Setting up Outpost for Santa Clara County RACES;
an Implementation Recommendation

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background

Emergency communications response teams use packet radio primarily for moving messages that do not lend themselves very well to being passed as voice traffic. Ensuring packet's effectiveness is critical for it to be integrated into a communications plan. This can be done by defining and implementing specific policies for packet messaging.

Outpost has evolved based on the input from packet users, many of whom have implied a need that they requested Outpost support. To this end, several changes have been implemented to satisfy these needs. In almost all cases, these needs address implicitly stated policies that were aimed to improve overall packet operations.

This Application Note is a _**recommendation**_ for how Santa Clara County (CA) RACES packet users who have deployed Outpost should set up their instance of Outpost. **A final review and adoption of this recommendation is pending.**

1.2. Policies

A policy is a definite course or method of action. In a community of packet users, policies can be defined to help support order, consistency, and efficiency with how packet is deployed and used. As a starting point, the following policy recommendations are submitted for consideration:

1. All stations will identify with a tactical call sign
2. All messages exchanged between 2 stations are sent as private messages
3. All messages are uniquely identified
4. All messages are as short as possible
5. All stations will poll the BBS on a periodic basis
6. All stations will poll for specific message types
7. All message traffic becomes part of the official event documentation package

The balance of this document describes the steps necessary for deploying Outpost throughout the greater Santa Clara County RACES organization. It identifies the different menus that should be accessed and the settings that should be made to implement the above policies.

In some cases, exact setups will be called out to configure Outpost to support the requirements of Santa Clara County RACES and its affiliated cities. For other settings, there are no recommendations other than accepting the default setting that Outpost presents.

1.3. Outpost Version

This policy assumes that Santa Clara County RACES users have installed Outpost v2.2 or greater. Earlier version will work, but some features described here may not be implemented.

2. Setting up the TNC

This is station dependent with no requirement for a specific interface device for connecting to the County BBS (W6XSC-1). Set up your TNC as appropriate.

3. Setting up the W6XSC-1 BBS

From the Outpost main menu, select: **Setup > BBS…**

3.1. Tab 1 – BBS name

The fields on this tab should be filled in as shown here.

1. **BBS Name**. Enter **W6XSC-1.**

2. **Description.** Optional; the Description field is optional, and can be any description you want to enter.

3. **BBS Type.** Choose the 4th option…
    "AA4RE BBS with Tactical Call Customization"

3.2. Tab 2 – BBS Prompts

This tab is is only used if you intend to manually set up the BBS prompts that the BBS will send back to Outpost. The BBS Type selection on the previous tab will automatically pick the W6XSC prompts.

There is nothing to configure on this form!

3.3. Tab 3 – BBS Commands

For all users, the default set of commands will work fine. No need to change anything here.

3.4. Tab 4 – BBS Path

This is a… *it depends* setting.

1. Most cities can access the BBS directly. If you are one of them and can access the BBS directly from your location, then select "**Direct to BBS**".

2. If you usually access the BBS through a digipeater, then check "**Via Digipeater(s)**" and enter the digipeater name. The 2 meter digipeaters that are set up to reach the W6XSC-1 BBS are **W6XSC-2**, **W6XSC-5**, and **LPRC2**.

3. I don't believe anyone is using KA-Nodes to get to the BBS. If so, please contact Jim KN6PE if you need help configuring this option.

3.5. When done…

Press OK to save your settings.

4. Setting up your Station Identification

From the Outpost main menu, select: **Setup > Identification…**

1. Enter your FCC Call sign in the 1st field.
2. Enter your name (optional) in the 2nd field.
3. Enter your city's tactical call sign in the 3rd field.

