SitRepNet CommPlan

Preparation and Operation

Overview

The SitRepNet Communications Plan (CommPlan) provides the tools and structure for a resilient, decentralized way to share Situation Reports (SitReps), arrange impromptu nets to address specific events, and collect and distribute information. The SitRepNet project is designed to allow individual stations to more effectively communicate without the command structure of an organization or conventional net. Decisions are made by "boots on the ground" rather than those in another part of the country. There are no failure points from a command structure whose removal could collapse the system. It is a *network*, but not a *net*. Nets are important, and they serve a different function than SitRepNet. SitRepNet is designed to work alongside established organized nets (such as AmRRON, MAGNET, SEEN, ERIN, PrepperNet, etc.), in addition to the Bulletin Distribution Net (BDN), to share information that FLDIGI nets cannot efficiently do while maintaining their core objectives.

Core principles of SitRepNet:

- SitRepNet is completely open. There are no "secrets - just in case". There is no "membership" in a group, no cost, no fees, and no records. All plans and resources are available to anyone by going to https://sitrepnet.com/.
- SitRepNet is decentralized and resilient. There is no "command structure". It is designed to be used by any licensed ham radio operator, and it depends on individual ham operators taking the initiative and doing what needs to be done.
- SitRepNet is not affiliated with any other group or organization. At the same time, SitRepNet encourages participation in established nets. Those established nets serve vital functions that SitRepNet cannot provide.
- Simplicity is how an effective network can be built without a central command structure. It depends on individual radio operators combining their own initiative with the basic SitRepNet plan and making it all work together.

There are three basic "layers" of the SitRepNet plan:

1. JS8Call and JS8Spotter - MCForm reports are used to share SitReps and other information, either actively by initiating the transmission, or passively by having those reports available for others to download. This is the primary layer of SitRepNet.
2. FLDIGI modes - These are used to pass traffic with more detail than JS8 can efficiently handle, using the Bulletin Distribution Net (BDN), impromptu nets, and scheduled traffic handling nets.
3. Local modes. This is the collection and distribution of information to local areas by any means available, including VHF/UHF, CB, FRS, GMRS, and just observing and talking with your neighbors.

This CommPlan consists of four parts:

- Preparation – The basic set up needed for SitRepNet to function effectively
- Operation – Plans, procedures, and resources to be used when SitRepNet is operating
- Reporting and Bulletin Distribution – Compiling MCForms from multiple stations for a "big picture" view
- Appendix – Additional PDF docs with Quick Reference Guides, reference materials, and information that is likely to be regularly updated, such as available report files, etc.

For more information, visit https://sitrepnet.com/ or contact Stephen Clay McGehee, KN4AM.

Preparation

➤ Links for software and detailed information available here: https://sitrepnet.com/index.php/resources/

Software and Skills Needed

SitRepNet is based on JS8Call and JS8Spotter, so both of these programs are required to have an active role in this. Both programs can run under Windows, Mac, Linux, and Raspberry-Pi. In addition, FLDIGI is used for passing traffic that JS8 cannot efficiently handle. Refer to the *JS8 Quick Reference* (see Appendix) and know how to relay, store, and retrieve messages, query for messages, remote storage, and third-party operations – vital skills in a compromised environment.

Know your 6-character Maidenhead Grid Location

Information without location is often of little use.
In JS8Call, enter this in General>Station>Station Details.
In JS8Spotter, enter this in File>Settings.
Have a Maidenhead Grid map printed and available (included in the SitRepNet CommPlan Combined Package).

➤➤➤ Add @SITREP to your Group Callsigns

Include this in addition to any nets or groups you may follow or participate in. **This is the key to making the SitRepNet system work**. This is similar to @ALLCALL, but not used for general "CQ" or similar calls. @SITREP is essentially an independent, decentralized, unaffiliated group call. It is designed for emergency and grid-down comms, both for routine practice and for operations.

Frequency Selection

Set Waterfall to 2300
• Primary: 7.078 – JS8Call Primary Frequency
• Secondary: 7.107 – Used by the Bulletin Distribution Net, and @GHOSTNET (a decentralized network)

Set up your Expect System in JS8Spotter

This allows other stations to query your station and request reports that you have set up and allowed for downloading. It is important to use the "Expect" tags shown here so we are all using a "common language". Other tags can be added as needed. Following is a suggested setup, but modify and add to as needed:

Expect	Respond	Allowed	Max	(Notes)
CMDS	MCF STATUS COND NOTE	*,@SITREP	99	Expect system commands available
MCF	F!103 F!104 F!304	*,@SITREP	99	MCForms available
STATUS	6-char. grid location w/desc. or NTR	*,@SITREP	99	Brief status description
COND	G (or Y or R color code)	*,@SITREP	99	Subjective ranking of current status
NOTE	(Brief text note if appropriate)	*,@SITREP	99	Station operator discretion
F!104	(MCForm data)	*,@SITREP	99	@SITREP Basic Check-in
F!304	(MCForm data)	*,@SITREP	99	Individual Situation Report

