

## Winlink Contacts List Usage

### Exercise Message Submission Window

**March 14 00:00 UTC - March 20 08:00 UTC**

### Difficulty Level: Intermediate

### Purpose:

The goal of this exercise is to gain the understanding of the **Winlink Express Address Book** to ensure 100% accuracy of message delivery. By utilizing verified 'Tactical Address' lists instead of manual typing, participants can significantly reduce delivery failures due to typos and become familiar with the tools available in the Winlink environment. Additionally, this exercise demonstrates how to retrieve structured data using the Winlink Inquiry (catalog) system, enabling customization of your Winlink Express environment while reducing concerns about maintaining the file structure requirements of the process.

### Objectives:

- Populate a local "collection" of validated Tactical Addresses.
- Successfully retrieve a remote CSV file by manually initiating a **Winlink CMS Inquiry**, ensuring the received contact list is accurately transferred and retains its data formatting for use in the exercise.
- Copy CSV data from the received message to a local file, ensuring all record delimiters remain intact.
- Utilize the Address Book interface to accurately address "To" and "Cc" fields.
- Export verified contact data to provide a "Proof of Work" for exercise evaluators.
- Verify their own work by populating a Winlink Form's **Comment** section with exported text.
- Sending this populated Winlink Check-in Form to the appropriate Winlink Thursday clearinghouse for the participant's location.
- Maintain their own system by effectively managing and removing temporary exercise contacts.
- Practice generating an ICS-213 form according to our specifications, filling the Message block with the contact list information while also exporting that list as a separate file. Additionally, practice attaching this exported contact list file to the ICS-213 Winlink message for transmission to our ETO Clearinghouse.

- With only monthly Training Exercises, you will no longer need to remember the spelling of the Clearinghouse Tactical address as you now have a pre-loaded contact list containing your ETO addresses. This eliminates the risk of a delivery failure caused by typing **ECHO TANGO OSCAR DASH OSCAR ONE** instead of the correct **ECHO TANGO OSCAR DASH ZERO ONE** which is required for the message to be delivered. (Using the Letter O rather than the Number 0)

## Resources:

- General Notes on Frequently-Seen Mistakes:  
[https://emcomm-training.org/Winlink\\_Thursdays.html](https://emcomm-training.org/Winlink_Thursdays.html)
- Finding your ETO Clearinghouse:  
<https://emcomm-training.org/General-Drill-Info.html>
- ETO Location Instructions — With or Without a GPS Receiver for your Computer [PDF]
  - <https://emcomm-training.org/Santa-2023/ETO-Location-Notes.pdf>
- How a GIS map-capable form's default position is determined:
  - From within Winlink Express Click on Help ⇒ Help Contents..., expand Operation, click on GIS Mapping Forms & Catalog Items
- Understanding Window's Known File Move issues
  - Dealing with OneDrive hijacking your personal directories.
    - <https://qsl.net/w/w7owo/MiscWebPages/Understanding%20Windows%20Known%20File%20Move%20Issue.pdf>

**Continue to the next page for the instructions.**

## Exercise Instructions:

### Start Winlink Express and Verify Settings

1. Launch and Update:
  - Open or restart the Winlink Express application on your PC.
  - If prompted for a software update, allow any updates to complete and restart if necessary
2. Disable Automatic Forwarding:
  - To ensure all exercise traffic is handled manually, you must disable automatic notification.
  - Navigate to Settings > Message Notification and Forwarding.
3. Verify Settings:
  - Look at the sections labeled **Automatic Message Notification** and **Automatic Message Forwarding**.
  - Ensure that all boxes are unchecked in these sections.
4. Save and Close:
  - If you made any changes, click **Save**. Otherwise, click **Cancel** to exit the menu.

### Backup and Clear Existing Contacts (only required when contacts are already listed in your Winlink Contacts panel)

5. Open the Contact Editor:
  - **Right-click** anywhere inside the **Contacts Panel** on the left side of the main Winlink screen.
  - This will open the **Contacts Editor** window.
6. Export for Safekeeping:
  - Select **Import/Export > Export contacts to file**.
  - Click the **Browse** button
  - **Navigate** to your Documents folder (e.g., *This PC > Documents*).
  - In the "File name" field, type: *MyPersonalContacts.txt* .
    - i. Or any name of your choosing you will remember.
  - Click **Save**, then click **OK**, and click **OK** again on the confirmation prompt.
7. Validate the Backup (Windows Verification):
  - Before proceeding, you must verify the file was created correctly:

