

Populating the Detail of an ICS-309 (Communications Log) Via a Tab-Delimited Text File

Exercise Message Submission Window

September 16 00:00 UTC – September 19 15:00 UTC

Difficulty Level: **Intermediate**

Purpose: Understand and use the *Paste Data from a Spreadsheet* within the Winlink Express Communications Log (Form 309) that allows for efficient and accurate entry.

Objectives:

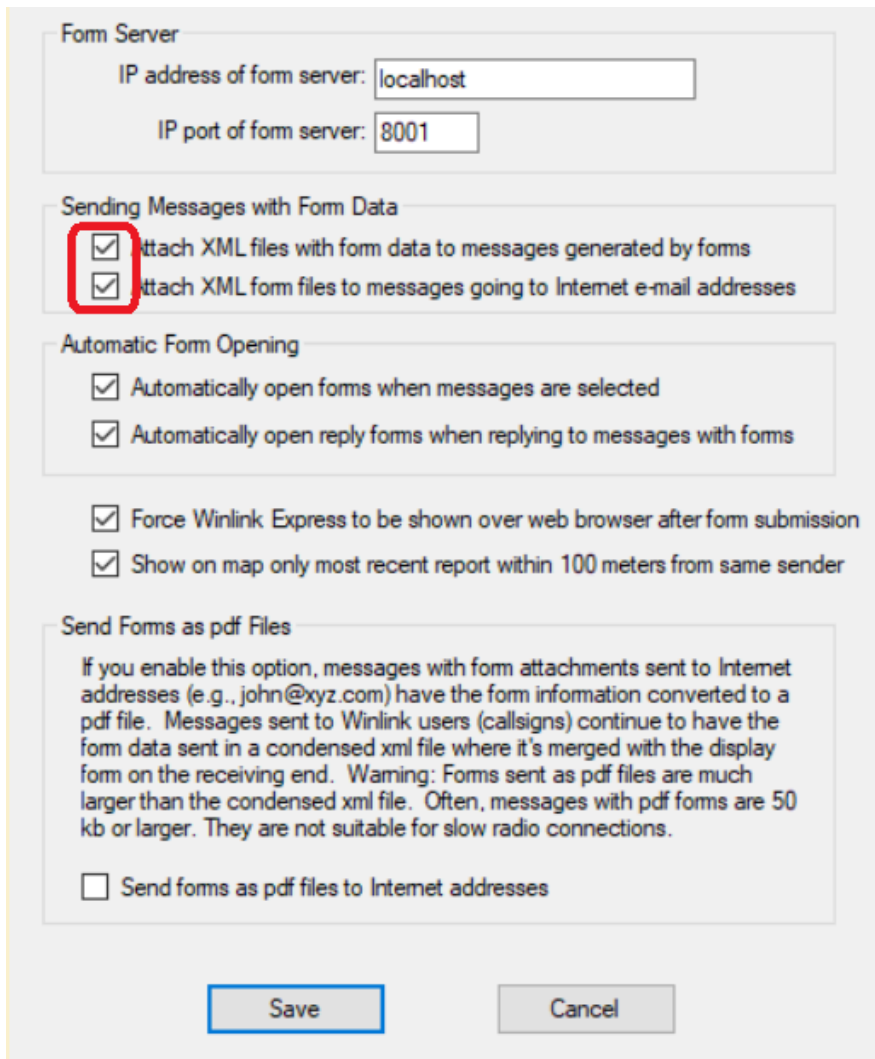
- Use Winlink Express to create and send an ICS-309 form.
- Populate an ICS-309 detail from a provided Tab-delimited Text file that can be generated from Winlink Express System and Personal Folder line item content.

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, and click on GIS Mapping Forms & Catalog Items.

Special Configurations:

- Recent configurations of Winlink have provided options on whether transmission of Form Data XML files for the current form are transmitted with each document. If not transmitted, the HTML form will not display. The ETO Feedback process uses this form data XML to parse the data in the exercise, so it should be provided. Ensure that the Form Data settings are as configured for ETO Exercises submissions.
- This dialog can be found under **Settings** ⇒ **Form Settings...**



The image shows the 'Form Settings' dialog box in Winlink. It has several sections: 'Form Server' with fields for IP address (localhost) and IP port (8001); 'Sending Messages with Form Data' with two checked checkboxes: 'Attach XML files with form data to messages generated by forms' and 'Attach XML form files to messages going to Internet e-mail addresses'; 'Automatic Form Opening' with two checked checkboxes: 'Automatically open forms when messages are selected' and 'Automatically open reply forms when replying to messages with forms'; a section with two checked checkboxes: 'Force Winlink Express to be shown over web browser after form submission' and 'Show on map only most recent report within 100 meters from same sender'; and 'Send Forms as pdf Files' with a warning text and an unchecked checkbox 'Send forms as pdf files to Internet addresses'. At the bottom are 'Save' and 'Cancel' buttons.

