

SIXTH REGION NET/Cycle 4

NET CONTROL STATION GUIDELINES

I. PURPOSE

These Guidelines set forth general and specific guidance for an effective Net Control Station assignment of a Sixth Region Net/Cycle 4 (RN6) operator.

The following guidelines are consistent with the provisions of the ARRL **Public Service Communications Manual** (see FSD-98). This Manual should be consulted as an authoritative source for basic and practical information on operating within the National Traffic System (NTS). RN6 net control stations should have the most current edition of the Manual and the RN6 Liaison Assignment Guidelines, and they should be familiar with these references.

The National Traffic System is an organized effort to handle traffic in accordance with a plan which is easily understood and basically sound, using modern methods of network traffic handling in general acceptance today.

For RN6 to play its part in this public service communications system, there must be a fair degree of discipline, observance of protocol, uniformity to our operations, coupled with courtesy and camaraderie.

So, please observe these guidelines, and lets serve and have fun together.

Times are given in UTC Standard for standard time. Cycle 4 moves an hour earlier during daylight savings time.

II. GENERAL

The NTS is not a deterrent to, or in competition with, other organized traffic networks and circuits. When necessitated by overload or lack of an outlet for traffic, such routings should be used in the interest of effective message relay and/or delivery.

The purpose of RN6 is to exchange formal traffic among the sections in the region. These sections are: **NCN** - East Bay, Nevada, Pacific, Sacramento Valley, San Francisco, San Joaquin, Santa Clara Valley; and **SCN** - Los Angeles, Orange, San Diego, and Santa Barbara. RN6 also relays out-of-region traffic through designated liaison stations to the PAN, and distributes traffic from outside the region to section net representatives.

RN6 is administered by the Net Manager, K9JM. The Net Manager is appointed by the ARRL Education and Field Services Manager, following election by the NTS Pacific Area Staff under written Terms of Reference.

The Net Manager assigns net control stations and liaison stations to and from PAN; monitors section net representation to RN6 and maintains a close rapport with all section net managers to help assure that the distribution of traffic through RN6 is not unnecessarily delayed for lack of section net representation.

Session Net Control Stations (NCS) may designate a station to a liaison or section representative function in the absence of an assigned station. Such designations are made with the concurrence of the station to be designated. Once designated, the station agrees to fully perform the function, absent unavoidable circumstances.

The participants in a typical RN6 session include: the **NCS, representatives from the various Northern and Southern California section nets, a liaison assigned to receive traffic at the early RN6 session (P1) for PAN (6T), and a liaison assigned to receive RN6 traffic at PAN (6R) for the RN6 late session (P2).** There may be more than one representative from the section nets, but more than two are usually superfluous. All section representatives should represent the entire section, not merely their own net.

RN6 sessions are by necessity structured in format and protocol since the singular objective is to promptly relay traffic between section representatives and/or PAN liaisons. General check-ins without traffic may be promptly excused by the NCS unless they can provide a needed outlet or act as an alternate. RN6 sessions operate on a tight time schedule, but visitors should be treated with courtesy.

Session net participants need wait no longer than two minutes, if the assigned NCS has not opened the session, before designating an NCS to open and complete the session. Participants are encouraged to keep session and net integrity by designating an NCS in the absence of the assigned NCS.

III. SPECIFIC

A NCS is assigned to each RN6 session by the Net Manager. The specific guidelines in this section apply to NCS assignments or to a designated NCS in the absence of the assigned NCS.

Timely Net Call-up. Each session of RN6 should begin at the scheduled time on the nominal frequency. It is the responsibility of the NCS to call-up the net session on time and on a clear channel on or near the nominal net frequency of 3.575 MHz.

The RN6 early session is scheduled to meet at 0345z daily. The RN6 late session meets at 0530z daily. During the Daylight Savings Time, the early session meets at 0245z and the late session convenes at 0430z.

There is not a standard NCS call-up, but the examples of other call-ups used by experienced NCS operators.

Order of Check-In. RN6 sessions need to be run with considerable structure and formality in order to accomplish the objective of the net within the scheduled time frame. The NCS should promptly determine by prearranged order (QNA) which PAN liaisons and section net representatives are on frequency and the extent of the traffic to be handled during the session. The liaison to PAN (P1) needs to have priority in clearing all out-of-region traffic before meeting PAN at 0430z. The liaison from PAN (P2) can be promptly excused if not otherwise needed.

