

Tactical Addressing Exercise

Exercise Message Submission Window

- August **15 00:00 UTC** - **August 21 08:00 UTC**

Difficulty Level: **Intermediate**

Purpose: Learn how to create a Tactical Address in your Winlink Express installation, and send messages from it.

Objectives:

- Create a Tactical Address in Winlink Express
- Using Winlink Express, send a message from an associated Tactical Address account.
- Create a Personal Exercise Folder to save operational traffic in.

Resources:

- Creating a Tactical Address: https://winlink.org/content/tactical_addresses
- 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, ⇒ GIS Mapping Forms & Catalog Items

Preparation:

Learn the difference between a [Tactical Address](#) and a Callsign or Auxiliary Callsign. Don't worry about Acceptance Lists or rejecting addresses; that is an advanced level topic. Note that the Help file description in the Winlink Express program is out-of-date.

Scenario

Two days ago “Anytown” was struck by an F3 Tornado that caused major destruction in approximately 25% of the residential area of the town. Fortunately, the new Administration Building (EOC in the basement) suffered minor wind damage and is functional. The new community recreational center is unscathed and is functioning as the Reception Center. However, a major casualty is the building housing the telephone “central office” switch and the commercial tower supporting microwave and Internet connectivity is damaged. While critical emergency service access to the NG911 phone network is protected, public access is severely limited. There are regional HF gateways available and packet/Vara FM gateways are available 6 miles away in the next city.

You have been selected to deploy to the Reception Center based on your Go-Kit capabilities. Your *task* is to maintain communications between the Reception Centre and the EOC. You are also tasked with passing welfare messages as feasible.

Use your personal callsign for this exercise. The EOC voice tactical callsign is “Anytown EOC”. The Reception Centre voice tactical callsign is “RecCen”.

Exercise Artificiality: In order to facilitate the ETO assessment process that generates the exercise feedback to you, you are asked to add your callsign as the second part of the Tactical Address that you are creating. After you receive the feedback message it is recommended that you REMOVE this Tactical Address from your Winlink Express setup. It will disappear after 90-days in any event unless it is used.

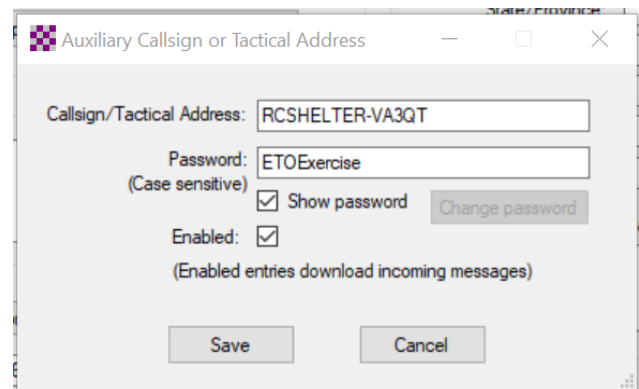
Continue to the next page for the instructions.

Exercise Instructions:

Creating a Tactical Address.

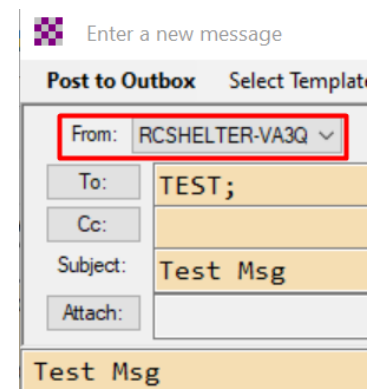
1. Open or restart the Winlink Express (WE) application.
2. Allow any updates to occur if prompted to do so.
3. Confirm that your personal callsign account is entered and functional.
4. Create a Tactical Address for the Recreation Center shelter station. For detailed guidance on Tactical Addresses go to the Express Help file and search for “***Auxiliary callsigns and Tactical Addresses***”:

- Open: Settings > Winlink Express Setup > Add Entry > Enter Tactical Address “RCSHELTER-your callsign”
- Choose and enter a Password
- Confirm the address is *Enabled*
- Click “Save”
- Click “Update”. You should receive an acknowledgement from the CMS that the address has been added



Teaching Point: in the ‘real world’ you would likely use a selected Password assigned to the location by the Com(L) or ACS/ARES Coordinator and all subsequent operators at that location must use the same Tactical Address/ Password combination.

5. Validate the Tactical Address:
 - Open a New Message
 - In the From: box, Click on the down arrow (v) and select the RCSHELTER-Your Callsign Tactical Address
 - Address the message to “TEST” (Winlink test message reflector)
 - Add a subject and main body text of your choosing



- Using the WE Session of your choice, send/transmit the message
 - Wait a few minutes for the CMS to validate the Tactical Address then query the CMS again; you should receive a message “From: Service, To: RCSHELTER-*Your Callsign* with a copy of your original message in the text (Remember, the traffic is traveling over-air using your Callsign or Auxiliary Callsign but the “TEST” response is to the Tactical Address you created)
6. Recommended practice: On the left side of your WE window, Right Click on the grey box titled “Personal Folders”. In the new sub-menu type in “ETO Aug 20” and click “Update”. Note the new sub folder with (0) messages.

Open a New Message

1. Create a New Message
2. At the top-left of the message form, click on the down arrow (v) in the grey “From:” box and change from your Callsign to the Tactical Address “RCSHELTER-*Your Callsign*”
3. Select a Winlink Check-In Template
4. Click Setup and type in “ANYTOWN RECREATION CENTER” to identify your exercise location. Always good practice as it assists the EOC staff locating a message when they have to refer to it.