`*,@SITREP` means that response is sent to any station addressing your call sign, or addressing @SITREP. Use a comma to separate items. You can add other groups, such as @GHOSTNET, by separating them with a comma.
`*` will reply to any individual call-sign

Download and add all MCForms to JS8Spotter

F!104 is the primary report form for SitRepNet, but <u>have all of them so you can read what others send</u> even if you don't normally send a more specialized form yourself (see JS8Spotter_MCFormsForSitRepNet.pdf for more information). New forms are being added, so keep your forms up to date. Download from https://sitrepnet.com or from https://kf7mix.com/

Set up a SitRepNet Profile

Items should include @SITREP, F!104, your call-sign, STATUS, plus any current issues you are tracking.
You may want to also include the call-signs of stations you regularly connect with, and other groups such as @GHOSTNET, @AMRRON, @MAGNET, etc.

Operation

A Brief Overview of SitRepNet and how it works

SitRepNet is a system for exchanging SitReps (Situation Reports) between stations. This is done in two ways:
❶ Reports are passively distributed by requests from other stations by using the @SITREP group callsign.
❷ Reports are actively distributed by using the “Send Now” function of the Expect System, addressed to @SITREP.

➤ SitRepNet fills a niche that conventional nets are not designed for and cannot efficiently handle.
➤ SitRepNet cannot efficiently do what conventional nets do.
➤ SitRepNet is designed to work WITH conventional nets where appropriate.
➤ SitRepNet can use F!106 to arrange impromptu nets using FLDIGI modes.

Once information has been received, there is still a need to share it. Established conventional HF nets, such as the Bulletin Distribution Net (BDN), and AmRRON, are designed for this, so they should be utilized where appropriate. If you aren’t already active with nets using FLDIGI modes, you should do so and become proficient at it. You should also look for ways to share that information with others in your local area by using whatever modes are available – VHF/UHF, CB, FRS, GMRS, and just talking to your neighbors. Those same modes, as well as local media, are also useful for collecting local information that you would then distribute using the SitRepNet system.

Routine Operations

❶ Monitor 7.078 using JS8Spotter as much as possible.
❷ Switch to 7.107 during the established GhostNet schedule if you are so inclined.
❸ Use the Expect System “Send Now” function to send F!104 to @SITREP at least once a day.
  • Remember to update it each time before sending so that it includes a current time/date code.
  • Check the “Send as MSG” box to see who is acknowledging reception.
  • In addition to F!104, use F!103 and/or F!304 if appropriate.
❹ Participate in FLDIGI-based nets if you are able to, and try to establish local comm links.
❺ Respond to F!107 – *Request for Information* when you are able to assist in that effort.

Emergency Operations

❶ Monitor 7.078 using JS8Spotter as much as possible.
❷ Switch to 7.107 during the established GhostNet schedule or as needed.
❸ Use the Expect System “Send Now” function to send F!104 to @SITREP *at least* once a day (preferably more).
  • Remember to update it each time before sending so that it includes a current time/date code.
  • You can also use the `Auto TX Schedule` function to send automatically at multiple times.
  • Add any “Other relevant current report(s)” to F!104, and confirm that they are included in your Expect system.
  • Check the “Send as MSG” box to see who is acknowledging reception (optional).
  • In addition to F!104, use F!304 as appropriate.
❹ Update any MCForms that apply to the current situation, and add them to your Expect System and the MCF item. MCForms that are not currently active should be set to “NTR” in the Expect system.
❺ Monitor and participate in the Bulletin Distribution Net, and other FLDIGI-based nets during their scheduled traffic-passing time. Return to the SitRepNet frequency when a net is concluded.
❻ If your local area is affected by a disaster, complete the applicable MCForms and add them to the “Other relevant current report(s)” field in F!104. Send those reports out as described in item ❸ (above). When and how often is a judgment call on your part.
❼ Use F!106 to schedule an impromptu net on FLDIGI if needed. Download and use the set of FLDIGI macros available on SitRepNet.com ➤ SitRepNet-macros.mdf or use your own.
❽ Respond to F!107 – *Request for Information* when you are able to assist in that effort.

Reporting and Bulletin Distribution

Brief Overview

By adding reporting and bulletin distribution to the SitRepNet system, we greatly increase the information sharing capability; more importantly, we greatly increase the usefulness of that information. Instead of just sharing information from one station to another station, this enables SitRepNet to request specific information, take in reports from many stations, compile that raw data into useful information, and then send it out in the form of a bulletin on the Bulletin Distribution Net (BDN) and other nets. This helps give us a “big picture” view of current events.

