

Create a Form 309 Via a WLE Generated CSV Using the Folders' Content

Exercise Message Submission Window

- **March 19, 2024 7:00 UTC - March 22, 2024 10:00 UTC**

Difficulty Level: **Intermediate**

Purpose: Radio operators supporting a service agency in drills, exercises, simulated emergency tests, or an actual emergency, may be asked to send a Winlink Form 309 Communications Log via Winlink at the end of each shift. For a large number of messages sent or received, this could get rather tedious entering the information, and risk introducing typos in transcribing the information.

Winlink Express provides a feature that will generate a Form 309 Communications Log via a filtered list of items taken from selected Message Mailboxes. Unfortunately by default, this produces a PDF file. PDFs are rather large and time-consuming to send. Fortunately, using the option to produce a CSV file, a Tab Delimited file can be created. By placing its content into the *Paste Data from a Spreadsheet* function of the Form 309 HTML it eliminates typing in the contents. This will allow you to quickly and more accurately create an ICS 309 Communications Log smaller in size than an attached generated ICS 309 PDF.

For this exercise, the EmComm Training Organization (ETO) is the served agency. ETO's requirements can and probably will be different from your other served agencies. If there is a conflict between your previous training and the ETO instructions for this exercise, follow the ETO instructions.

Objectives:

- Use Winlink Express to generate a Tab Delimited file documenting the Messages sent and received by the operator.
- Copy and paste the contents of this Tab Delimited file to populate the line items within the ICS 309 Communications Log HTML.
- Generate simulated messages that will be sent and received by the exercise participant and these messages reported within Form ICS 309.
- Transmit the completed Winlink Forms ICS 309 Communications Log to the participant's respective ETO Clearinghouse and ETO-BK.

Winlink Thursday Exercise For March 22, 2024**Resources:**

- General Notes on Frequently-Seen Mistakes:
https://emcomm-training.org/Winlink_Thursdays.html
- Finding your ETO clearinghouse:
<https://emcomm-training.org/General-Drill-Info.html>
- ETO Location Instructions — With or Without a GPS Receiver for your Computer [PDF]
 - <https://emcomm-training.org/Santa-2023/ETO-Location-Notes.pdf>
- How a GIS map-capable form's default position is determined:
 - From within Winlink Express Click on Help ⇒ Help Contents..., expand Operation, click on GIS Mapping Forms & Catalog Items

Narrative

In a limited scope Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) Functional Exercise, for your task, you have been asked to operate a Winlink Express station hypothetically located at an emergency shelter. Your sole operation is to generate simulated traffic and provide reports in the form of an ICS 309 Communications Log. The Communications Log should be in the format of the Winlink HTML Form Template provided within the Winlink Express Standard Templates under the Template Manager. This Form 309 is to be sent to your ETO Clearinghouse.

The simulated traffic will require the creation of three simple text-based Winlink Messages. These should be uploaded to the CMS, by using any available Internet-connected RMS Gateway. These messages are to be addressed to the Winlink Test Message Reflector which will generate a reply to you with the content of your received message. The report will be a Winlink Forms Template of the ICS 309 Communications Log representing the three messages sent to the Reflector (Sent folder) and those three responses returned by the Reflector (Inbox). For a total of six messages within the log.

Instructions Start On the Following Page

Exercise Instructions:**Section 1. Create the three Winlink text messages.**

1. Open the Winlink Express application.
2. Accept any updates. You should be at version 1.7.13.0 or greater.
3. Note your settings for displaying Local or UTC time for the date/time values within the folder lists.
 - a. Open the **Preferences** dialog found under *Settings \ Preferences...* on the Winlink Express main form.
 - b. Note within the **Time Display** group box, whether you have **UTC** or **Local** selected.
 - i. If you have **UTC**, your Date/Time in your folder items list will be in UTC time.
 - ii. If you have **Local**, your Date/Time in your folder items list will be in Local time.
 - c. To simplify this exercise, it is suggested you select **Local** prior to performing the exercise. If UTC is your desired option and you change it to Local for the exercise, only switch back to UTC after performing the exercise.
4. First Message
 - a. Click on the *Message \ New Message* menu item.
 - b. Verify that *Send As* is set to **Winlink Message**.
 - c. Address the message **ONLY** to the Winlink test message reflector:
 - i. **TEST@winlink.org**;
 - d. Assign the Subject Line to the text:
 - i. **ETO Exercise, Winlink Simulated Emergency Message One**
 - e. Populate the body of the message with:
 - i. **Test-Simulated Emergency Message 1-Test**
 - f. Post it to your Outbox, as you would any other message.
 - g. Open a session and send it normally.
 - i. Pay attention to the banner messages. If the internet is not accessible by that gateway it should state that information. If so, stop your connection and try a different gateway.
 - h. Wait just over a minute before going to step 5.
5. Second Message
 - a. Click on the *Message \ New Message* menu item.
 - b. Verify that *Send As* is set to **Winlink Message**.
 - c. Address the message **ONLY** to the Winlink test message reflector:
 - i. **TEST@winlink.org**;
 - d. Assign the Subject Line to the text:
 - i. **ETO Exercise, Winlink Simulated Emergency Message Two**
 - e. Populate the body of the message with:
 - i. **Test-Simulated Emergency Message 2-Test**
 - f. Post it to your outbox, as you would any other message.
 - g. Select your Winlink Session opened in 4.g and send it normally.

