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# NACK-Oriented Reliable Multicast Protocol

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### Abstract

This document describes the messages and procedures of the Negative-ACKnowledgment (NACK) Oriented Reliable Multicast (NORM) Protocol. This protocol is designed to provide end-to-end reliable transport of bulk data objects or streams over generic IP multicast routing and forwarding services. NORM uses a selective, negative acknowledgment mechanism for transport reliability and offers additional protocol mechanisms to allow for operation with minimal *a priori* coordination among senders and receivers. A congestion control scheme is specified to allow the NORM protocol to fairly share available network bandwidth with other transport protocols such as Transmission Control Protocol (TCP). It is capable of operating with both reciprocal multicast routing among senders and receivers and with asymmetric connectivity (possibly a unicast return path) between the senders and receivers. The protocol offers a number of features to allow different types of applications or possibly other higher level transport protocols to utilize its service in different ways. The protocol leverages the use of FEC-based repair and other IETF reliable multicast transport (RMT) building blocks in its design.

## Requirements Language

The key words "MUST", "MUST NOT", "REQUIRED", "SHALL", "SHALL NOT", "SHOULD", "SHOULD NOT", "RECOMMENDED", "MAY", and "OPTIONAL" in this document are to be interpreted as described in [\[RFC2119\]](#).

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## 1. Introduction and Applicability

The Negative-acknowledgment (NACK) Oriented Reliable Multicast (NORM) protocol is designed to provide reliable transport of data from one or more sender(s) to a group of receivers over an IP multicast network. The primary design goals of NORM are to provide efficient, scalable, and robust bulk data (e.g., computer files, transmission of persistent data) transfer across possibly heterogeneous IP networks and topologies. The NORM protocol design provides support for distributed multicast session participation with minimal coordination among senders and receivers. NORM allows senders and receivers to dynamically join and leave multicast sessions at will with minimal overhead for control information and timing synchronization among participants. To accommodate this capability, NORM protocol message headers contain some common information allowing receivers to easily synchronize to senders throughout the lifetime of a reliable multicast session. NORM is designed to be self-adapting to a wide range of dynamic network conditions with little or no pre-configuration. The protocol is purposely designed to be tolerant of inaccurate timing estimations or lossy conditions that may occur in many networks including mobile and wireless. The protocol is also designed to exhibit convergence and efficient operation even in situations of heavy packet loss and large queuing or transmission delays.

This document is a product of the IETF RMT WG and follows the guidelines provided in [\[RFC3269\]](#).

### Statement of Intent

This memo contains the definitions necessary to fully specify a Reliable Multicast Transport protocol in accordance with the criteria of [\[RFC2357\]](#). A prior document, [\[RFC3940\]](#), contained a previous description of the NORM Protocol specification described in this document. RFC3940 was published in the "Experimental" category. It was the stated intent of the RMT working group to re-submit this specifications as an IETF Proposed Standard in due course.

This Proposed Standard specification is thus based on [\[RFC3940\]](#) and has been updated according to accumulated experience and growing protocol maturity since the publication of RFC3940. Said experience applies both to this specification itself and to congestion control strategies related to the use of this specification.

The differences between [\[RFC3940\]](#) and this document are listed in [Section 9](#).

### 1.1 NORM Data Delivery Service Model

A NORM protocol instance (*NormSession*) is defined within the context of participants communicating connectionless (e.g., Internet Protocol (IP) or User Datagram Protocol (UDP)) packets over a network using pre-determined addresses and host port numbers. Generally, the participants exchange packets using an IP multicast group address, but unicast transport may also be established or applied as an adjunct to multicast delivery. In the case of multicast, the participating *NormNodes* will communicate using a common IP multicast group address and port number that has been chosen via means outside the context of the given *NormSession*. Other IETF data format and protocol standards exist that may be applied to describe and convey the required *a priori* information for a specific *NormSession* (e.g., [Session Description Protocol \(SDP\)](#) [\[RFC4566\]](#), [Session Announcement Protocol \(SAP\)](#) [\[RFC2974\]](#), etc.).