- Open **File Explorer** and go to your **Documents** folder as used above.
  - **Right-click** *MyPersonalContacts.txt* and select **Open with > Notepad**.
  - **Verify** that you see your contacts listed as plain text. Once confirmed, **Close Notepad**.
  - Note the directory if it is not your Documents folder.
    - i. Also if this is a cloud drive like OneDrive don't shut down or halt the cloud service while performing this exercise.
    - ii. OneDrive may redirect your personal directories to the cloud. See Understanding Window's Known File Move issues in the references if you experience missing documents from your personal directories.
8. Clear the Contacts List:
- Return to the Winlink **Contacts Editor**.
  - **Select all contacts** to highlight them.
  - Click **Remove**, then click **OK** to confirm.
  - Validate all items are no longer in the list.
  - Click **Close**.
9. Force Refresh (**Important**):
- To resolve a known display bug in the Contacts Panel, **Close and Restart** Winlink Express. This ensures the panel correctly reflects the empty state.

## Use CMS Inquiry Feature To Download Contact List

1. **Create a New Message:** Select **Message > New Message**.
2. Generate the Inquiry:
  - **To:** INQUIRY
  - **Subject:** Requesting ETO Contact List
  - **Message Body:** Copy and paste the following URL as the **first line and nothing else**.
    - i. [https://emcomm-training.org/3-19-26\\_Files/ETO\\_Contact\\_List\\_03\\_19\\_Exercise.txt](https://emcomm-training.org/3-19-26_Files/ETO_Contact_List_03_19_Exercise.txt)
3. **Post and Send:** Click **Post to Outbox** and send the message using your usual session mode (Telnet is recommended if internet is available).
4. **Retrieve Response:** Wait, it may take several minutes for the request to be processed. Then initiate a second session to retrieve the response from the CMS.
5. **Verify:** Open the returned message to view the comma separated contact data.

## Generate New Import File From Provided Import List

1. **Open Notepad:** Press the **Windows Key + R** on your keyboard, type **Notepad** in the Run Dialogs's **Open:** textbox, and press **Enter**.
2. **Highlight the Data:** In the currently opened received message body, using your mouse, highlight only the CSV data block within the message body.
  - a. **Start:** Place your cursor at the beginning of the line:  
Name,Address,Notes
  - b. **Select:** Drag the mouse down to the end of the final line:
  - c. Training Ex CC Entry,ETO-BK,ETO-BK CC Field for Training,
  - d. **Verify:** Ensure you have selected all 15 lines (the header plus 14 records) and that no header information (From/To/Date) or trailing blank lines are included in your selection.
3. **Copy the Text:** Right-click the highlighted text and select **Copy**, or press **Ctrl + C**.
4. **Paste into Notepad:** Click inside the blank Notepad window and press **Ctrl + V**.
5. **Validate:** Look to see if all lines have been copied and no beginning or ending characters have been lost, including the last line's comma.

**6. Save the File:**

- a. Go to **File > Save As** .
  - b. **Navigate** to your Documents folder (e.g., *This PC > Documents*).
  - c. Name the file *ETO\_3-19\_Contacts.txt* .
    - i. Ensure **Save as Type** is **Text Documents (\*.txt)**.
  - d. Click **Save**.
7. Close Notepad.

**Importing Your Contact List Into Winlink Express**

1. **Open Contacts:** Right-click anywhere in the **Contacts Panel**.
2. **Access Import:** Click on **Import/Export**, then select **Import contacts from file**.
3. **Locate File:** Click **Browse**. **Navigate to your Documents folder (e.g., This PC > Documents)**.
4. **Select File:** Ensure the file type is set to **CSV and Text Files (\*.csv, \*.txt)**. Click on your file named *ETO\_3-19\_Contacts.txt* and click **Open**.
5. **Confirm Path:** Validate that the "Fully qualified name" matches the file you just saved.
6. **Configure Format:**
  - Select the option: **Standard CSV File with Column names in the first row**.
  - In the "Delimiter character" group box, select **Comma**.
  - Click **Next >**.
7. **Map Columns (Validation):** Confirm the following mappings:
  - **Select column with contact name:** *Name*
  - **Select column with e-mail addresses:** *Address*
  - **Select column with notes:** *Notes*
  - **Select column with mail server:** *(none)*
  - Click **Next >**.
8. **Final Review:** Validate that all items are present in the preview and no characters have been dropped (check the first and last entries). Note sort order may be different than imported list.
  - You should have 14 records in your list. If less or more you have a bad list file.
9. **Process:** Click **Finish**.

