



# Participation Guide for the Seminole VHF Traffic Net



*Table of Contents*

|                                     |    |
|-------------------------------------|----|
| Description of the Net.....         | 3  |
| Session Flow.....                   | 4  |
| Checking In with “No Traffic”.....  | 5  |
| Learn by Listening.....             | 6  |
| Copying Message Traffic.....        | 7  |
| Delivering Messages.....            | 8  |
| Sending Messages.....               | 9  |
| “HX” Pro-signs.....                 | 11 |
| Sources of Help (Elmers).....       | 12 |
| Message Handling Abbreviations..... | 13 |
| Authorized Abbreviations.....       | 14 |
| Net Control Operator’s Script.....  | 16 |
| RADIOGRAM Form.....                 | 18 |
| References.....                     | 19 |
| Phonetic Alphabet.....              | 20 |

### *Description of the Net*

The Seminole VHF Traffic Net (SVTN) is a local area net organized by the Lake Monroe Amateur Radio Society that is part of the National Traffic System. SVTN normally meets on the LMARS 2M repeater on frequency 147.285 with a 107.2 Hz tone, every night at 7:15 PM. The net does not meet on the first Thursday of each month except under emergency conditions.

On the first Monday of each month, SVTN meets on the simplex frequency 147.555. This session allows participants to test their ability to participate in the net without the benefit of a repeater, which is something that could be necessary if the repeater were lost during a real emergency.

As a part of the National Traffic System, SVTN handles formal written message traffic into, out of, and within Seminole County and the surrounding area. SVTN maintains liaisons with other recognized traffic nets so that traffic can be collected and passed beyond the SVTN local area.

The net begins at 7:15 PM local time with the most formal part of the net where incoming, outgoing and emergency messages are relayed. Then check-ins from stations that are operating mobile or portable, and stations that are short of time and want to check into the net, but are unable to stay on the air for the duration of the net. After the portable, mobile and short of time stations have had the opportunity to check in, all stations are invited to check-in.

A Net Control Operator designated by the Net Manager or Assistant Net Manager runs the net. All participants should follow the instructions of Net Control to help maintain order. Net Control follows a script that keeps the net running smoothly and makes certain nothing is forgotten. The script, and everyone's respect for it, is the thing that makes it easy for a new or inexperienced Net Control Operator to manage the net. We all know what to expect, when to expect it, and we can all help each other meet the expectations of an official net of the National Traffic System. When the net closes each evening, we all enjoy a sense of accomplishment and *we know* we can be of useful service to our community in the event of an emergency.

### *Session Flow*

The net opens with a query by the Net Control Operator wanting to make certain the frequency is not in use. On occasion Net Control may request someone using the frequency to kindly move to a different frequency in order for the net to hold its scheduled session.

Net Control then opens the net by reciting a standard announcement of the net's name, purpose, and participation instructions. Net Control then asks for any station holding emergency or priority traffic to announce itself and check in to the net. Message traffic that is designated as "Emergency" or "Priority" traffic would be handled immediately at that time.

Then Net Control will ask for any stations to check in that have an announcement or bulletin for the net. Usually stations with announcements or bulletins take this opportunity to inform Net Control but wish to delay making the announcement or bulletin until later in the net, allowing time for more participants to check in to the net. However, it is possible for them to make the announcement or bulletin immediately, knowing that most participants intending to check in to the net are listening.

Net Control now requests portable, mobile, or short of time stations to check in to the net. This request will be made until no further check-ins are announced, at which time Net Control will request check-ins from any and all stations, with or without traffic. This signals the beginning of the formal part of the net, usually about 7:30 PM. Net Control will make a second request for any station holding announcements, official bulletins, or general net messages.

As stations check in to the net they will indicate if they have message traffic to pass or not. Net Control will request stations to take message traffic that must be delivered locally, or relayed to other nets in the National Traffic System for delivery outside the range of the SVTN.