The W6XSC-1 BBS has a hard limit of 6 characters for the tactical call sign. At last check, the tactical calls that the W6XSC-1 BBS will recognize are:

Campbell, City of	CBLEOC
County Communications Center	COCOMM
Cupertino, City of	CUPEOC
Gilroy, City of	GILEOC
Los Altos, City of	LOSEOC
Los Altos Hills, Town of	LAHEOC
Los Gatos, Town of	LGTEOC
Los Gatos Red Cross	LGREDC
Milpitas, City of	MLPEOC
Monte Sereno, City of	MSOEOC
Morgan Hill, City of	MRGEOC
Mountain View, City of	MTVEOC
NASA – Ames	NAMEOC
Palo Alto, City of	PAFEOC
Palo Alto Red Cross	PAFARC
San Jose, City of	SJCEOC
San Jose Red Cross	SJCARC
Santa Clara, City of	SNCEOC
Santa Clara County	XSCEOC
Santa Clara Valley Water Dist	VWDEOC
Santa Cruz County	XCZEOC
Saratoga, City of	SAREOC
Stanford University	STUEOC
Sunnyvale, City of	SNYEOC

4.1. When done…

Press OK to save your settings.

CONFIRM: at this point, check the bottom status line on the Outpost main window and confirm that your call sign, tactical call, and BBS are all set up as you expect it.
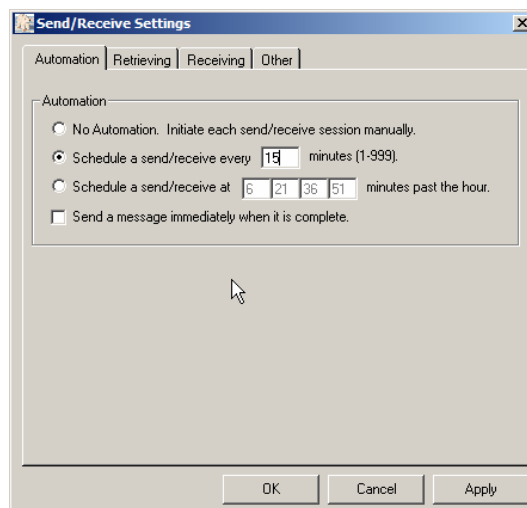
5. Setting up your Send/Receive Settings

From the Outpost main menu, select: **Tools > Send/Receive Settings…**

5.1. Tab 1 – Automation

Santa Clara County RACES policy on polling rate has not been finalized. However, given that we have 3 BBS access channels and about 5 stations per channel (average), an automated interval polling period of every 10 to 15 minutes should be sufficient.

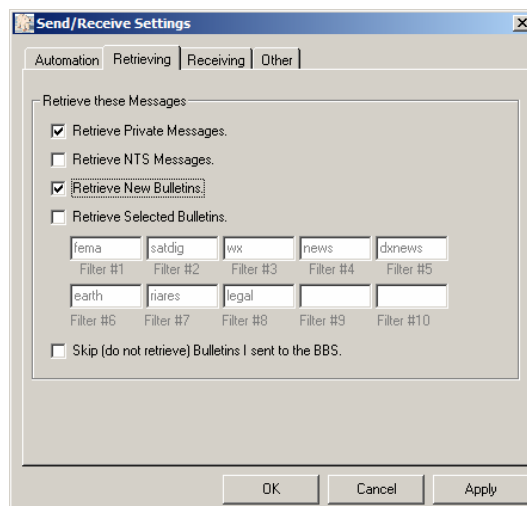1. Check the box as shown and enter a polling frequency <u>*no less than*</u> 10 minutes.

5.2. Tab 2 – Retrieving

We can expect to see both private and bulletin messages sent to the county users. When sending from your station to another, PRIVATE messages should be used. This is a change from the original county policy of sending everything as BULLETINS.
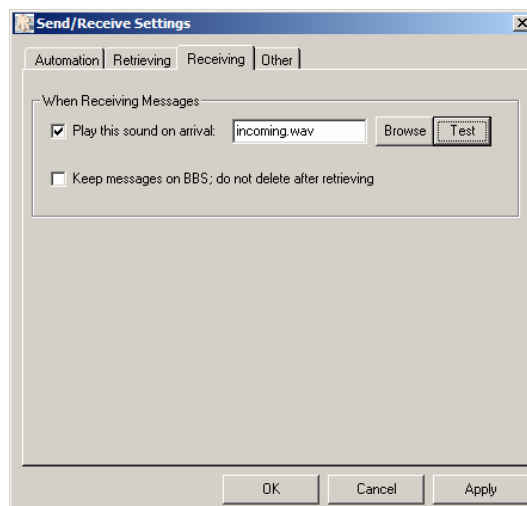
As a rule, only send BULLETINS when the information is of necessity to everyone else.