RN6 Liaison stations have guidelines for the effective performance of their liaison functions. NCS should be familiar with these guidelines, be alert to new liaisons, and be patient, yet clear, in helping these operators learn the pace and "savy" of the net.

The typical order of check-in an NCS might use is:

- > **(P1) the liaison assigned to receive all out-of-region traffic listed at the RN6 early session and take it to PAN.**
- > **(P2) the liaison assigned to bring region traffic back from PAN to the RN6 late session.**
- > **(NCN) the representative(s) from any Northern California section nets, including NCN1, NCN2 or NCN/VHF.**
- > **(SCN) the representative(s) from any Southern California section nets, including SCN1, SCN2, SCN/VHF or SCN/SB.**

Prompt Check-In. Stations functioning as liaisons are the means through which the NCS is able to accomplish the objective of RN6 at each session. It is critical that the sessions not only meet on time, but that they be able to promptly move all listed traffic. Hence, the assigned or otherwise designated liaisons are expected to promptly check in at the ordered call (QNA) of the NCS.

Section net representatives should also be expected to check-in when called at the opening of each session by the NCS.

Adherence to NCS Directions. The NCS is the session leader and NCS directions should be followed by Net participants. NCS directions should be clear, but if not understood, they should be repeated for clarification. Asking for clarification is good practice.

Maintain Pace of Net Session. The NCS sets and by example helps to maintain the pace of each net session. Net participants will be expected to maintain the pace of the net session: session procedures (including use of QN signals, clean signals, and good message sending/receiving practices), speed, zero-beat net frequency set by NCS, and the like.

Clearing Listed Traffic. The NCS should give clear and concise directions using generally accepted abbreviations and appropriate QN signals to effectively clear all listed traffic between liaisons and section net representatives. Stations without traffic and not needed for net functions should be excused. Full use of off-net frequencies should be used by the NCS to facilitate the prompt relay of traffic listed. The NCS must keep close track of the use of directed off-net frequencies by the net participants to avoid confusion and session delays.

It is recommended that each NCS have a ready-reference to:

- > ***Operator's Reference Card*** (ARRL Form FSD-218)
- > ***ARL Numbered Radiogram List*** (ARRL Form FSD-3)
- > ***Net Directory*** (ARRL FSD-50)
- > ***Public Service Communications Manual*** (ARRL FSD-98)
- > National Area-Code List
- > USPS ***ZIP*** Code References

If band conditions are poor, the NCS should consider alternative circuits, modes, frequencies or bands to effect either the session or the relay of traffic through the session.

It is the responsibility of the NCS to arrange alternate routes for any listed traffic not otherwise cleared during the session. This responsibility does not mean that the NCS is necessarily the relay station for such remaining traffic.

Session Duration. The session NCS has the discretion to keep the net open for a reasonable period of time (five minutes) to allow liaison and section net representatives to check in. If all participants have checked in and /or traffic has been cleared, the net session should be closed.

Closing of Session. When all traffic listed on the session has been cleared and all net participants excused, the NCS should close the net session (QNF), and summarize the session activity for subsequent reporting purposes.

QR Ming other Nets. NCS should be aware of other neighboring nets. Specifically, IMN during day light savings time has early check-ins starting at the same time as the early RN6 and the operate at 3572 KHz, so “down 3” should be avoided.

IV. NET CONTROL STATION RECORDKEEPING

Each assigned or designated Net Control Station should record the key aspects of each net session. This information is also useful for the reporting of individual station traffic and net activity (BPL and PSHR) to the Section Manager or SectionTraffic Manager.

Net Control Station Summary Reports should be filed promptly by message to the Net Manager. These reports should include the date (UTC), the call signs and assignment designations, total traffic cleared during the net session, and the duration (in minutes) of the session.

All traffic cleared during a net session should be included in the NCS report. In some cases, the net may have been closed while traffic is actually being cleared. The NCS may use a time-factor for all such traffic as long as it is consistently applied. Although THRU traffic may be listed, such traffic should **not** be counted in the NCS report.

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