

Instructions for Taking the Maine Amateur Radio Service Emcomm Tests using Flmsg

Flmsg is a complete message composition system that includes various ICS and Radiogram forms along with generic and blank forms. It also functions with custom forms making use of user-supplied HTML templates. Flmsg is open source and cross platform.

As a ham radio program, flmsg can be used natively with fldigi or files prepared with flmsg may be attached to any electronic transport medium that accepts file attachments. This includes Winlink, the packet bulletin board system (BBS) as well as commercial email.

What gets transmitted is only the inputted data. The actual form fields stay with the sending and receiving stations. This minimizes the amount of data that has to be transmitted over a relatively slow RF circuit.

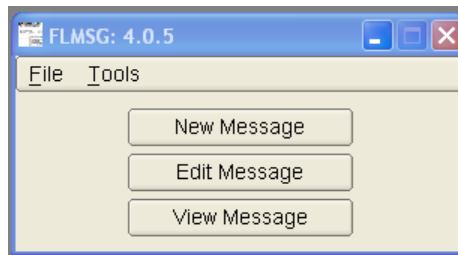
For the purpose of these tests, we are using custom test forms. These are adapted from the New York City ARECS (Amateur Radio Emergency Communications Service) tests which use a web-based on line format. The study materials originate with Pat Lambert WOIPL in Colorado.

Flmsg has two user interface screens. A “Simple” (agency) screen that allows you to open, view and edit custom html templates and an “Expert” (radio operator) screen that has the wide range of features that are necessary to use flmsg as a communications tool. For simplicity, we’ll describe operation with the Simple interface in the following.

Experienced users of flmsg will generally work from the “Expert” dialog but, for the test, it might be easier to switch to the “Simple” interface. If you wish to do this, click Config – User Interface on the Expert interface and uncheck User Interface = Expert. Close flmsg and reopen.

Flmsg Installation

- Download and install flmsg. The program may be found at <http://w1hkj.com/files/flmsg> This location has all versions of flmsg (Windows, Linux and Mac) as well as the help documents. For Windows you will want the setup.exe file. After downloading, double click on the file to install. You will see three or four dialog boxes depending on which version of Windows you are using. Accept the default install location, etc. The final screen shows the install progress and will indicate when the install is completed. You have to manually close this dialog.
- You will now see a flmsg short cut icon on your desktop if you installed with the defaults. Double click this to open flmsg. You may get a Windows warning. Click through that and flmsg will open.
- If installing for the first time, flmsg may open to a dialog that asks which interface you want to set as the default. As noted above, the choices are “Service Agency/Simple” and “Communicator/Expert.” Select the “Simple” screen. This has 3 buttons and two menu items.



- “File” opens either the folder with the custom html templates (Templates Folder) or the folder with filled out messages (Messages Folder). The latter have a .k2s file extension. Templates must be in the default Template folder. For Windows 7 and above, the paths to the folders are:

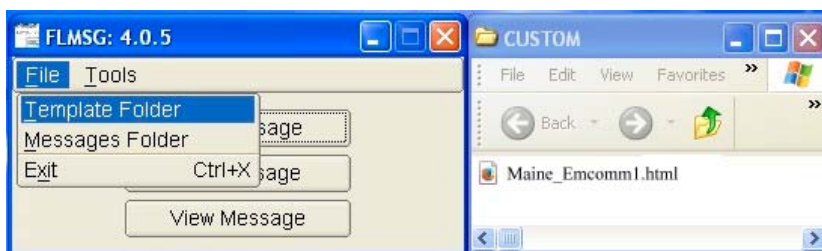
C:\Users\<<your log in>\NBEMS.files\CUSTOM and

C:\Users\<<your log in>\NBEMS.files\ICS\messages

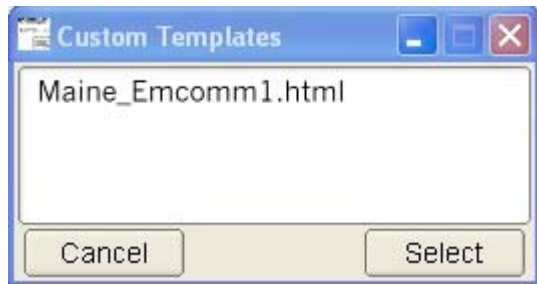
- “Tools” opens a dialog to Update (refresh) the template list or a dialog to change the interface to the Expert interface.
- “New Message” opens the folder with the templates. This is what you will use to get the Test template.
- “Edit Message” is used to view and edit a completed message (in this case the test). These come from the ... \messages folder.
- “View Message” is used to view or print a completed message. There is no edit capability.

Installing the Template

- Download the template (e.g. Maine_Emcomm1.html) to the Custom folder directly or to a convenient location on your computer, e.g. Downloads or Desktop.
- If you didn’t place the template directly into the Custom folder, find the file and either drag the file into the Custom folder or do Edit Copy/Edit Paste into the folder. As noted above, you can open the Custom folder by clicking File-Template Folder in flmsg. The figure below shows the file as installed. **DO NOT CHANGE THE TEMPLATE FILE NAME.**



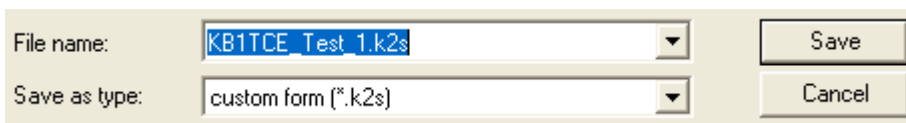
- To take the test, click the “New Message” button to open the Custom Template folder. Highlight the Maine_Emcomm1.html file and click “Select.” The test sheet will open in your browser.



- Fill out your personal information and take the test.
- When you are finished, click the “Submit Form” button at the bottom left of your screen.



- You will be prompted to save the file. Instead of using the default file name and location, for simplicity enter your call sign and save to a convenient location e.g. your desktop. The file will have the extension .k2s. Note, flmsg doesn't especially like spaces in file names. Use underscores if you want to separate parts of the file name. Be sure that you save the file as a custom form (*.k2s)



- You may take the test in several sessions. Simply save the file and then when you are ready to continue, use the Edit button on flmsg.
- When you are finished, email the file to your EC (preferred) or to kb1tce@maine-ares.org.