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- h. The response from the first message transmitted should have been downloaded to your inbox.
 - i. Wait over a minute or more before going to step 6.
6. Third Message
- a. Click on the *Message \ New Message* menu item
 - b. Verify that *Send As* is set to **Winlink Message**.
 - c. Address the message ONLY to the Winlink test message reflector:
 - i. **TEST@winlink.org**;
 - d. Assign the Subject Line to the text:
 - i. **ETO Exercise, Winlink Simulated Emergency Message Three**
 - e. Populate the body of the message with:
 - i. **Test-Simulated Emergency Message 3-Test**
 - f. Post it to your outbox, as you would any other message.
 - g. Select your Winlink Session opened in 4.g and send it normally.
 - h. The response from the second message transmitted should have been downloaded to your inbox.
 - i. Wait over a minute or more before going to step 7.
7. Download the Third Message.
- a. Select your Winlink Session opened in 4.g and *Start* the session.
 - b. If you waited long enough, all three messages should be in your inbox.
 - c. If all three messages have not been downloaded, wait some more and try step 6.a again.
 - i. If after ten minutes you don't receive any reflected messages, return to step 3 and repeat, selecting a different RMS Gateway or use Telnet if no other gateway is available. You may have selected a gateway that does not have a functioning internet connection.

Section 2. Generate the tab-delimited file

1. From within the Winlink Express main window, click on the Menu Items: *Message \ Generate Form 309 Communications Log*.
2. Within the *Select Message Mailboxes* group box:
 - a. Select the check box for the *Sent* option.
 - b. Select the check box for the *Inbox* option.
 - c. Select the check box for the *Read* option, If you have done any of the following:
 - i. The Preference setting *Automatically move read messages to Read Items folder* turned on.
 - ii. Have read one or more of the Reflector reply messages.
 - iii. You manually move read messages to the Read Items folder.
 - d. Clear the remaining check box options.

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3. Within the *Message Date Range* option box
 - a. The times to be entered here, should be in Local Time. If, as discussed in Section 1, Step 3, you have your list items in UTC time, you will need to recognize the hour values selected will be different by the offset between local time and UTC time at your locale.
 - b. Select *Limit start date/time* and select a date and time at least one minute before the local date and time when Message 1 was sent.
 - c. Select *Limit end date/time* and select a date and time just at least one minute after the local date and time when Message 3's reflected message was received.
4. Ignore *Page Layout Options* fields as they are for PDF generation option
5. Within *Format of Dates on Report*
 - a. For Form 309 to work with the provided dates, select the format yyyy-mm-dd. Note the dashes, do not use the format with slashes.
 - b. For consistency, only select the *UTC time* option if under your Winlink Express Settings \ Preferences ... menu item's window, the *Time Display* UTC value is checked.
6. Ignore the following fields as they are for the PDF generation option.
 - a. *Task ID*:
 - b. *Task Name*:
 - c. *Operational Period*:
 - d. *Operations name*:
 - e. *Station ID*:
 - f. *Output pdf file*:
7. Click on *Generate CSV File*.

Section 3. Generate CSV File with Message Records

1. Within the *Select Columns to Include* group box:
 - a. only check the: *Time, From, To, Subject* columns.
2. Within the *Column Delimiter* group box:
 - a. Select the *Tab* radio button..
3. Within the *CSV Output File* group box:
 - a. Click on Browse to choose a directory and enter a unique file name for the Tab Delimited File that will be created.
4. Click the button *Generate CSV File*

Section 4. Validate and copy contents of the file just generated

1. Note the file name you created.
2. Keeping within the *Generate CSV File with Message Records* window, click on browse again.