The NORM protocol design is principally driven by the assumption of a single sender transmitting bulk data content to a group of receivers. However, the protocol MAY operate with multiple senders within the context of a single *NormSession*. In initial implementations of this protocol, it is anticipated that multiple senders will transmit independent of one another and receivers will maintain state as necessary for each sender. However, in future versions of NORM, it is possible that some aspects of protocol operation (e.g., round-trip time collection) may provide for alternate modes allowing more efficient performance for applications requiring multiple senders.

NORM provides for three types of bulk data content objects (*NormObjects*) to be reliably transported. These types include:

1. static computer memory data content (NORM\_OBJECT\_DATA type),
2. computer storage files (NORM\_OBJECT\_FILE type), and
3. non-finite streams of continuous data content (NORM\_OBJECT\_STREAM type).

The distinction between `NORM_OBJECT_DATA` and `NORM_OBJECT_FILE` is simply to provide a hint to receivers in *NormSessions* serving multiple types of content as to what type of storage should be allocated for received content (i.e., memory or file storage). Other than that distinction, the two are identical, providing for reliable transport of finite (but potentially very large) units of content. These static data and file services are anticipated to be useful for multicast-based cache applications with the ability to reliably provide transmission of large quantities of static data. Other types of static data/file delivery services might make use of these transport object types, too. The use of the `NORM_OBJECT_STREAM` type is at the application's discretion and could be used to carry static data or file content also. The NORM reliable stream service opens up additional possibilities such as serialized reliable messaging or other unbounded, perhaps dynamically produced content. The `NORM_OBJECT_STREAM` provides for reliable transport analogous to that of the Transmission Control Protocol (TCP), although NORM receivers will be able to begin receiving stream content at any point in time. The applicability of this feature will depend upon the application.

The NORM protocol also allows for a small amount of out-of-band data (sent as `NORM_INFO` messages) to be attached to the data content objects transmitted by the sender. This readily-available out-of-band data allows multicast receivers to quickly and efficiently determine the nature of the corresponding data, file, or stream bulk content being transmitted. This allows application-level control of the receiver node's participation in the current transport activity. This also allows the protocol to be flexible with minimal pre-coordination among senders and receivers. The `NORM_INFO` content is designed to be atomic in that its size **MUST** fit into the payload portion of a single NORM message.

NORM does NOT provide for global or application-level identification of data content within in its message headers. Note the `NORM_INFO` out-of-band data mechanism could be leveraged by the application for this purpose if desired, or identification could alternatively be embedded within the data content. NORM does identify transmitted content (*NormObjects*) with transport identifiers that are applicable only while the sender is transmitting and/or repairing the given object. These transport data content identifiers (*NormTransportIds*) are assigned in a monotonically increasing fashion by each NORM sender during the course of a *NormSession*. Each sender maintains its *NormTransportId* assignments independently so that individual *NormObjects* may be uniquely identified during transport with the concatenation of the sender session-unique identifier (*NormNodeId*) and the assigned *NormTransportId*. The *NormTransportIds* are assigned from a large, but fixed, numeric space in increasing order and may be reassigned during long-lived sessions. The NORM protocol provides mechanisms so that the sender application may terminate transmission of data content and inform the group of this in an efficient manner. Other similar protocol control mechanisms (e.g., session termination, receiver synchronization, etc.) are specified so that reliable multicast application variants may construct different, complete bulk transfer communication models to meet their goals.

To summarize, the NORM protocol provides reliable transport of different types of data content (including potentially mixed types). The senders enqueue and transmit bulk content in the form of static data or files and/or non-finite, ongoing stream types. NORM senders provide for repair transmission of data and/or FEC content in response to NACK messages received from the receiver group. Mechanisms for out-of-band information and other transport control mechanisms are specified for use by applications to form complete reliable multicast solutions for different purposes.