Form Server

IP address of form server: localhost

IP port of form server: 8001

Sending Messages with Form Data

☒ Attach XML files with form data to messages generated by forms

☒ Attach XML form files to messages going to Internet e-mail addresses

Automatic Form Opening

☒ Automatically open forms when messages are selected

☒ Automatically open reply forms when replying to messages with forms

☒ Force Winlink Express to be shown over web browser after form submission

☒ Show on map only most recent report within 100 meters from same sender

Send Forms as pdf Files

If you enable this option, messages with form attachments sent to Internet addresses (e.g., john@xyz.com) have the form information converted to a pdf file. Messages sent to Winlink users (callsigns) continue to have the form data sent in a condensed xml file where it's merged with the display form on the receiving end. Warning: Forms sent as pdf files are much larger than the condensed xml file. Often, messages with pdf forms are 50 kb or larger. They are not suitable for slow radio connections.

☐ Send forms as pdf files to Internet addresses

Save Cancel

Narrative:

You are serving as a radio operator assigned to the Supply Unit within the Logistics Section of an incident response. Throughout your shift, your station has been handling incoming and outgoing traffic related to resource requests, deliveries, and coordination with field units.

Narrative continued...

As your shift nears completion, the Logistics Branch Headquarters has requested a completed ICS-309 Communications Log summarizing all message traffic handled by your station. However, due to a temporary reassignment, another operator, Taylor Lane - W0TLD, was responsible for receiving and transmitting the actual messages with the large animal shelter during your shift. Your ETO Clearinghouse will be the Winlink address for the Logistic Branch Headquarters.

As the current radio operator, you have been provided a tab-delimited file, which is an extract from the other operator's Inbox and Sent Items for W0TLD's shift. To avoid transcription errors and ensure consistency, you will use the **"Paste Data from a Spreadsheet"** function built into the Winlink Express ICS-309 HTML Form. This function allows data to be copied directly from a spreadsheet. Highlighting the full text and using the Copy context menu or Ctrl-C will provide a clipboard copy with the required tab-delimited format. Using Copy-Paste, provides an efficient and accurate entry for this exercise.

Note: In this exercise Narrative, the term "file" refers to a simulated artifact representing another operator's TX and RX messages. For training purposes, the actual data is provided as tab-delimited content within a web page. Only Copy-Paste should be used; no physical or downloadable file is supplied—the content itself is the operative artifact for analysis. See section heading "Tab-delimited Text for Copy-Paste into ICS-309" for this information.

Your Assignment:

- Open an ICS-309 and provide the header information that is contained in the following guided instruction set.
- Review the provided tab-delimited message records.
- Highlight the entire provided block of Tab-delimited text as is, then use the Copy function. To paste it into the form, be sure to use the "Paste Data from a Spreadsheet" link feature provided in the form—it ensures the data is entered correctly.
- Ensure the log includes all required fields: date/time, sender/receiver callsigns, and subject lines.
- Address the completed ICS-309 to your ETO Clearinghouse, which will represent the designated contact for the Logistics Branch Headquarters.
- This task must be completed within the exercise period defined in the heading of this document.

This exercise reinforces your ability to document communications accurately, even when you are not the transmitting operator. It also highlights the importance of

standardized logging, efficient digital workflows, and timely reporting in emergency communications by keeping your exercise within the exercise window.

Tab-delimited Text for Copy-Paste into ICS-309

Here is what the data appears like that needs to be loaded. Do not copy and paste from the following list. Its conversion from a word-processing document to a PDF has converted the tabs to spaces. Since many participants don't have spreadsheets, the text is provided on an ETO webpage noted within the detailed exercise instructions on the next page.

2025-09-15 09:42	KØXRD	WØTLD	ICS 213RR- Request for Animal Bedding: Wood Chips, Hay, Straw
2025-09-15 11:17	WØTLD	KØXRD	ICS-213: Received Bedding Request - Processing and Allocation Underway
2025-09-15 13:02	WØTLD	KØXRD	ICS 213RR- Bedding Delivery ETA: 3pm, Partial Fulfillment Confirmed
2025-09-15 15:45	KØXRD	WØTLD	ICS-213: Request for Veterinary Supplies - Basic Medications and Bandages
2025-09-15 17:08	WØTLD	KØXRD	ICS-213: Vet Supply Request Received - Inventory Check in Progress
2025-09-15 19:36	WØTLD	KØXRD	ICS-213: Veterinary Supplies Delivery ETA: 8pm - Full Fulfillment Confirmed

Note that there are 4 columns.

- The first column is the date and time the message was created by the sender.
 - The second column is the call sign of the sender.
 - The third column is the call sign of the recipient.
 - The fourth column is the subject line of the message.
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- ❖ This content was created by selecting the **Generate Form 309 Communications Log** menu item under the Winlink Express main window Message Menu item.
 - ❖ From within the **Generate Form 309 Communications Log as a pdf File** dialog.
 - ❖ Within the **Select Message Mailboxes** group, both the Inbox and the Sent items were selected.
 - ❖ The **Message Date Range** was set to the operational period the ICS-309 covers.
 - ❖ Under **Page Layout Options**, the **Combine recipients into a single entry** option was selected.
 - ❖ The **Generate CSV file** button was clicked.
 - ❖ This presents the **Generate CSV File with Message Records** dialog window.
 - Within the **Select Columns to include**, **Time**, **From**, **To**, and **Subject** items were selected.
 - **IMPORTANT:** Within the **Column Delimiter** group, **Tab** was selected.
 - A **CSV Output File** was provided, and the Generate CSV File button was clicked.