10. **Confirm Results:** A dialog box should report: **14 new contacts added, 0 duplicates ignored, and 0 invalid entries discarded.** Click **OK**, then click **Close**.
11. **Force Refresh (Important):** To resolve a known display bug where the Contacts Panel doesn't update immediately, **Close and Restart Winlink Express.** This ensures the panel correctly reflects your new contacts.
12. **NOTE:** All spaces in the Name field have been replaced with Underscores.

## Export Your Current Contacts For Use in an ICS-213 Message

1. Open the Contact Editor:
  - **Right-click** anywhere inside the **Contacts Panel** on the left side of the main Winlink screen.
  - This will open the **Contacts Editor** window.
2. Export:
  - Select **Import/Export > Export contacts to file.**
  - Click the **Browse** button
  - **Navigate** to your Documents folder (e.g., *This PC > Documents*).
  - In the "File name" field, type: *ContactsCopy.txt*.
  - Click **Save**, then click **OK**, and click **OK** again on the confirmation prompt.
  - Close the **Contacts Editor** dialog window.
3. Open in Notepad:
  - Before proceeding, you must verify the file was created correctly:
  - Open **File Explorer (Windows key + E)** and go to your **Documents** folder (*This PC > Documents*).
  - **Right-click** *ContactsCopy.txt* and select **Open with > Notepad.**
4. Copy Contents:
  - Place the cursor in the text field and Type **Ctrl+A, Ctrl+C.**

## Send ETO a Winlink ICS-213 Form With Your Contact List File as an Attachment and the Content in the Message Block

1. Open a new Message (e.g. Click Message > New Message...)
  - Add your *ContactsCopy.txt* file as an attachment.
    - i. Click on **Attach**:
    - ii. In the **Attachments** dialog box click on **Add**.
    - iii. Navigate to your **Documents** folder (*This PC > Documents*)
    - iv. Select your *ContactsCopy.txt* file and Click open
      1. Alternatively double click on your *ContactsCopy.txt* file.
    - v. Click Finished
2. Create an ICS-213 Form
  - Within the new message Select the ICS-213 Message
    - i. Select Template > Standard Forms > ICS USA Forms
    - ii. Double click on ICS 213 General Message.txt
3. Copy the contents in your clipboard into the text block for 7. Message.
4. Back at the top:
  - Click Setup and in the pop up dialog, set the Enter Agency/Group Title field to **EmComm Training Organization**.
  - Click in the checkbox for THIS IS AN EXERCISE.
5. Set the following Fields
  - 1. Incident Name: **03/19/2026 Training Exercise**.
  - 2. To (Name/Position): **EmComm Training Organization**.
  - 3. From (Name/Position): <YourCallSign> / Participant
  - 4. Subject: **Winlink Contact List Exercise**.
  - 5. Date: Click in the box and accept the provided value.
  - 6. Time: Click in the box and accept the provided value.
  - 7. Message: This should have been populated in the 2nd item of this block. If not, go to your open Notepad window and recopy the contents and paste in block 7.
  - 8. Approved by: Enter your first name.
  - 8b. Position / Title: Enter your callsign.
6. Review content for correctness.
  - Your exported file will have the Name Fields with underscores where the original import had spaces.
7. Click on **Submit**.

**NOTE:** The Date and Time must be within the submittal window:  
March 14 00:00 UTC - March 20 08:00 UTC

## Sending the message

1. For the **To:** line: Click on the **To:**
  - a. In the Select Destinations Pop-up click your ETO Clearinghouse address, then Click **Add To Message**.
2. For the **CC:** line: Click on the **CC:**
  - a. In the Select Destinations Pop-up, then click on the **TRAINING\_EX\_CC\_ENTRY**.
3. **Optional:** Add your internet email address in the **CC:** line. Separating the existing content with a semi-colon (;).
4. Click on **Post to Outbox** in the menu bar.
5. Send the message in your preferred session type.

NOTE: Historically, ETO has mapped participants to their ETO Clearinghouse using FEMA Regions. When selecting from the Contacts list, the system pulls from the **Name** field (which, for this exercise, contains the FEMA Region). Once you post the message to the Outbox, you will notice that the **E-mail** field value has automatically replaced the **Name** field value in the message header.

## Other Actions

We recommend retaining only the ETO contacts relevant to your needs; delete any rows that do not pertain to your clearinghouse information. If you previously removed rows that you need, you can import the file you exported at the beginning of the exercise.