After all message traffic, announcements and bulletins are passed, Net Control will provide a net report to the Net Manager in the form of a message, and close the net for the evening.

***Checking In  
with “No Traffic”***

Don't worry, checking in to the SVTN doesn't require you to send or receive any formal written traffic. Nor does checking in make you susceptible to be designated as a Net Control Operator in the heat of things. Checking in *does* help the net demonstrate its potential usefulness in the event of an emergency by being able to count you as a participant. That is why you will hear stations check in and state, “No traffic, just one for the count.” Or sometimes they will say, “No traffic, just giving you a number.” What this means is they are simply checking in to the net to demonstrate their capability of communicating with the net, and this allows their check-in to be counted in to the evening's participation. The more stations that can check in to the SVTN, the more we can demonstrate reliability in the event of an emergency. So here is all you have to say.

*Net Control: “This is WXYZ with the Seminole VHF Traffic Net looking for check-ins from any station with or without traffic.”*

***You say: “This is (your call sign). My name is (first name) and I am located in (city). I have no traffic.***

Although the SVTN is an official net that handles formal written traffic and is under the control of a Net Control Operator, it is a friendly net. It is also a forgiving net. No one is going to criticize you, especially on the airwaves. The net welcomes you to check in and become a countable resource.

We do follow the script, carefully and thoughtfully, because we want to demonstrate quality, not just quantity. It's not all how many people check in and how many pieces of traffic we handle. It's also how well we do that. So over time, you will develop your skill and confidence by participating in the net.

That's why we meet every night. So every one has the chance to practice, gain experience, and get better at participating and handling traffic for the local area.

### *Learn by Listening*

One of the best ways to teach is by using real life examples. Every night, the SVTN provides real life examples of how to participate. All you have to do is tune in, check in, then be quiet and listen. In fact you don't even have to check in. We just threw that in to encourage you and help keep our participation numbers up.

Most of us listened for several nights before we worked up the courage to check in the SVTN. Following are some of the common things you will hear and learn from.

**“Re-check”** A station that has already checked in to the net has something to bring to the attention of the Net Control Operator. In order to get the Net Control Operator's attention, the calling station will announce “Re-check” and the Net Control Operator will respond with an acknowledgement. Many times, the Net Control Operator will recognize the voice of the station and know whom it is calling for attention.

**“Query”** A station that has checked in to the net has a question they would like to ask Net Control. To attract the attention of the Net Control Operator and at the same time indicate the purpose of their communication, they will announce “Query.” Net control will usually respond with an acknowledgement and listen to the question.

**“Short one”** Sometimes a station will request permission from Net Control to conduct a short conversation with another station. The Net Control Operator will usually acknowledge this request with an instruction for the requesting station to call the station they want to communicate with.

**“Relay”** When a station announces the term “Relay” it means they have copied another calling station attempting to check in or contact Net Control, but apparently the Net Control Station is unable to copy the calling station and has not recognized it. Net Control will acknowledge the relay station, and communication will be exchanged between Net Control and the calling station through the relay station.

### ***Copying Formal Written Message Traffic***

Messages are “formal” because they are numbered and expressed in a standard format. They are written because amateur radio operators handling them keep very careful track of the exact content of the message until it is delivered to the addressee. It is this accountability that makes the National Traffic System and SVTN a reliable source of communication support in the event of an emergency such as a national disaster.

Refer to a copy of the standard message format for more information. It is convenient to use a simple form to copy messages and later transcribe them onto the formal message form if need be. Messages always contain the following information in a specific order.

Message Number

Message Precedence

HX Identifier (if applicable)

Originating Station

Check (Number of words or letter groups in the message)

Place of Origin

Date (Of origination)

TO (Name, call sign, address and phone of the intended recipient)

MESSAGE CONTENT

Sender's name and call sign

Messages are passed by Nets like SVTN through the National Traffic System until they reach an amateur radio operator who is close enough to the addressee to actually deliver the message. It's quite a thrill to deliver the message to the addressee. They are usually happily surprised to receive it, and often want to send a message back to the originator.

