly.

4. On Ics213mm, press **New**. This will load any default fields you may have set up or saved from the last time you created a message. At this point, fill in all the fields as usual. As mentioned, my last year's submittal looked like this:



5. When done, press **Send**. This creates the actual packet message in Outpost in a very human-readable format.



3 Deliver the message

OK, you got the message created, but what about getting it delivered? Some options are:

3.1 NTS access

If you have a local and active NTS community that services NTS messages on packet, then it is likely your packet message would be picked up, serviced, and delivered... *DONE!*

3.2 BBS with Internet and email access

This works well if you have the email address of the recipient. Known BBS systems that support email routing are JNOS, Winlink, and BPQMailChat (if there are others, please let me know).

1. If your BBS type is one of these, definitely check if email routing is set up.
2. Before field day, make sure you have the email addresses of your SM and/or formal message recipients.
3. Once the message is created, in the message **To:** field, add the recipient's email address, your own email address, and the packet address of your field day site's call sign.
4. Send and *DONE!*

3.3 Standalone BBS & PBBS systems

These are systems that are not networked with any other BBS or the internet. For many packet communities, this may be the extent of what they have to support their local jurisdiction. But just as you would make message passing work during an emergency, you can also make this work for Field Day. This is one approach that I personally used when my BBS was a remote KPC3-P PBBS.

This approach works for both NTS and ICS 213 messages.

Before Field Day

1. Agree on a station where these messages would be sent. This could be either a call sign (yours, a buddy, or other club member, ex: KT3MP) or a tactical call (FDMSG, CUPQLC, or other).
2. Make sure you have the email addresses of your Section Manager and/or formal message recipients (you really want to deliver these messages!). If you don't have an email address, then use a phone number.
3. Identify a buddy or other club member or yourself to service the field day packet messages.

During Field Day

4. Create the message in the format you wish (NTS, ICS 213). Once the message is created and displayed in Outpost, edit the message to add the Destination email address (or phone number) at the top of the Message section.
5. In the message **To:** field, enter the agreed to call sign or tactical call where these messages would be delivered.
6. Then, send the message.

After Field Day

7. Later that day or once field day is over, connect to your BBS with whatever destination call sign or tactical call you used and download the messages.
8. Open each message. .pdf (or screenshot) the message for your ARRL submittal, and copy and paste the text into an email for the recipient. Add some introductory text to the email introducing yourself, that this message originated by Amateur Radio, and why they are receiving this email. If all you had was a phone number, call and deliver the message. Be prepared to talk through your introduction. Essentially, be a good ambassador for Amateur Radio!
9. Send the email and *DONE!*

Will the message get through?

10. This is a "it depends".
 - a. Email messages run the risk of being flagged as spam by over-aggressive spam filters and put in a Bulk or Spam folder. Then, it depends on how often the recipient checks these locations.
 - b. For phone calls, your number may be unfamiliar to the recipient on their called ID and they decide to let it roll to voicemail.

4 Conclusion

In Cupertino CA where I live, we view Field Day as an Emergency Field Communications Drill. Not only is it an opportunity to have fun, but also test out our systems and procedures. The nice thing about sending packet messages to the SM and others (possibly your town council or OES staff?) is that it can demonstrate what we can do when an emergency hits.

Comments, corrections, and updates to this HOWTO would be appreciated.