1. Check the boxes for "**Retrieve Private Messages**" and "**Retrieve New Bulletins**".

2. We do not use the NTS message format in the County.

3. Additionally, we are not connected to a packet forwarding network, there is no need to filter on our bulletin messages.
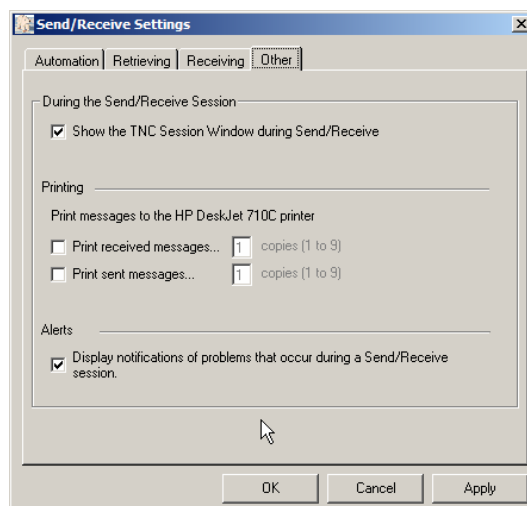
5.3. Tab 3 – Receiving

1. **Play a sound.** Optional, when receiving a message, you can have Outpost generate a sound (if you have a sound card). Two files are distributed with Outpost as initial choices (incoming.wav and sound38.wav). However, you can use any other .wav file for this task. If you do not have a sound card, Outpost will just **beep**.

2. **Keep message on BBS.** DO NOT CHECK this box. If you do, after you download your private messages, they will still be on the BBS, and you will get the listing every time to poll the BBS for messages. This not only is a nuisance, but also a contributor to unnecessary channel congestion.

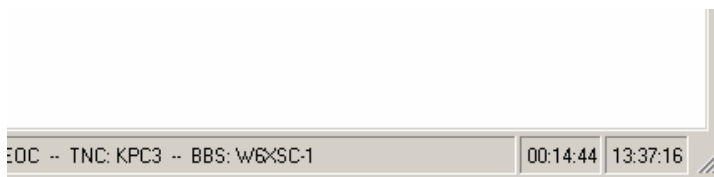### 5.4. Tab 4 – Other

The features on this tab are optional.

1. **Show TNC Session…** Optional, most people like to watch the session kick off and run. Leave this checked if this is the case for you. If you want the session window to run minimized, uncheck this box.

2. **Printing**. Optional, depends on your local situation and requirements for distributing messages throughout the EOC. Checking the boxes as indicated will generate a print-out to the configured printer at the time the message is received or sent (depends on the option checked).

3. **Alert**. Check this box. This will send alerts if problems arise when sending or retrieving messages with the BBS.

5.5. When done…

Press OK to save your settings.

CONFIRM: Look at the bottom status line on the Outpost main window. By setting up the interval timer for 15 minutes, an additional timer is displayed at the bottom right corner, just left of the current time. This value will show how many minutes and seconds are left before the Send/Receive session runs again. On reaching 00:00, a Send/Receive session will automatically start.
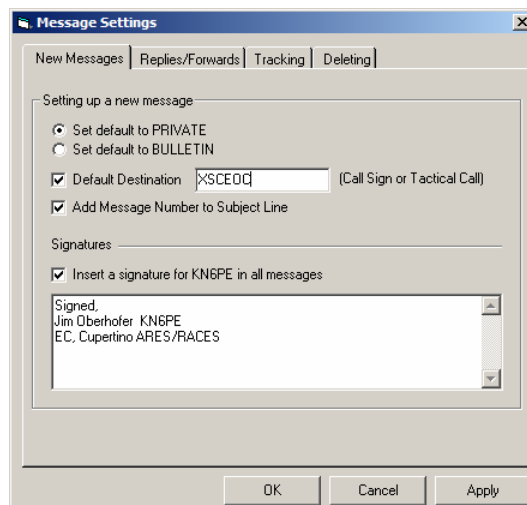
6. *Setting up your Message Settings*