### *Delivering Messages*

Anyone that checks into the SVTN can help deliver formal written message traffic. All they have to do is copy the message from the sending or relaying station, and then call the addressee and read them the message.

When Net Control asks for someone willing to take a message to be delivered to a local addressee, they will usually say something like “Is anyone able to take one for (city)?” So if your station is in Orlando, and Net Control asks for a station willing to take a piece of traffic for Orlando, then you could reply with your call sign and state that you would be willing to deliver the traffic. Net Control will then instruct you to call the station with the message and “pick up” the traffic to be delivered. It goes something like this.

**Net Control:** “Is anyone able to take a piece of traffic for Winter Springs?”

**NU8K responds:** “NU8K would be happy to deliver that traffic.”

**Net Control:** “NU8K please call K1JPG and pick up one for Winter Springs.”

**NU8K acknowledges:** “K1JPG, NU8K, Good evening Ray, I’m ready to copy.”

**K1JPG:** “Good evening Vic, Please copy message number...”

The message is relayed just exactly as it is written. After the entire message is conveyed, the receiving station acknowledges receipt of the message and both stations return usage of the net back to the Net Control Operator.

NU8K, the receiving station, delivers the message to the addressee, usually by calling them at the telephone number in the message address, and reading them the message. The secret is to keep it light and make it an exciting and happy experience for the addressee. There is much enjoyment in delivering messages that contain birthday wishes and greetings of all kinds.



## *Sending Messages*

Sending messages is really helpful because it provides the National Traffic System to exercise, just like a person, and stay in shape. You get a great opportunity to practice a skill that someday could be quite helpful.

The best way to prepare to send a message is to first write it out in the standard NTS message format, just like we used to copy a message. This way you will have all of the information ready, in the proper order, when the net control operator directs you to send your message.

Use the message format in the appendix as a guide to prepare your message. It is important that you have the name, address and telephone number of the person you are sending the message to, because that is what the amateur radio operator will use to deliver your message at the other end.

You assign a message number to your message. It is only important to you, the sender, so you can differentiate quickly from one message to another. Usually, we assign sequential numbers beginning with “1” for the first message of the new year. But you can use any numbering scheme you prefer.

The amateur radio operator sending the message is not necessarily the author, or “originator” of the message. You could be sending a message for a neighbor who would like to extend a “Happy Birthday” wish to a relative or friend in another state. The sending operator puts his/her call sign in the sender’s block on the message form, and the originator puts his/her name in the

signature block. The originator does not need to be an amateur radio operator.

When you check in to the SVTN, simply state that you have a message to send, like this:

**Net Control:** “Looking for check-ins to the SVTN.”

**N9MN:** “N9MN, Don in Sanford, with traffic for Iowa.”

That’s all there is to letting the net control operator know that you are holding a message to send. By telling him the state it is destined for, he will be able to group it with other traffic, and he

will be able to start thinking about who might be able to take the message and relay it to another traffic net.

At the appropriate time, the net control operator will call you and ask you to pass your traffic to a station that has checked into the net. Or, the net control operator will direct another station to call you and pick-up your message. So pay attention and you will be ready for something like this:

**Net Control:** “KG4QCC, Randy, please call N9MN and pick-up a message for Iowa.”

**KG3QCC:** “N9MN, KG4QCC, good evening Don, I am ready to copy your message for Iowa.”

**N9MN:** “Good evening Randy, please copy...”

And so begins the relay of the message. Probably the very best way to get some practice at sending and copying message traffic is to listen in to those passing traffic on the net, and play like a “silent partner.” Pretend that you are the operator taking the traffic, and copy along with the real operator.

