

Radio Relay International VEC Welcome Radiogram Program

For many years now, a small group of radio operators have taken it upon themselves to send welcome radiograms to new licensees. This has typically been done by harvesting address information from the FCC database or a service such as “QRZ.com.”

While the welcome radiograms are always well received by the addressee, this method has proven inherently problematic. The FCC database lacks some important contact data, not the least of which are phone numbers and e-mail addresses. The result is a frustrating range of delivery failures and the perception that radiograms are nothing more than useless “spam.”

Yet, there is much to be said for the process of originating a welcome radiogram to a newly licensed radio amateur. Consider these benefits associated with the message delivery process:

- The delivering station can personally welcome the new operator to the fraternity of radio amateurs.
- The delivering operator can invite the new operator to local radio club or emergency communications unit meetings.
- The delivering operator can answer questions about Amateur Radio. He can leave his name and phone number and invite the new operator to call him when he has technical problems or operating questions.
- The delivering operator can keep a list of new hams to whom he has delivered radiograms and use this list to invite them to special events, such as Field Day, a contest station activity or the like.

In other words; if done correctly, the process of originating and delivering a “welcome radiogram” can be very beneficial. Of course, it also exercises the system and provides training for traffic operators who may someday be active in an emergency communications function.

RRI intends to **transform** this process of “welcome radiograms” from a problematic “spam” generating activity to a beneficial outreach and recruiting activity, which benefits not just the traffic system, but also local clubs and EMCOMM groups.

VEC volunteers can download a “VEC Welcome Radiogram Form” document from the RRI Web Site. This document can be printed and distributed to those who pass their license exam during the session. The new ham simply fills out the form with his basic contact information, such as name, address, phone and e-mail. This data is then provided to RRI, which assigns the data to a volunteer in another state or country, who then originates a

welcome message. Upon arrival, the radiogram message is delivered by an enthusiastic local ham and outreach ensues.

Because the new ham operator anticipates the radiogram, and because he provides timely, accurate contact data, the delivery process is not just painless, but beneficial to everyone.

Imagine, for example, being a new ham who is welcomed to the hobby by an experienced radio amateur from across the country before your call sign is even issued! Imagine a pleasant phone call from a local ham inviting that new ham to the local club meeting or Field Day event! **It's a win-win for everyone.**

The program was tested with a trial run at the North American Short Wave Association VEC session in 2018. The results were excellent and VEC candidates willingly filled out the form. It was a real pleasure to originate “welcome” and congratulatory radiograms to newly upgraded hams immediately after their test using **up-to-date** contact information.

Radio Relay International has a standard PDF form, which can be downloaded from our website. Simply print out the desired number of copies, distributed and collect them at each VEC session. One simply registers with our bulk coordination group email reflector and shares the list of new hams with those on the list: Once can subscribe to this list at: RRI-bulk-tfc-coordination+subscribe@groups.io

This will distribute the contact data to a group of enthusiastic operators who volunteer to originate the messages. Each of these volunteers will be assigned a specific state or group of states to which he will send welcome radiograms. Best of all, the radiograms will come from across the country or even overseas.

We need to get these new hams on-air and we also need to get them involved with our local radio clubs and EMCOMM groups.

The necessary form and outline of the program can be found under the “publications” heading of the RRI website at: www.radio-relay.org

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