From the Outpost main menu, select: **Tools > Message Settings…**

6.1. Tab 1 – New Messages

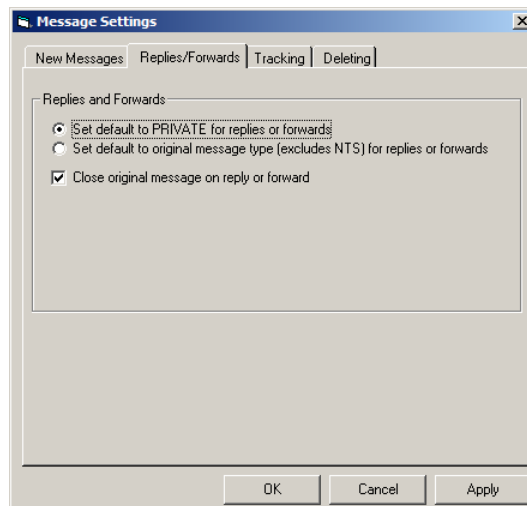There are several settings recommended for this tab:

1. **Set default to PRIVATE**. All messages will initially start as default.

2. **Default Destination**. This will make your life a lot easier. For stations other than the County EOC, CHECK this box and enter "**XSCEOC**" in the field (watch the spelling!!!). Then, all new messages will initially be addressed to County EOC. This can be changed on the message form if needed.

3. **Add message number**… Check this box to automatically serialize your messages.

4. **Insert a signature…** Optional, may reduce the keystrokes later on. Watch for wordy signature lines.

6.2. .Tab 2 – Replies/Forwards

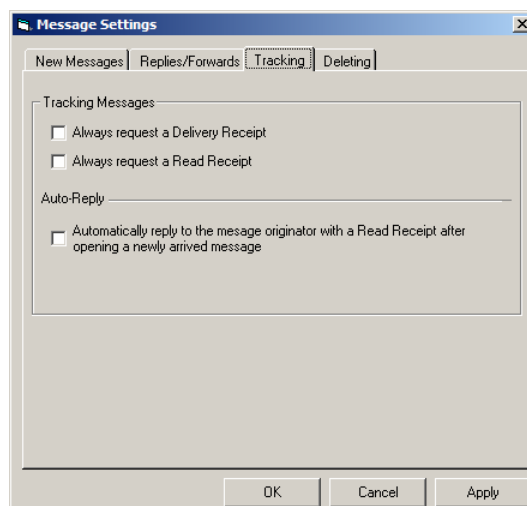These 2 choices should be set as follows for operational consistency.

1. **Set default to PRIVATE**… ensures a reply to only the originator, and not generating another BULLETIN if the original message was a BULLETIN.

2. **Close original message…** Optional, this is the default, and more a matter of convenience.
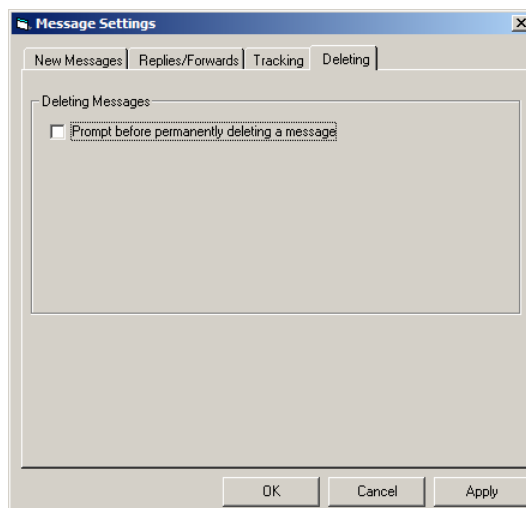
6.3. .Tab 3 – Tracking

1. **Track messages**. All options are initially turned off (not checked) and there is no requirement for originating stations to turn them on.