What happens if the person taking the traffic doesn’t understand what was said, or can’t keep up with the speed of the sender? You’ll find that it is OK to simply ask the sender to repeat something, or to ask him to speak slower. Don’t be afraid to say, “I’m new at this and would appreciate you going slower.” Believe me, even Mario Andretti would slow down if it meant the National Traffic System could get a new operator some experience.

***Handling Instructions***  
***“HX\_” Pro-signs***

- HXA** (Followed by number) “Collect” telephone delivery authorized by addressee within X miles. If no number is sent, authorization is unlimited.
- HXB** (Followed by number) Cancel message if not delivered within X hours of filing time, service (notify) originating station.
- HXC** Report date and time of delivery to originating station.
- HXD** Report to originating station the identity of the station who delivered the message, plus date, time and method of delivery. Also, each station to report identity of station to which relayed, plus date and time.
- HXE** Delivering station to get and send reply from addressee.
- HXF** (Followed by date in numbers.) Hold delivery until (specify date).
- HXG** Delivery by mail or telephone, toll call not required. If toll or other expense involved, cancel message and send service message to originating station.

If more than one HX pro-sign is used, they can be combined like this: HXAC. However, if numbers are used, such as with HXF, the HX must be repeated each time.

***SVTN Elmers***

LMARS is stocked full of Elmers. Here are just a few who would be delighted to help you with any questions regarding participation on the SVTN. Please do not hesitate to call on them at any time. If there is no phone number listed, talk to them at a LMARS meeting. They welcome your interest.

|        |              |              |
|--------|--------------|--------------|
| KG4QCD | Andy Gausz   | 321-229-7547 |
| KJ4VQO | Harry Bankes | 407-314-4734 |
| WR4RW  | Rich Wilson  | 407-221-7787 |

***Other Local VHF Nets***

QCWA (Social Net) 7:30PM Tuesdays 147.195 (103.5 tone)

Seminole County ARES/RACES Net (Emergency Services)  
8:00PM Mondays 147.090 (103.5 tone)

---

---

---

*Message Handling Abbreviations*

| Pro-word            | Meaning  |
|---------------------|--|
| <b>BREAK</b>        | Separates address from text, and text from signature.      |
| <b>CORRECTION</b>   | “I am going to correct an error.”                          |
| <b>END</b>          | End of message.  |
| <b>FIGURES</b>      | Used before a word group consisting of all numerals.       |
| <b>INITIAL</b>      | Used to indicate a single letter will follow.              |
| <b>I SAY AGAIN</b>  | Used to indicate a repeat of a word or phrase will follow. |
| <b>I SPELL</b>      | I am going to spell a word phonetically.                   |
| <b>LETTER GROUP</b> | Several letters together in a group will follow.           |
| <b>MIXED GROUP</b>  | Letters and numbers combined in a group will follow.       |
| <b>MORE</b>         | Additional messages to follow.                             |
| <b>NO MORE</b>      | No additional messages.                                    |
| <b>X-RAY</b>        | Used to indicate end of sentence, as with a “period.”      |

---

***Authorized Abbreviations***  
***“ARL” Numbered Radiograms***

The letters “ARL” can be used in the message preamble in the CHECK and in the message text itself to abbreviate standard message content. This helps to expedite the message through the NTS without having to read each word of a message that is of a routine content. Here are a few of that are non-emergency related.

- FORTY SIX      Greetings on your birthday and best wishes for many more to come.
- FIFTY            Greetings by amateur radio.
- FIFTY ONE      Greetings by Amateur radio. This message is sent as a free public service by ham radio operators here at \_\_\_\_\_. Am having a wonderful time.
- FIFTY THREE    Received your \_\_\_\_\_. 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 \_\_\_\_\_, a most worthy and deserved achievement.
- FIFTY SEVEN    Wish we could be together.
- FIFTY NINE      Congratulations on the new arrival. Hope mother and child are well.
- \*SIXTY            Wishing you the best of everything on \_\_\_\_\_.
- 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 season.

