



Dispelling Mythology Surrounding the NIMS ICS213 Standard

A bibliography of articles and reference material illustrating the relationship between the radiogram format and the NIMS ICS213 standard

The mythology of “NIMS Compliant Message Forms” seems to never die. Much of this mythology is undoubtedly rooted in the confusion between “form” and “format” as well as a misunderstanding of how government standards are implemented.

ICS213 is, in fact, not a message format, but rather a STANDARD, which defines the MINIMUM accountability information, which must be incorporated into record message traffic. Agencies and organizations are at liberty to add additional information as necessary, but the minimum defined content must be retained. In many respects, the ICS213 minimum defines the same content as that ancient and well- established document, the “inter-office memorandum.”

Government and commercial telecommunications systems regularly convey a variety of ICS213 messages. These systems invariably add ADDITIONAL network management data, which exceeds the minimum standard. For example, an ICS213 message transmitted via e-mail will have considerable network management data appended to it.

In fact, there is no difference between the radiogram and the ICS213 message except for the network management data appended in the radiogram preamble. Operational messages in radiogram format have been accepted by local, state, and Federal agencies during recent exercises because the radiogram format is fully compliant with NIMS ICS213 requirements. Two recent exercises of note include the “Cascadia Rising” disaster exercise in which radiogram format messages were routed across the United States and injected directly into the data stream at the National Response Coordination Center at Washington, DC, and a recent US Navy Medical Exercise in which radiogram messages were originated to various points throughout the United States.

Here are references to several articles and documents that have addressed this issue over the past 7 years. Please feel free to review these articles to obtain a better understanding of the relationship between the Radiogram and the ICS213 standard. In the meantime, *we respectfully ask that radio amateurs not disseminate false or misleading information about the ICS213 standard:*

“A Little Knowledge is a Dangerous Thing” Page 5

<https://qinewsletterdotnet.files.wordpress.com/2015/11/qni-2013-9.pdf>

“Clueless” Page 10

<https://qinewsletterdotnet.files.wordpress.com/2015/11/qni-2013-12.pdf>

“Don’t Believe Everything You Read” Page 4

<https://qinewsletterdotnet.files.wordpress.com/2016/02/qni-2016-2.pdf>

“New Standardized Radiogram-ICS-213 Radiogram Released” Page 21

<https://qninewsletterdotnet.files.wordpress.com/2017/03/qni-2017-4.pdf>

“ICS213 The Mythology That Just Won’t Die” Page 6

<https://qninewsletterdotnet.files.wordpress.com/2017/07/qni-2017-7.pdf>

Radiogram-ICS213 Fillable Message forms 1701, 1702, 1703 and 1704 – Available on the RRI ‘Publications’ Page:

<http://radio-relay.org/about/publications/>

Radio Relay International “National Emergency Communications Response Guidelines” Effective 1 Aug 2020. See Appendix A for various examples of standard EmComm message formats in both standard radiogram format and radiogram-ICS213 format:

<http://radio-relay.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/RRI-NECRP-2020-8-1-Final-Approved.pdf>