



MDRS Mission Support Procedures and Daily Reports

Each evening between 8 and 9 PM Mountain Time, a group of volunteers from around the world gather electronically as your Mission Support team to await your daily reports and to provide you with assistance from Earth. The person you will be communicating with each evening is your CapCom – short for “Capsule Communicator”, a term dating back to the Apollo days. CapComs change from day to day on an approximate weekly cycle. Behind the CapCom stands the engineering team, the remote science team, the MDRS web team, the logistics, greenhouse and food study coordinators, and the rest of MDRS leadership.

All of the daily reports you are required to submit, except the Journalist’s Report, are based on templates. Make sure you submit the Commander’s Check In and the Engineering Report before 8 PM Mountain time, when the CapCom logs on. These reports are intended to tell the CapCom that all is okay with you, or to indicate where you have run into difficulties, have questions, or need assistance.

We expect the following reports between 8 and 9 pm:

- Commander’s report
- EVA report (one report per EVA),
- Science report (one report per science, so biology, geology, astronomy and human factors reports are typically separate from each other)
- Cook’s Report
- Journalist’s Report.

The Engineering report is a webform; the EVA, Science and Cook’s reports are just ‘windows’ where you can paste the filled-in templates for each type of report. Finally, please send a daily Journalist report relating each day’s major accomplishments or issues. The Journalist’s report is meant to capture the excitement, charm, frustrations and other human aspects of life on analog Mars. It has no required format, so be creative!

The science reports are brief progress reports on your research, used by the RST to provide feedback and assistance. They’re also part of MDRS’s commitment to science outreach. The first two progress reports can describe project goals and the equipment or methods you are using. (Some people write these in advance) Later reports should mention your research activities, progress, any interesting findings, and any problems you encounter in the research – the sort of thing you would relate to an interested colleague over lunch. Note to those of you hoping to prepare your results for scientific journals: your science reports do NOT constitute “prior publication”, and no one will steal your results.

Don’t let the volunteers wait in vain for your reports. It’s frustrating for them, and more important, we will begin to worry about you if we don’t hear from you on time. Mission support can’t help you if they are not informed of problems you ran into during the day. They are volunteers who freely give this hour or more to process your reports, answer your questions and be your contact with Earth. Be kind and respectful by being on time.