SIXTY THREE Victory or defeat, our best wishes are with you.  
Hope you win.

SIXTY FOUR Arrived safely on \_\_\_\_\_.

SIXTY FIVE Arriving \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_. Please  
arrange to meet me there.

SIXTY SIX DX QSLs are on hand for you at the \_\_\_\_\_  
QSL Bureau. Send \_\_\_\_\_ self-addressed  
envelopes.

SIXTY SEVEN Your message number \_\_\_\_\_ undeliverable  
because of \_\_\_\_\_. Please advise.

SIXTY EIGHT Sorry to hear you are ill. Best wishes for a  
speedy recovery.

SIXTY NINE Welcome to the \_\_\_\_\_. We are glad to  
have you with us and hope you will enjoy the fun  
and fellowship of the organization.

\* Can be used for all holidays.

Note that ARL numbers are spelled out at all times.

*The SVTN  
Net Control Operator's Script, also  
known as the "Net Preamble"*

DOES ANYONE NEED TO USE THIS FREQUENCY BEFORE I BEGIN THE SEMINOLE VHF TRAFFIC NET?

THIS IS (NET CONTROL OPERATOR'S CALL SIGN) CALING ALL AMATEUR RADIO STATIONS TO THE SEMINOLE VHF TRAFFIC NET. GOOD EVENING EVERYONE. MY NAME IS \_\_\_\_\_ AND I AM LOCATED IN \_\_\_\_\_. I WILL BE THE NET CONTROL OPERATOR TONIGHT. THIS IS A DIRECTED NET. PLEASE FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS OF NET CONTROL.

THE SEMINOLE VHF TRAFFIC NET MEETS DAILY STARTING AT 7:15 PM LOCAL TIME ON THIS FREQUENCY 147.285 MHZ, A REPEATER WITH A PL TONE OF 107.2 HZ. ON THE FIRST MONDAY OF EACH MONTH THE SVTN MEETS ON 147.555 MHZ SIMPLEX AND DOES NOT USE THE REPEATER. ON THE FIRST THURSDAY OF EACH MONTH THE SVTN MEETS ONLY UNDER EMERGENCY CONDITIONS. WE WILL NOT CALL THE NET IF THERE IS LIGHTNING OR THUNDER IN THE AREA AS A SAFETY PRECAUTION. PLEASE BE COURTEOUS AND PAUSE BRIEFLY BETWEEN TRANSMISSIONS TO HELP AVOID PILE UPS.

THIS IS A TRAINING NET WITH THE PURPOSE OF PROVIDING EXPERIENCE IN NET OPERATIONS, AND TO LEARN AND PRACTICE RELAYING FORMAL WRITTEN MESSAGE TRAFFIC INTO, OUT OF, AND WITHIN SEMINOLE COUNTY AND THE SURROUNDING AREA. WE MAKE AN EFFORT TO SHARE MESSAGE RELAY OPPORTUNITIES WITH ALL STATIONS INTERESTED IN HANDLING TRAFFIC. THE SVTN IS AN OFFICIAL NET OF THE NATIONAL TRAFFIC SYSTEM AND MAINTAINS LIAISON WITH OTHER RECOGNIZED TRAFFIC NETS.

THIS IS \_\_\_\_\_ FOR THE SEMINOLE VHF TRAFFIC NET.

DO WE HAVE ANY LIAISON STATIONS WITH INBOUND TRAFFIC OR ABLE TO TAKE OUTBOUND TRAFFIC? CALL NOW PLEASE...



DO WE HAVE ANY STATIONS HOLDING EMERGENCY OR PRIORITY TRAFFIC? CALL NOW PLEASE...

DO WE HAVE ANY STATIONS ABLE TO TAKE AND DELIVER INBOUND MESSAGES? CALL NOW PLEASE...