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- a. You should still be within the directory where you created the file
- b. Scroll till you find the filename you entered
- c. Right-click on the file
 - i. Within the pop-up menu select *Open with \ notepad*.
 - ii. Click Cancel on the File Explorer window labeled “CSV file for messages”.
3. Within the *Notepad* window
 - a. Without any line wrapping, you should have 7 lines of data.
 - i. Validate the first line has Time, From, To, and Subject
 1. If you have too few or too many fields, you will need to regenerate the tab-delimited file ensuring you extract just the *Time, From, To, and Subject* columns from the Inbox and Sent folder records.
 - ii. The first line is a header and should not be copied
 - iii. The second, fourth, and sixth lines should be your three sent messages residing within your Sent Folder
 - iv. The third, fifth, and seventh lines should be your three received messages from the Winlink Test Reflector residing in your Inbox.
 - v. If any of these six messages are missing you most likely have the incorrect times for selecting the records and will need to return to the instructions with the box **Generate the tab delimited file** and restart with the generation of the file.
 - vi. Editing the message is not recommended. If edits are performed make sure you do not remove tabs or change other formatting.
 - b. Set your cursor at the beginning of line two (the first line starting with 2024), hold down the shift key, and press the down arrow until your cursor is below the last data record.
 - c. Right-click on the selected text and click on the menu item *Copy* (or press Ctrl-C)
 - d. You should now have the line items copied to your PC's Clipboard buffer.
 - e. Click Exit in the Generate CSV File Window and Exit in the Generate Form 309 Communications Log window
 - f. If you are immediately going to the next Section, you may close the *Notepad* window.

Section 5. Open a New Winlink Form ICS 309 Communications Log HTML Document

1. From within the Winlink Express Main Window, click on *Message \ New Message... .*
2. Within the *Enter a new message* window click on the menu item *Select Template* to open the Template Manager.
3. Expand *Standard Templates*
4. Expand *ICS USA Forms*
5. Select the *ICS309 Communications Log.txt* and then click on the menu item *Select*. Alternatively, double-click on the *ICS309 Communications Log.txt* entry.

Section 6. Populate the COMMUNICATIONS LOG (Form- 309)

1. To Paste and Parse Clipboard contents into the Form 309 line items:
 - a. Click on the blue link and Paste Data from a Spreadsheet
 - b. Ensure your cursor is within the "Paste spreadsheet data here" box.
 - c. Right-click the mouse and select Paste (or press Ctrl-V)
 - d. Click on the Parse Data button
 - e. Click OK on the "This page says Data has been parsed" Pop Up.
 - f. Editing line item text is not recommended. If you do, make sure the formatting is consistent for all the line items.
 - g. If no data is pasted, recopy the information in notepad as specified in Section 4, Items 3 b & c.
2. Click the Setup button and enter **EmComm Training Organization** (just the three words, no punctuation or other adornments.)
3. The field labeled *Task #* is limited to 7 characters, use the text: **240321**
4. Click on the *Date/Time Prepared* field and use the date time value provided if it is within the exercise submission window. Otherwise, edit it so that it is within the exercise submission window, but keeping the format the same (yyyy-mm-dd hh:mm).
5. The field labeled *Operational Period #* is limited to 15 characters, use the text: **03/19-03/22**
6. The field labeled *Task Name* is limited to 50 characters, use the text: **ICS 309 Form Via Winlink Express Generated CSV**
7. The field labeled *Operator Name* is limited to 35 characters, use just your first name.
8. The field labeled *Station ID* is limited to 13 characters, enter your call sign.
9. The field labeled *Express Sender* is read-only and populated with the Call Sign of the Winlink Express set-up call sign.
10. The field labeled *PAGE #* is limited to 3 characters and defaults to 1. Leave it at the default value.

Section 8. Submitting the form

1. **Optional:** Click on the *Save Form 309* button and follow the prompts.
2. Click on the Submit button.
3. Click **OK** on the form submission pop-up dialog box to close it.
4. Close the browser if no other tabs are in use.
5. If you haven't closed the *Notepad* Window, close it now.

Section 9. Sending the message

1. Enter your ETO Clearinghouse address in the *To:* line.
2. Enter ETO-BK in the *CC:* line (required).
3. **Optional:** Enter your internet email address in the *CC:* line.
4. Click on *Post to Outbox* on the menu bar.

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5. Check the Outbox folder to verify your message is in the Outbox.
6. Select your session type from the drop-down list to the right of the *Open Session* button.
7. Click the *Open Session* button.
8. The Open Session Window will open.
9. If applicable, pick an appropriate *Channel Selection*.
10. Click Start to send your message.
11. Close the Session window.
12. Close the Winlink Express window.

Section 10. Feedback checks

1. Task Name is correct.
2. Operator Name, Station ID are provided.
3. The three **sent** simulated traffic messages should have the subject as specified.
4. There should be three simulated traffic messages sent. Each addressed to **TEST**.
5. There should be three **received** simulated traffic messages, each from **SERVICE**.
6. Dates should be in **yyyy-mm-dd** format and the values should be within the exercise submission window.
7. Only Page 1 of the form.
8. Message line items are in Ascending Chronological order (latest entries last).
9. The form Setup feature has been performed to include **EmComm Training Organization** in the Form Title block.
10. The To: field is assigned to a valid ETO Clearinghouse and ETO-BK is included in either the To: or CC: field.

End of Exercise Instructions

Note: Current plans for the May Semi-Annual Drill will expect you to log your traffic using FORM 309. You may want to file this exercise for future reference.