## 1.2 NORM Scalability

Group communication scalability requirements lead to adaptation of negative acknowledgment (NACK) based protocol schemes when feedback for reliability is required [[RmComparison](#)]. NORM is a protocol centered around the use of selective NACKs to request repairs of missing data. NORM provides for the use of packet-level forward error correction (FEC) techniques for efficient multicast repair and optional proactive transmission robustness [[RFC3453](#)]. FEC-based repair can be used to greatly reduce the quantity of reliable multicast repair requests and repair transmissions [[MdpToolkit](#)] in a NACK-oriented protocol. The principal factor in NORM scalability is the volume of feedback traffic generated by the receiver set to facilitate reliability and congestion control. NORM uses probabilistic suppression of redundant feedback based on exponentially distributed random backoff timers. The performance of this type of suppression relative to other techniques is described in [[McastFeedback](#)]. NORM dynamically measures the group's round-trip timing status to set its suppression and other protocol timers. This

allows NORM to scale well while maintaining reliable data delivery transport with low latency relative to the network topology over which it is operating.

Feedback messages can be either multicast to the group at large or sent via unicast routing to the sender. In the case of unicast feedback, the sender relays the feedback state to the group to facilitate feedback suppression. In typical Internet environments, it is expected that the NORM protocol will readily scale to group sizes on the order of tens of thousands of receivers. A study of the quantity of feedback for this type of protocol is described in [\[NormFeedback\]](#). NORM is able to operate with a smaller amount of feedback than a single TCP connection, even with relatively large numbers of receivers. Thus, depending upon the network topology, it is possible that NORM may scale to larger group sizes. With respect to computer resource usage, the NORM protocol does NOT require that state be kept on all receivers in the group. NORM senders maintain state only for receivers providing explicit congestion control feedback. However, NORM receivers must maintain state for each active sender. This may constrain the number of simultaneous senders in some uses of NORM.

### 1.3 Environmental Requirements and Considerations

All of the environmental requirements and considerations that apply to the [RMT Multicast NACK Building Block \[RFC5401\]](#), [FEC Building Block \[RFC5052\]](#), and [TCP-Friendly Multicast Congestion Control \(TFMCC\) Building Block \[RFC4654\]](#), also apply to the NORM protocol.

The NORM protocol SHALL be capable of operating in an end-to-end fashion with no assistance from intermediate systems beyond basic IP multicast group management, routing, and forwarding services. While the techniques utilized in NORM are principally applicable to flat, end-to-end IP multicast topologies, they could also be applied in the sub-levels of hierarchical (e.g., tree-based) multicast distribution if so desired. NORM can make use of reciprocal (among senders and receivers) multicast communication under the Any-Source Multicast (ASM) model defined in [\[RFC1112\]](#), but SHALL also be capable of scalable operation in asymmetric topologies such as Source-Specific Multicast (SSM) [\[RFC4607\]](#) where there may only be unicast routing service from the receivers to the sender(s).

NORM is compatible with IPv4 and IPv6. Additionally, NORM may be used with networks employing Network Address Translation (NAT) providing the NAT device supports IP multicast and/or can cache UDP traffic source port numbers for remapping feedback traffic from receivers to the sender(s).

## 2. Architecture Definition

A *NormSession* is comprised of participants (*NormNodes*) acting as senders and/or receivers. NORM senders transmit data content in the form of *NormObjects* to the session destination address and the NORM receivers attempt to reliably receive the transmitted content using negative acknowledgments to request repair. Each *NormNode* within a *NormSession* is assumed to have a preselected unique 32-bit identifier (*NormNodeId*). *NormNodes* MUST have uniquely assigned identifiers within a single *NormSession* to distinguish between possible multiple senders and to distinguish feedback information from different receivers. There are two reserved *NormNodeId* values. A value of 0x00000000 is considered an invalid *NormNodeId* value and a value of 0xffffffff is a "wild card" *NormNodeId*. While the protocol does not preclude multiple sender nodes concurrently transmitting within the context of a single NORM session (i.e., many- to-many operation), any type of interactive coordination among NORM senders is assumed to be controlled by the application or higher protocol layer. There are some optional mechanisms specified in this document that can be leveraged for such application layer coordination.