DO WE HAVE ANY STATIONS HOLDING OUTBOUND MESSAGES OR NET REPORTS? CALL NOW PLEASE...

DO WE HAVE ANY STATIONS HOLDING ANNOUNCEMENTS OR BULLETINS FOR THE NET?

WE WILL NOW TAKE CHECK-INS FROM SHORT OF TIME, MOBILE AND PORTABLE STATIONS. CALL NOW PLEASE GIVING CALL SIGN PHONETICALLY AND FIRST NAME...

ALL SHORT OF TIME, MOBILE AND PORTABLE STATIONS MAY SECURE. THANK YOU FOR JOINING US TONIGHT AND CHECK IN AS OFTEN AS YOU CAN. WE APPRECIATE YOUR PARTICIPATION.

WE WILL NOW TAKE CHECK-INS FROM ANY STATION THAT WOULD LIKE TO JOIN THE NET. PLEASE SLOWLY STATE YOUR CALL SIGN PHONETICALLY AND GIVE YOUR FIRST NAME. CALL NOW PLEASE...

WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK ALL THE STATIONS THAT CHECKED IN TO THE SVTN TONIGHT. PLEASE JOIN US AGAIN AS OFTEN AS POSSIBLE.

(NET REPORT)

THIS IS \_\_\_\_\_ CLOSING THE SEMINOLE VHF TRAFFIC NET AT \_\_\_\_\_ LOCAL TIME AND RETURNING THIS FREQUENCY TO REGULAR AMATEUR USE. GOOD EVENING EVERYONE. \_\_\_\_\_ CLEAR.

*Message Format*

**The American Radio Relay League  
RADIOGRAM**

| Number   | Precedence | HX | Station of Origin  | Check | Place of Origin | Time Filed | Date |
|--|------------|----|--|-------|-----------------|------------|------|
|  |            |    |  |       |                 |            |      |
| <p>TO</p> <p>Telephone Number</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> |            |    |  |       |                 |            |      |
| <p>RECEIVED:</p> <p>From                      Date                      Time</p>                   |            |    | <p>SENT:</p> <p>To                      Date                      Time</p> |       |                 |            |      |

The RADIOGRAM provides a standard format for recording the important ingredients of any message.

The top row of boxes are for data that identifies the message for the amateur operators who will become involved in relaying the message...what's it's identifying number (assigned by the originating station), the message's precedence (normally R for routine), any handling instructions identifier, the number of words in the message, it's city and state of origin, and the time and date filed.

The TO block is for the name, address and phone number of the addressee. There are 25 (five rows of five words) spaces to record the text of the message. Units of five make it easy to compare to the check number. And finally, there is a place to identify where the message was received and sent (relayed).

## *References*

The ARRL Emergency Communication Handbook, Edited by WB8IMY Steve Ford, ©2005, Newington, CN

The ARRL FCC Rule Book, 13<sup>th</sup> Edition, Edited by N1KB John Hennessee, ©2004, Newington, CN

The ARRL Handbook for Radio Communications 2005, Editor W1IC Dana G. Reed, ©2004, Newington, CN, pp. 2.3 - 2.4

The ARRL Operating Manual, 7<sup>th</sup> Edition, Editor K8CH Chuck Hutchinson, ©2000 Newington, CN, pp 7.1 – 8.22

Public Service Communications Manual, published by The American Radio Relay League, Newington, CN

*Phonetic Alphabet***A** ALFA**N** NOVEMBER**B** BRAVO**O** OSCAR**C** CHARLIE**P** PAPA**D** DELTA**Q** QUEBEC**E** ECHO**R** ROMEO**F** FOXTROT**S** SIERRA**G** GOLF**T** TANGO**H** HOTEL**U** UNIFORM**I** INDIA**V** VICTOR**J** JULIET**W** WHISKEY**K** KILO**X** X-RAY**L** LIMA**Y** YANKEE**M** MIKE**Z** ZULU