

Carson City ARES©

RMS Express / Winlink 2000

Winlink is a worldwide system of volunteer resources supporting email by radio, with non-commercial links to internet email. These resources come from Amateur Radio, DHS NCC SHARES, and other volunteer organizations. It consists of a group of Common Message Servers (CMS) placed at various locations around the world. These connect via the internet to Radio Message Servers (RMS) in many geographic locations to form a communications network. Radio Message Servers are the VHF, UHF, or HF gateways into the Winlink system.

The final component of this network is your station running the RMS Express software to send/receive messages via your radio or the internet. The Winlink system also provides valuable services to emergency communicators and to licensed operators who do not have access to the internet.

The Winlink (RMS Express) program can be downloaded at winlink.org

We encourage members to become familiar with Winlink because it has been adopted by federal agencies including FEMA and SHARES, and also by the American Red Cross. In an actual or simulated event, it is the primary digital platform for communications. The software is heavily used by the US and other governments and Military Auxiliary Radio System and some of the Radio Message Servers are restricted to non-amateur operations since they operate on frequencies unavailable to amateur radio operators.

While VARA and ARDOP are primarily HF based, if you do not currently have HF capability, you may still use the Telnet function of Winlink, which is internet based and very easy to get started with.

Registration

Registration of Winlink Express does not involve licensing. Registration is **voluntary and not necessary** to use the program. Registration requires that you purchase a digital key to be applied to your program. Your registration key purchase supports all Amateur Radio Safety Foundation projects, the ongoing operations of the Winlink system, and the continuing development of new programs, radio modes, enhancements, and better performance. The registration fee is \$24 per callsign via PayPal.

Go here to register: [Winlink Registration](#)

It is possible to make peer to peer connections between two client stations within propagation range of each other without going through a Radio Message Server. This might be useful in an emergency scenario where Winlink traffic is too heavy or where the RMS gateway is unreachable. Emails sent through the Winlink 2000 network via the ham bands must follow the usual rules for amateur radio communications and may not be used for commercial operations or be encrypted.

During Emergency Drills in Carson City County, RMS Express is used extensively. 37 pieces of traffic were sent or received via the Winlink 2000 network during the last drill. The network was accessed using packet radio, the 40 meter and 80 meter HF bands and the internet. This flexibility allows ARES operators access to the network 24/7 and enhances our capacity to send large quantities of message traffic without overwhelming our local emergency voice nets.

It is highly recommended that everyone in Carson City ARES download and install the RMS Express program even if you do not plan on interfacing it to a radio. Those of you who already use HF digital modes will find that integrating the RMS Express program is a rather simple endeavor and it greatly increases your emergency communication capabilities. There are RMS servers that listen on many of the HF Ham bands including 20m, 30m 40m and 80m. At last count there were 60 Radio Message Server stations active on the bands.