2. **Auto-reply**…
   For City OES: leave this UNCHECKED.

   For County OES: Given the past experience where Cities call the County asking them to confirm they received a packet message, the County EOC should CHECK this box and force a Read Receipt back to the cities regardless of whether the city requested one or not.

6.4. Tab 4 – Deleting

1. **Delete messages**. Optional, this is a safety option and prompts to confirm all permanent message deletes out of the **Deleted Message Folder**.

6.5. When done…

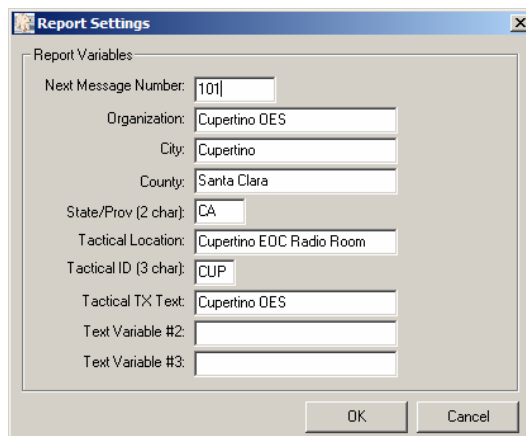Press OK to save your settings.

7. Setting up your Report Settings

From the Outpost main menu, select: **Tools > Report Settings…**

For Santa Clara County Users, the **MINIMUM** two fields that you should set up are:

1. **Next Message Number**. For first time installations, set this to 100. This field will increment every time a new message is created.
2. **Tactical ID (3 char)**. Set this field to your 3 character city designator. For instance, Cupertino's Tactical ID is **CUP**, the first 3 characters of the city's tactical logon (CUPEOC).

With the setting to **Add a message number to subject line** turned on (see *Section 6.1 Tab 1 – New Messages* above) these 2 fields will be concatenated and inserted on the subject line of each new message.

For instance: using the example shown here, the next message will have "**CUP101:**   "automatically inserted on the subject line. Additional subject line text can then be added by the user.

7.1. When done…

Press OK to save your settings.

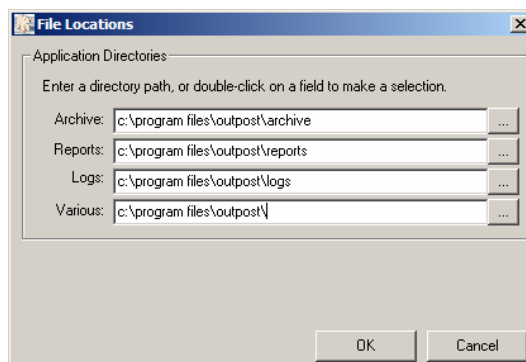## 8. Setting up your Directory Settings

From the Outpost main menu, select: **Tools > Directory Settings…**

The listing shown here are the default locations created when Outpost is in initially installed. However, they can be changed to any directory you wish.

No requirement is set for the directory settings.

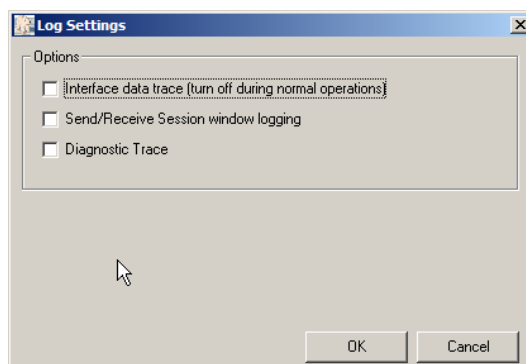### 8.1. When done…

Press Cancel or OK to save your settings.

9. Setting up your Log Settings

From the Outpost main menu, select: **Tools > Log Settings…**

These settings are mainly used for debug. Both should be left UNCHECKED.

9.1. When done…

Press Cancel or OK to save your settings.

10. Setting up your General Settings

From the Outpost main menu, select: **Tools > General Settings…**

These settings are primarily convenience settings. Both should be left unchecked.

10.1. When done…

Press Cancel or OK to save your settings.