The text to copy and paste into the document will be on the ETO website within a code block that will ensure formatting codes are maintained. This code block should be presented by the link you used to download the exercise PDF.

Exercise Guided Instructions:

Tab-Delimited Data Code Block Location

1. In a browser, open the following web site:
 - https://emcomm-training.org/9-18-25_Files/Instructions_9-18-25.html
2. The browser tab for this web page is labeled **ICS-309 TDF**. The web page content is titled **2025-09-18 Exercise: ICS-309 Tab-delimited Text**.
3. Clicking the **Copy** button will place the tab-delimited text in your computer's clipboard.

Open and select the form.

1. Open or restart the Winlink Express application.
 - Launch the Winlink Express application from your desktop or Start menu.
 - Allow any updates to occur if prompted to do so.
2. Verify Your Position Settings
 - Go to **Settings > GPS/Position Report > Position Report**.
Ensure your location is correctly set so it appears on the map.
*If you're unsure how to set your position, refer to the instructions under **Resources** on Page 2.*
3. Create a New Message:
Click **Message > New Message** from the top menu bar.
4. Confirm Sender Information
 - Check that the **From:** field shows your correct callsign.
 - Ensure **Send As** is set to **Winlink Message**.
5. Open the Template Manager window.
 - Click **Select Template**, then double-click the **Standard Forms**, or click on the plus sign to expand.
6. Navigate to ICS Forms
 - Scroll down and expand **ICS USA Forms**.
7. Open the ICS 309 Template
 - Find and select **ICS309 Communications Log.txt**.

- The form titled **COMMUNICATIONS LOG (Form- 309)** will open in your default web browser.
 - i. If this is the same browser that was used to display the tab-delimited data from which to copy and paste, the message will be created in a new browser tab.

Populate the Communications Log Header

1. Click the Setup button and enter **EmComm Training Organization**
2. Set the **Task #** field to **091801**.
3. For the **Date/Time Prepared** field, click within the text box and add the date and time. You may edit it, but keep it in the provided format. (YYYY-MM-DD HH:mm).
4. For the **Operational Period #**, set the text box contents to **20250918**.
5. For the **Task Name**, set the text box contents to **ETO 09/18/2025 ICS-309 Exercise**.
6. Another person was the operator, you are just reporting. So set the contents of the text box for the **Operator Name** to **Taylor Lane** as described in the narrative.
7. While Taylor Lane was the operator, the Station ID was **W0LTD**.
8. You are the operator for sending the ICS-309, so use YOUR CALL SIGN for the **Express Sender** field, which should already be set.
9. There are only 6 records in the provided messages so only 1 page at most. So leave the **PAGE #** field to its default of 1.

Populate the Communications Log Detail

1. Click on the blue link **Paste Data from a Spreadsheet**.
2. Copy the Tab-delimited data provided:
 - a. In the browser you earlier had opened the tab-delimited data; the browser tab should be labeled **ICS-309 TDF**.
 - b. If you have not yet opened the supplied data in a browser, the link to this page is the following:
 - i. https://emcomm-training.org/9-18-25_Files/Instructions_9-18-25.html
 - c. Click on the copy button to get data into your clipboard.
 - i. If you just copy the data by highlighting, make sure you get all 6 rows.

3. Switch back to the browser tab labeled Form 309 Communications Log to paste the content into the box provided in the pop-up window. If the pop-up box is no longer present, click on the blue “Paste Data from a Spreadsheet” link to reopen it.
4. Click on **Parse Data**.
 - a. This will provide an alert stating the data has been parsed.
 - b. Click on **Ok**.
5. Count the rows inserted; there should be 6.
6. If you make a mistake, click on **CLEAR Data**, this will clear the detail contents, and you can then recopy the data and paste the corrected data again.

Optional: Save Form 309 Data

Click on **Save Form 309 Data** if you would like to work with this form and data set again.

Submitting the form

1. Click on Submit.
2. Click on OK in the popup message and close the browser tab that is labeled **localhost:8003**. You may also close the browser tab labeled **ICS-309 TDF**.
3. Verify that the **Send as:** is set to **Winlink Message**.
4. On the To line, enter your **ETO Clearinghouse**.
5. On the CC line, enter “**ETO-BK**”.
6. **Optional:** Enter your internet email address in the CC: line.
7. Click on *Post to Outbox* on the menu bar.
8. Select your session type from the drop-down list to the right of the *Open Session* button.
9. Select your gateway if using a radio mode and click **Start** to send the message.

End of Exercise Instructions

An example of a completed view of *Form ICS-309* is available on the next page.

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