❶ The Initiating Station uses JS8Spotter to request specific information about a situation or event.
❷ Responding stations complete the appropriate MCForm(s) and send to @SITREP
❸ The raw data is compiled and formatted into a useful report.
❹ The prepared report is sent out as a signed FLAMP file, primarily using the Bulletin Distribution Net (BDN).

⚑ “Bulletin” and “Report” are used fairly interchangeably here, with “Report” generally being shorter in length and referring to the data being collected or the finished product, and “Bulletin” being more detailed or including multiple reports.

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Initiating Station

Requesting Information - The Initiating Station will use JS8Spotter and F!107 to request specific information. The F!107 report will be sent out several times over a 48 hour period to @SITREP on 7.078 and 7.107, as well as being available from @SITREP using the JS8Spotter Expect system by sending `@SITREP E? F!107`. The F!107 report includes a serial number and an expire date to aid in accuracy.

Responding Stations

Providing Information – Responding Stations that are able to provide the requested information take the following steps:

1. Complete the requested MCForm(s) and add to your Expect System with `*,@SITREP` in the `Allowed` field.
    1. In the Comments field, include the serial number shown on the F!107 *Request for Information*.
    2. Check the expire date on the F!107 to confirm it is a current request.
    3. Remove any reports from your Expect System that are replies to an expired information request.
2. Send the requested reports to @SITREP on 7.078 and 7.107 at intervals over a 48 hour period by manually sending, or by using Auto TX Schedule. Reports should be sent during prime propagation times for 40 meters.
3. **All SitRepNet Stations** - Relay F!107 to @SITREP to get it distributed as widely as possible. Check the Expire Date so you only relay current *Requests for Information*.

Collection / Distribution Station(s)

Collect, Compile, and Analyze – The Collection Station is normally the same as the Initiating Station. There may be other stations wishing to collect, compile, and analyze, and all are encouraged to do so. This is crowd-sourced intelligence gathering and analysis, so additional viewpoints may help provide a better picture of a situation.

1. Collection Stations should keep their station up as much as possible, especially during prime propagation hours for 40 meters.
2. On or about the Expire Date on the F!107, use `MCForms-Form Responses` to copy all applicable MCForms and then paste them into a spreadsheet. After eliminating duplicates and any obviously bad data, use that information to compile the raw data into useful information. Exactly how that is done will vary widely depending on the situation and person doing it.

Create the Bulletin / Report – The typical report should be done using the following format. If circumstances clearly call for a change in format, just use your best judgment; however try to use this standard format if possible.

1. Basic Format – All reports are prepared as a plain text document. Do not use FLMSG or a word processor, etc.
2. Report Header
    1. DATE: Report creation date, should be no later than the Expire Date on F!107 that initiated the report.
    2. SUBJ: Event or Situation being reported on
    3. FROM: Station / person / group writing the report or bulletin
    4. SIGNED BY: Station / person / group taking responsibility for authenticity, and whose public key is used to verify authenticity. Always use the same description that appears on the PGP Public Key being used to authenticate the report.
    5. SOURCE: SitRepNet reports / SW Broadcast / First Person Observation / Relayed report, etc.
    6. SUMMARY: Brief summary of report if applicable. This field is optional.
3. Report Text – Raw data turned into useful information / intelligence. Also include:
    1. Input stats – Number of reports this is based on, and the location of reporting stations if applicable.
    2. Call signs and locations of all reporting stations.
4. Footer - "/ / / END OF REPORT / / /"
5. Authentication – Use Single File Signing as shown in the *Kleopatra Quick Reference*. PGP authentication is an important part of the SitRepNet. If you must send without FLAMP and a signature, be sure to remove the "SIGNED BY:" line from the header, as well as the PGP signature.

Distribute the Bulletin / Report – The Bulletin Distribution Net (BDN) is the primary outlet for handling distribution of SitRepNet bulletins. To submit for distribution, check into the BDN, and follow the instructions of NCS. Be sure to have your bulletin ready to go in FLAMP

- The BDN meets every Friday at 9:00 pm Eastern Time on 7.107 – 900 offset.
- The net starts with Contestia 4/250, and continues with MFSK32.
- Mode is determined and set by NCS, so make sure your TxID is off, and FLAMP is set so it will send in the mode set by the NCS.
- All bulletins are sent using FLAMP.
- SitRepNet bulletins may also be sent through any other traffic net; if so, be sure to send using FLAMP in order to maintain the signature authentication. Authentication is an important part of SitRepNet.

Notes

- Bulletins are normally signed using a PGP signature. Have Kleopatra installed on your system, and learn how to use it (see the *Kleopatra Quick Reference*).
- You will also need to download the Public Keys from SitRepNet.com or from other sources.
- If you will be creating and signing SitRepNet bulletins, then you will need to post your Public Key on SitRepNet.com

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