



Field Day Message / Message Handling – 300 Points There for the Taking –

Each year, hundreds of Field Day operations try and find every advantage to earn as many points as possible. But many overlook bonus point categories that can add a reliable 300 points to your group score: the group participation message to the ARRL Section Manager, the W1AW Field Day bulletin, and the message handling bonus.

Each Field Day group should generate a formal message to their ARRL Section Manager or Section Emergency Coordinator. This message should include the group's name, their location for Field Day, and the number of ARES members participating in the event. Most Section Managers make special provisions to have these messages handled during the regularly scheduled section traffic or ARES nets. Since it may mean that your group may have to take one of your stations away from operating normal Field Day contacts, your group is awarded the 100-point bonus for taking the time to pass this message. To claim this bonus, you must submit a copy of the formal message with your Field Day entry. **Note: The Section Manager message does not count as one of the 10 messages for bonus points.**

During a real emergency, there are often special bulletins transmitted by W1AW that will provide updates and important information. During Field Day, an official Field Day message is transmitted from W1AW twelve times on various bands and modes (Phone, CW, RTTY, and PSK31). The schedule of times for these bulletins is found in this packet with the list of rules. The W1AW frequencies are found each month in *QST*. The special Field Day bulletin is only available on-the-air during the Field Day period (it is not sent via the internet). **Your group will earn a 100-point bonus for including a copy of the W1AW bulletin with its Field Day submission. Also, stations will once again have the chance to copy the bulletin when K6KPH transmits the bulletins. Their schedule is also included in this packet.**

The formal message-handling bonus is an excellent method of demonstrating Amateur Radio's formal communication ability. **All you have to do is have your Field Day team handle 10 formal messages during the Field Day period. This involves 10 messages other than the Section Manager message noted above.**

Your group will earn its 100-bonus points by Originating, Relaying or Delivering ten different messages during the Field Day period (ten points per message, up to ten messages handled). These messages must be handled during the Field Day period. You may pass them on local, state or regional HF or VHF traffic nets, via the packet network, when in contact with other amateurs willing to assist you in handling the traffic, or with point-to-point communications. All messages must enter or leave the Field Day operation over Amateur Radio RF in order to qualify. Messages claimed under this bonus must be in either standard NTS or ICS-213 format (or have the equivalent content).

Many local groups assign one of their HF stations to check-in to the state or local traffic or emergency net at the appropriate time during the Field Day period, as that provides a central clearing house for routing messages, just as would occur during an actual emergency.

The messages generated during the Field Day for bonus credit do not have to be addressed to a state or local official (though in doing so you may help them become more aware of our message-handling network). Some groups will address formal traffic to other clubs or have visitors prepare messages to their friends and families.

You say you have never handled formal traffic before? Ask around your club. We bet it won't take too long to locate a member with traffic handling experience. Or contact Steve Ewald, WV1X, Field Organization Specialist at the ARRL at wv1x@arrl.org if you need specific questions answered.

The Amateur Radio messaging capability – through ARES or the NTS – can play a big role during an actual emergency. Use this bonus to help your club achieve additional points for the Field Day efforts as well as to hone your skills for this key part of emergency communications.