

Postmaster messages should include 2-3 sentences with the essential information you want the readers to know. If your item in the various items in a postmaster email is interesting to them, they will open up the attachment for more info. The sentences you provide should be simple, with the most important information element first. The elements are the 4W's and H (who, what, when, where, how, and why). Take care in choosing the words for your sentences, so that even if the reader doesn't click on your flyer, they are reasonably informed about your event, program, or activity.

**MESSAGE EXAMPLE.**

**EXCHANGE HOLIDAY PET SHOW NOV 5.** Join the Fort Irwin Exchange team for a very special event, the Holiday Pet Show on Thu., Nov. 5, 3-5 pm. Look forward to Owner/Pet Holiday costume contest, Obstacle Course and Smallest /Largest Pet, prizes and vendor giveaways. **See attached.**

**HTML MESSAGE FORMAT:** Format the messages in HTML, so bold lettering and highlighting are possible. Not everyone views their emails in HTML, but those who do find it useful. Hyperlinks also work easily, by simply control-clicking instead of copying and pasting web addresses into browser windows.

**HIGHLIGHTING.** Highlight in yellow, e.g. "see attached" in the above example, so readers can easily note that there is an attachment to provide more info. Attachments are also used when posting to Facebook wall as a "photo." It's a good attention-getter, for people sliding through their cellphone screens, while browsing through Facebook wall postings.

**BOLD FACE AND UPPER CASE ON ITEM TITLE.** For each entry item, write a short title, using upper case and bold face lettering. This makes it easier for busy readers to quickly browse through the several items in an Outlook email and read only what they find interesting or relevant to them.

**SHORT BODY TEXT.** Keep the body text short (2-3 sentences), but put as much of the essential information in the text, so readers don't need to open up the attachment related to the item unless they are interested enough to know more about your event/program.

Avoid jargon. Keep in mind that your reader may be newly-wed spouse of a Soldier new to the Army, who may not understand terms well known to you. Avoid acronyms unless they are very commonly used.

Times and date formats. Use "am" and "pm," instead of military time. Don't use period marks after the letters, as in a.m. and p.m. E.g., 5 pm, 6:30 am. For event dates, include the day of the week as abbreviations, since most people plan their day's schedule according to the day of

the week. Use 3-letter abbreviations, to keep wording short and simple: Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat, Sun.

**DO NOT WRITE MARKETING MESSAGES.** Keep in mind that the Postmaster message platform is to provide simple communications, not overt promotion of an event or program. It can be styled in an informal style, so it's easier to read. You can use "we and "you" in referring to yourself and your audience.

**DOD/ARMY ETHICS REVIEW.** If an announcement is potentially sensitive, have your item reviewed and approved by the Fort Irwin/NTC legal office, especially for non-Army organizations, commercial or non-profit organizations or fund-raising events.

**ATTACHMENTS, FLIERS, DOCUMENTS.** In preparing your attachment, ensure all essential information is in the flyer or document. Keep your text simple, like bullet points. Use simple graphics, so they don't overpower the message content. The graphics should simply draw reader's attention to the text info so he/she can take action on the info. Include POC/website link info also in the flyer. Use large font sizes for your text. They should be easily readable on cell phone screens.

**PDF FORMAT.** Word document attachments must be converted to PDF so they are not easily altered and can be read on all computers. If you have Adobe Acrobat software on your computer, use the compression option to keep email file size manageable.

**FILE SIZE LIMITATIONS.** Keep your attachment's file size as small as possible, but not so pixilated that it's hard to read. Using simple graphics and design will keep the flier small, ideally between 50-250 Kilobytes (Kb). I try to keep the total memory for any email I send to under 1 Mb. A Postmaster email with 4+ attachments can easily approach or exceed 1 Mb. This ties up the network and Outlook files of addresses.

**ATTACHMENT FORMATS FOR FACEBOOK.** Facebook doesn't allow PDF uploads, only .jpg, .gif, .bmp and .png. If you have the software that can do this, convert your PDF and PowerPoint slides to one of these graphic formats.

**QUESTIONS?** Call Leslie Ozawa, Fort Irwin Public affairs office, 760-380-3076.