Fill out the STATION section

1. Insert the following Exercise ID: “OP TORNADO”
2. Click on Date/Time and accept the proposed time
3. In the To: box, Insert the Tactical Address “ANYTOWNEOC”
4. In the From: box, Insert the Tactical Address “RCSHELTER-*Your Callsign*”
5. In the Station Contact Name: box, Insert your First Name and Callsign
6. In the Initial Operator(s): box, insert your Name and Callsign

Fill out the SESSION section

1. Ensure that the EXERCISE radio button is selected
2. Select the Service, Band and Session radio buttons as applicable to your operating situation

Fill out the LOCATION section

1. You are located in the Recreation Center, 200 Main Street, Anytown

Teaching Point: If as implied in the Resources section above you have entered your current position in the Setup > GPS/Position Report menu (or have a GPS connected), this position will automatically appear in the Latitude/Longitude entry.

Alternatively, if you do not want to change the Position Report settings on someone else's computer, you can insert a position directly into the Check-in form. In this situation consider using a mobile phone GPS application to get an accurate position.

Position Report
Your last position report was posted at 2025/12/18 01:49:02 UTC

Report Date/Time: 2026/05/02 18:28:28 UTC

(Latitude/longitude may be entered as DD.DDDD, or DD-MM.MMx, or DD-MM-SSx)

Latitude: 44-21.52N Longitude: 079-41.31W

Speed: 0.0 Knots Course: 0 True

MGRS coordinates: 17TPK0451312546

Comment - 148 Characters Maximum: ETO Winlink Thursday Exercise 1/15/2026 WFD2026 Participation: No

2. Verify the shown position coordinates are accurate or insert your current position

Fill out the COMMENT section

1. Enter: "Request relief in four hours"

Submitting the form

1. **Optional:** Click on the “Save Check-in Data” button and follow prompts.
2. Click on the Submit button.
3. Correct any intermediate pop-up(s) produced by WE
4. Click “Submit” to transfer the Form to the open WE Message
5. Close the browser window

Sending the message

1. Exercise artificiality: Once you have submitted the Form, the “ANYTOWNEOC” Tactical Address should appear as the “To:” line. **Delete this**, and substitute your ETO Clearinghouse address. Add “ETO-BK” in the CC: line
2. Optional: Enter “Test” in the CC: line to receive a message confirmation from the CMS server. Enter your internet email address in the CC: line to receive an alternative copy
3. Click on “*Post to Outbox*” on the menu bar
4. Check the Outbox folder to verify that your message is in the Outbox.
5. Select your session type from the drop-down list to the right of the “*Open Session*” button
6. Click the *Open Session* button of choice
7. If applicable, pick an appropriate *Channel Selection*
8. Click Start to send your message
9. Close the Session window. This should return you to the main WE page

Teaching Point

Collating and preparing message traffic for submission to the “Document Cell” at the end of an operational deployment or exercise is a vital step. Underlying this is the preservation of evidence for any inquiry that may be convened, particularly at higher levels of government, to assess lessons learned, determine mitigation steps, and how future responses can be improved. A single operator On Station for one operational period is a relatively simple process. However, in an EOC environment with several operators and loggers routinely relieving each other over an operational period a standardized procedure is recommended.

Moving a Message to a Temporary Folder

1. Reminder: At Step 6 in Creating your Tactical Address above (bottom of page 4) you created a Personal Folder called “ETO Aug 20”
2. At the top-centre of the main WE page click on the down arrow (v) in the right of the “Move To” box. Click on “ETO Aug 20” and it will now appear highlighted in the Move To: box
3. Now click on the “Sent Items” System Folder and Right Click on the message you just transmitted
4. Click on the “Move to Folder Selected Above” option
5. Confirm that the Personal Folder ETO Aug 20 count (in brackets) has incremented by one, the message has disappeared from the Sent Items Folder

Follow the same procedure with received messages. Depending on served client or local ACS/ARES policy, any personal traffic using your callsign account unrelated to the operation/exercise can be left in the System Folders

End of Exercise Instructions

Example of Completed Winlink Check-in Form Using Tactical Addresses

Winlink Check-in ANYTOWN RECREATION CENTER				
Setup Click to add your agency/group name to title		Load Check-in Data		Form Info
Optional Incident/Exercise ID: OP TORNADO				
1. STATION				
a. Date/Time: 2026-06-29 15:50:18				
b. To: ANYTOWNEOC			Clear ALL "Send To" Entries.	
c. From: RCSHELTER-VA3QT		d. Station Contact Name: Ian VA3QT		e. Initial Operator(s): VA3QT
2. SESSION				
a. Type: ☒ EXERCISE ☐ REAL EVENT b. Service: ☒ AMATEUR ☐ SHARES c. Band: ☐ NA ☒ Telnet ☐ HF ☐ VHF ☐ UHF ☐ SHF				
d. Session: ☐ Telnet ☐ Packet ☒ Pactor ☐ Robust Packet ☐ Ardop ☐ VARA HF ☐ VARA FM ☐ Iridium Go ☐ Mesh				
3. LOCATION				
a. Location: Recreation Center, 200 Main Street, Anytown				
b. LATITUDE: 44.358667		c. LONGITUDE: -79.688500		d. MGRS: 17TPK0451312546
e. GRID SQUARE: FN04di				
LAT/LON and MGRS default to the center of the grid square listed in Express Settings, unless a GPS is used or Lat/LON or MGRS must be entered manually. Without properly formatted GPS coordinates this form cannot be mapped in Winlink Express.				
4. COMMENTS: Max Characters 500				
Request relief in four hours				
Submit Save Check-in Data Reset Form				
Ver 5.1.3				