

## Winlink Proficiency Goals For Radio Operators Supporting American Red Cross<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

#### Overview

During disasters, man-made or natural, the normal communications infrastructure can often be disrupted. Red Cross Radio Operators may be called upon to provide emergency communications support through the use of voice and/or digital radio communications.

As such we need to build skills and knowledge among our operators allowing for clear, effective communication.

This document identifies core skill goals for Winlink digital messaging in support of the American Red Cross, divided into **Basic**, **Independent** and **Advanced** levels.

Operator Skill Levels	
<b>Basic</b>	Communicator has the basic skills which meet the knowledge and performance skill goals.
<b>Independent</b>	Communicator has intermediate knowledge and skill and is capable of independent operation, without coaching or assistance, in the qualified skill goal area.
<b>Advanced</b>	Communicator has more advanced knowledge and skill and is considered a subject matter expert. May act as a communications lead and/or mentor. Capable of more difficult assignments, requiring more equipment and more complicated configurations, operations and troubleshooting. Is able to deploy and operate for an extended duration.

#### Abbreviations, Acronyms and Terms

General Abbreviations and Terms	
<b>ARC</b>	American Red Cross
<b>ARDOP</b>	Amateur Radio Digital Open Protocol
<b>ARES</b>	ARRL Amateur Radio Emergency Service
<b>EMCOMM</b>	Emergency Communication
<b>FLMSG</b>	Fast Light Message
<b>NBEMS</b>	Narrow Band Emergency Messaging Software
<b>P2P</b>	Peer-to-Peer
<b>RMS</b>	Winlink Radio Mail Server
<b>SDA</b>	San Diego ARES
<b>WL2K BOK</b>	Winlink Book of Knowledge
<b>WL2K HELP</b>	Winlink Express application's integrated Help documentation

---

<sup>1</sup> Prepared Sept 2020 by the Red Cross EmComm Steering Committee for the Fall 2020 Drill

Release Information

Change Control		
Revision	Date	Comment
1.0	9/24/20	Initial Release
1.1	9/25/20	VARA or PACTOR radio-only mode

## Basic Operator Skills – Winlink

### Overview

This is a basic skills / competency level for those new to Winlink and/or Technician license level operators. The Basic Operator is minimally expected to:

- Demonstrate ability to install, configure and operate Winlink using Telnet and packet session modes.
- Successfully create Personal Folders and organize (move) received messages into folders.
- Update the packet channel selection list.
- Create, receive and reply to Winlink ARC standard template-based messages (e.g., ARC ICS 213).
- Create an ARC template-based message, save message text and reload text for later reuse in a second message.
- Show competency in connecting to an RMS gateway both direct and via digipeaters.
- Send and receive a Winlink message using a packet peer-to-peer session.

### Related Publications and Videos

- A. SD ARES WL2K San Diego ARES Winlink YouTube Series  
<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL-7mirT-kjfs84FQzLr-qv066K194rtYM>  
(While dated process is relevant for today's Winlink Express P2P operation)
- B. Winlink BOK (Winlink *Book of Knowledge*)  
[https://winlink.org/content/winlink\\_book\\_knowledge](https://winlink.org/content/winlink_book_knowledge)
- C. Winlink Express Application integrated Help documentation
- D. Winlink for EMCOMM - John Davis, WB4QDX  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3gdwsV9\\_ca0&feature=youtu.b](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3gdwsV9_ca0&feature=youtu.b)

### Suggested Training

YouTube videos are available covering numerous aspects of Winlink usage. The below list is recommended for the Basic Operator. It is also advised that those new to Winlink seek an Elmer, a mentor, to provide local assistance.

The American Radio Safety Foundation's *Winlink Book of Knowledge* (BOK) is an excellent source of information on Winlink (winlink.org). Those new to Winlink Express are encouraged to tour through the BOK, in particular pay attention to the information topics in the "How-To Recipes" section. For example, if you are a Signalink user there is guidance on setting Signalink sound levels.

After installing the Winlink Express application you will find the built-in HELP documentation an excellent reference source.

Source	Video or Reference Material – Basic Operator
WB4QDX	Winlink for EMCOMM - an overview by John Davis - YouTube
SDA	0.0a How to download and install Winlink Express - YouTube
WL2K HELP	Basic Configuration topic - Winlink HELP
WL2K HELP	Composing a Message topic – Winlink Help
SDA	0.0b How to test your Winlink email account - YouTube
SDA	0.1 How to create a personal folder in Winlink Express - YouTube
WL2K HELP	Personal Message Folders topic - Winlink HELP
SDA	0.5 How to set always request a read receipt - YouTube
WL2K HELP	Message Acknowledgments topic - Winlink Help
SDA	0.7 How to update VHF and HF channel selection tables - YouTube
WL2K HELP	Updating Channel Data topic - Winlink HELP
SDA	0.8 How to create, save, and resume Form ICS-214A entries - YouTube
SDA	3. How to send an ICS Form 213 using Winlink Express software (Note process similar to using ARC ICS 213 template)
WL2K HELP	Making a Packet Connection to a Winlink RMS Packet Server topic – Winlink Help
SDA	11. How to send a Winlink Catalog Request to find your Winlink neighbors
SDA	15. How to generate an ICS Form 309 Comm Log automatically using Winlink Express software
WL2K HELP	ICS 309 Communications Log Generation topic - Winlink HELP