As previously noted, NORM allows for reliable transmission of three different basic types of data content. The first type is NORM\_OBJECT\_DATA, which is used for static, persistent blocks of data content maintained in the sender's application memory storage. The second type is NORM\_OBJECT\_FILE, which corresponds to data stored in the sender's non-volatile file system. The NORM\_OBJECT\_DATA and NORM\_OBJECT\_FILE types both represent *NormObjects* of finite but potentially very large size. The third type of data content is NORM\_OBJECT\_STREAM, which corresponds to an ongoing transmission of undefined length. This is analogous to the reliable stream service provide by TCP for unicast data transport. The format of the stream content is application-defined and may be byte or message oriented. The NORM protocol provides for "flushing" of the stream to expedite delivery or possibly enforce application message boundaries. NORM protocol implementations may offer either (or both) in-order delivery of the stream data to the receive application or out-of-order (more immediate) delivery of received segments of the stream to the receiver application. In either case, NORM sender and receiver implementations provide buffering to facilitate repair of the stream as it is transported.

All *NormObjects* are logically segmented into FEC coding blocks and symbols for transmission by the sender. In NORM, an FEC encoding symbol directly corresponds to the payload of NORM\_DATA messages or "segment". Note that when systematic FEC codes are used, the payload of NORM\_DATA messages sent for the first portion of a FEC encoding block are source symbols (actual segments of original user data), while the remaining symbols for the block consist of parity symbols generated by FEC encoding. These parity symbols are generally sent in response to repair requests, but some number may be sent proactively at the end each encoding block to increase the robustness of transmission. When non-systematic FEC codes are used, all symbols sent consist of FEC encoding parity content. In this case, the receiver must receive a sufficient number of symbols to reconstruct (via FEC decoding) the original user data for the given block.

Transmitted *NormObjects* are temporarily yet uniquely identified within the *NormSession* context using the given sender's *NormNodeId*, *NormInstanceId*, and a temporary *NormObjectTransportId*. Depending upon the implementation, individual NORM senders may manage their *NormInstanceIds* independently, or a common *NormInstanceId* may be agreed upon for all participating nodes within a session if needed as a session identifier. NORM *NormObjectTransportId* data content identifiers are sender-assigned and applicable and valid only during a *NormObject*'s actual transport (i.e., for as long as the sender is transmitting and providing repair of the indicated *NormObject*). For a long-lived session, the *NormObjectTransportId* field can wrap and previously-used identifiers may be re-used. Note that globally unique identification of transported data content is not provided by NORM and, if required, must be managed by the NORM application. The individual segments or symbols of the *NormObject* are further identified with FEC payload identifiers which include coding block and symbol identifiers. These are discussed in detail later in this document.

### 2.1 Protocol Operation Overview

A NORM sender primarily generates messages of type NORM\_DATA. These messages carry original data segments or FEC symbols and repair segments/symbols for the bulk data/file or stream *NormObjects* being transferred. By default, redundant FEC symbols are sent only in response to receiver repair requests (NACKs) and thus normally little or no additional transmission overhead is imposed due to FEC encoding. However, the NORM implementation

MAY be optionally configured to proactively transmit some amount of redundant FEC symbols along with the original content to potentially enhance performance (e.g., improved delay) at the cost of additional transmission overhead. This option may be sensible for certain network conditions and can allow for robust, asymmetric multicast (e.g., unidirectional routing, satellite, cable) [[FecHybrid](#)] with reduced receiver feedback, or, in some cases, no feedback.

A sender message of type NORM\_INFO is also defined and is used to carry OPTIONAL out-of-band context information for a given transport object. A single NORM\_INFO message can be associated with a *NormObject*. Because of its atomic nature, missing NORM\_INFO messages can be NACKed and repaired with a slightly lower delay process than NORM's general FEC-encoded data content. NORM\_INFO may serve special purposes for some bulk transfer, reliable multicast applications where receivers join the group mid-stream and need to ascertain contextual information on the current content being transmitted. The NACK process for NORM\_INFO will be described later. When the NORM\_INFO message type is used, its transmission should precede transmission of any NORM\_DATA message for the associated *NormObject*.