## End of Exercise Instructions

**See the next page for example of a completed ICS-213 Form with the expected contents.**

## Example of Completed ICS-213 Form for this Exercise

General Message (ICS 213)

EmComm Training Organization

THIS IS AN EXERCISE
[Load ICS213 INITIAL Data](#)
[Form Instructions](#)

1. Incident Name:

2. To (Name/Position):

3. From (Name/Position):

4. Subject:

5. Date:

6. Time:

7. Message:

Name	Address	Notes
CANADIAN_PROVINCES	ETO-CAN@winlink.org	ETO-CAN Exercise Clearing House
FEMA_REGION_01	ETO-01@winlink.org	ETO-01 Exercise Clearing House
FEMA_REGION_02	ETO-02@winlink.org	ETO-02 Exercise Clearing House
FEMA_REGION_03	ETO-03@winlink.org	ETO-03 Exercise Clearing House
FEMA_REGION_04	ETO-04@winlink.org	ETO-04 Exercise Clearing House
FEMA_REGION_05	ETO-05@winlink.org	ETO-05 Exercise Clearing House
FEMA_REGION_06	ETO-06@winlink.org	ETO-06 Exercise Clearing House
FEMA_REGION_07	ETO-07@winlink.org	ETO-07 Exercise Clearing House
FEMA_REGION_08	ETO-08@winlink.org	ETO-08 Exercise Clearing House
FEMA_REGION_09	ETO-09@winlink.org	ETO-09 Exercise Clearing House
FEMA_REGION_10	ETO-10@winlink.org	ETO-10 Exercise Clearing House
OTHER_COUNTRIES	ETO-DX@winlink.org	ETO-DX Exercise Clearing House
PRACTICE_EX_TO_ENTRY	ETO-PRACTICE@winlink.org	To Field for Practice
TRAINING_EX_CC_ENTRY	ETO-BK@winlink.org	ETO-BK CC Field for Training

8. Approved by:       8b. Position / Title:

Optional Location Coordinates

Latitude     Longitude     MGRS     Grid

LAT/LON and MGRS default to the center of the grid square listed in Express Settings, unless a GPS is used or Lat/LON or MGRS are entered manually.  
For Winlink mapping and CSV export you must enter a latitude and longitude.

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Example of the Completed Winlink Message on the following page.

## Winlink Thursday Exercise For March 19, 2026

Enter a new message
— □ ×

Post to Outbox Select Template Attachments Spell Check Save in Drafts Close

From:  Send as:   Request message receipt

To:

Cc:

Subject:

Attach:

GENERAL MESSAGE (ICS 213)  
 EmComm Training Organization  
 \*\* THIS IS AN EXERCISE \*\*

1. Incident Name: 03/19/2026 Training Exercise
2. To (Name and Position): EmComm Training Organization
3. From (Name and Position): W7OWO / Participant
4. Subject: Winlink Contact List Exercise
5. Date: 2026-03-19
6. Time: 08:37
7. Message:

Name	Address	Notes
CANADIAN_PROVINCES	ETO-CAN@winlink.org	ETO-CAN Exercise Clearing House
FEMA_REGION_01	ETO-01@winlink.org	ETO-01 Exercise Clearing House
FEMA_REGION_02	ETO-02@winlink.org	ETO-02 Exercise Clearing House
FEMA_REGION_03	ETO-03@winlink.org	ETO-03 Exercise Clearing House
FEMA_REGION_04	ETO-04@winlink.org	ETO-04 Exercise Clearing House
FEMA_REGION_05	ETO-05@winlink.org	ETO-05 Exercise Clearing House
FEMA_REGION_06	ETO-06@winlink.org	ETO-06 Exercise Clearing House
FEMA_REGION_07	ETO-07@winlink.org	ETO-07 Exercise Clearing House
FEMA_REGION_08	ETO-08@winlink.org	ETO-08 Exercise Clearing House
FEMA_REGION_09	ETO-09@winlink.org	ETO-09 Exercise Clearing House
FEMA_REGION_10	ETO-10@winlink.org	ETO-10 Exercise Clearing House
OTHER_COUNTRIES	ETO-DX@winlink.org	ETO-DX Exercise Clearing House
PRACTICE_EX_TO_ENTRY	ETO-PRACTICE@winlink.org	To Field for Practice
TRAINING_EX_CC_ENTRY	ETO-BK@winlink.org	ETO-BK CC Field for Training

8. Approved by: Brian  
 8a. Position/Title: W7OWO  
 [Sender: W7OWO Lat: 45.296833, Lon:-123.011667, MGRS: ; Location source: User specified]

-----  
 Express Sending Station: W7OWO  
 Senders Express Version: 1.7.29.2  
 Senders Template Version: ICS 213 v.43.8  
 [No changes or editing of this message are allowed]

## End of Examples