

MESSAGE LOGGING

I. MARS Messages. Message handling is the cornerstone of all MARS operations. Whether it is handling emergency traffic for disaster support agencies, or delivering morale and welfare traffic in the form of a MARSgram, our responsibility is to effect reliable, secure, speedy communications.

a. Message System. The MARS traffic communications system is a relay system where a message entering the system may pass through several MARS stations before delivery to the addressee. During the movement of the message through the interconnecting network, it may be necessary for the message to be refiled from one system to another. The MARS Winlink system has reduced the number of relays required but in many instances, a relay may still be necessary from a deployed station without Winlink capability to a station with Winlink.

b. Message Relay. Each station in a relay sequence will acknowledge receipt for a message and then assign their own new station serial number (maintaining the message original date time group) before retransmitting. Assigning the relaying station's serial number to the message ensures that message tracing and servicing can be accomplished. Acknowledgment of message receipt will be exchanged only between stations transmitting and receiving the message. Messages will be relayed exactly as received since only the message originator is authorized to make changes.

c. Message Retention. MARS members are required to retain copies of messages they receive, relay, and originate as follows:

- (1) MARSgrams – 90 days.
- (2) Policy and Procedure Messages – until superseded
- (3) Participation Reports – 6 months
- (4) Other messages – Not stated – assumed to be 6 months.

d. Message Log Contents. Members should also maintain a message log that includes at a minimum the following information for each message originated/handled:

- Sending station's message serial number and precedence
- Sending station's Date Time Group (DTG) of message
- Transmission time (DTG of actual transmission)
- Station from which the message was received
- Station to which the message was relayed to
- Remarks as appropriate

II. Implementation Since effectively all our message traffic is in digital form, only digital implementation will be discussed. The periodic practice of sending participation reports by voice includes entering this traffic into the MARS Winlink system for transmission, so it quickly becomes digital traffic.

