The Net Control Station's Toolkit

Net Control Stations often have a "toolkit" of items that make the job of NCS easier. Here is what some will have in their kit:

1. OPENING A NET-THE PREAMBLE
    a. Opening a net Normally a Net Control Station will start or begin his or her net with a preamble that announces the net, tells what its purpose is, and who is the net Control station. The preamble also typically gives the ground rules by which the net operates. Here is a typical preamble

    > Calling the Northern Florida ARES Hurricane net . Calling the Northern Florida ARES Huricane Net. This is <Call>, and I will be the net control for this net. My name is <name>, and I am located in <city>. This net has been called to pass traffic related to Hurricane Zelda. <call> will be the alternate net control station.   Are there any stations with emergency or priority traffic for the net? Please call now. Are there any stations with any other traffic? Please call now. Are there any stations that would like to check into the net? Please call now.   Are there any announcements or other business for the net?

    b. CHANGING NET CONTROL STATIONS
    > In an ongoing emergency such as hurricanes, ARES nets tend to last hours, and sometimes days. Hence, Net Control Stations typically serve in shifts, often 4 hours long, and in dire circumstances, 8 hours. At the end of a shift, the new NCS will check into the net with the outgoing NCS. As a matter of courtesy and smooth net operations, the new NCS

should check into the net 5-15 minutes before his shift begins. Below is a typical change of shift dialog

W4OLD this is W4NEW on station ready to assume duties as the NCS for the North Florida ARES net. Over.
W4NEW this is W4OLD. Good morning. There are (number) of stations on net. The net is yours. 73. This is W4OLD over.

W4OLD this is W4NEW. Thank you. Have a good day. Ok, I would like to see who is on frequency. (The New NCS then conducts a check in/roll call.)

This is W4NEW. Thank you. This a directed net. If you have traffic for the net, or need to contact another station contact me. Unless any station has business for the net, we will now monitor the frequency. This is W4NEW Net Cotnrol for the NFL ARES net standing by

c. CLOSING THE NET

Typically, once net business has been taken care of, and nothing else remains, the net closes. In an emergency, of course, it would stay open to handle any traffic that may need to be passed that surfaces later.

There are no magic words to close nets, but something like the following would do;

This is <call>. Is there any business for the net or any station desiring to check in. (Pause). Nothing heard. I will at this time close the <name of the net.> Thanks to all who checked in. This net will next open on<give time net will next meet> 73 this is <call>

2. Forms
   a. ICS 213 message form--https://training.fema.gov/icsresource/icsforms.aspx
   b. ARRL radiogram message form--
      http://www.idahoarrl.info/needed_files/Fillable%20Radiogram%20Form.pdf
   c. ICS 309-Communications log-https://groups.io/g/WWARES/topic/30828537
3. Phone numbers/email addresses of
   a. Section Manager-Kevin Bess-KK4BFN 386 547 2838
   b. Section Emergency Coordinator-Karl Martin-K4HBN-386 756 9861
   c. Net manager-David Davis WA4WES 850 562 3660
4. SAR net map-sarnetfl.com
5. Propagation chart program link-https://www.voacap.com/hf/
6. HF frequencies
   a. Primary 3.950 MHz
   b. Alternate 7.242 MHz
   c. 60 meters- Channel 4-5.371.5 MHz

Of course, you can modify this list as your needs dictate, but this is a start.

Hints and Kinks for the NCS

1. Start the net on time.
2. Use a script or preamble whenever possible
3. Write down all calls
4. Know how to use your radio-read the manual
5. Frequently identify the name and purpose of the net
6. Ask for help if you need it.
7. Don't think on the air
8. Keep transmissions short
9. Transmit only facts
10. Use Standard ITU phonetics
11. Use plain English