The sender also generates messages of type NORM\_CMD to assist in certain protocol operations such as congestion control, end-of-transmission flushing, round trip time estimation, receiver synchronization, and optional positive acknowledgment requests or application defined commands. The transmission of NORM\_CMD messages from the sender is accomplished by one of three different procedures. These procedures are: single, best effort unreliable transmission of the command; repeated redundant transmissions of the command; and positively-acknowledged commands. The transmission technique used for a given command depends upon the function of the command. Several core commands are defined for basic protocol operation. Additionally, implementations MAY wish to consider providing the OPTIONAL application-defined commands that can take advantage of the transmission methodologies available for commands. This allows for application-level session management mechanisms that can make use of information available to the underlying NORM protocol engine (e.g., round-trip timing, transmission rate, etc.). A notable distinction between NORM\_DATA message and some NORM\_CMD message transmissions is that typically a receiver will need to allocate resources to manage reliable reception when NORM\_DATA messages are received. However some NORM\_CMD messages may be completely atomic and no specific state may need to be kept. Thus, for session management or other purposes it is possible that even participants acting principally as data receivers MAY transmit NORM\_CMD messages. However, it is RECOMMENDED that this is not done within the context of the NORM multicast session unless congestion control is addressed. For example, many receiver nodes transmitting NORM\_CMD messages simultaneously can cause congestion for the destination(s).

All sender transmissions are subject to rate control governed by a peak transmission rate set for each participant by the application. This can be used to limit the quantity of multicast data transmitted by the group. When NORM's congestion control algorithm is enabled the rate for senders is automatically adjusted. In some networks, it may be desirable to establish minimum and maximum bounds for the rate adjustment depending upon the application even when dynamic congestion control is enabled. However, in the case of the general Internet, congestion control policy SHALL be observed that is compatible with coexistent TCP flows.

NORM receivers generate messages of type NORM\_NACK or NORM\_ACK in response to transmissions of data and commands from a sender. The NORM\_NACK messages are generated to request repair of detected data transmission losses. Receivers generally detect losses by tracking the sequence of transmission from a sender. Sequencing information is embedded in the transmitted data packets and end-of-transmission commands from the sender. NORM\_ACK messages are generated in response to certain commands transmitted by the sender. In the general (and most scalable) protocol mode, NORM\_ACK messages are sent only in response to congestion control commands from the sender. The feedback volume of these congestion control NORM\_ACK messages is controlled using the same timer-based probabilistic suppression techniques as for NORM\_NACK messages to avoid feedback implosion. In order to meet potential application requirements for positive acknowledgment from receivers, other NORM\_ACK messages are defined and available for use.

## 2.2 Protocol Building Blocks

The operation of the NORM protocol is based primarily upon the concepts presented in the [Multicast NACK Building Block document](#) [RFC5401]. This includes the basic NORM architecture and the data transmission,

repair, and feedback strategies discussed in that document. Additional reliable multicast building blocks, as described in [RFC3048], are applied in creating the full NORM protocol instantiation. NORM also makes use of Forward Error Correction encoding techniques for repair messaging and optional transmission robustness as described in [RFC3453]. NORM uses the FEC Payload ID as specified by the [FEC Building Block document \[RFC5052\]](#). Additionally, for congestion control, this document fully specifies a baseline congestion control mechanism (NORM-CC) based on the [TCP-Friendly Multicast Congestion Control \(TFMCC\) scheme of \[TfmccPaper\]](#) and [RFC4654].

## 2.3 Design Tradeoffs

While the various features of NORM are designed to provide some measure of general purpose utility, it is important to emphasize the understanding that "no one size fits all" in the reliable multicast transport arena. There are numerous engineering trade-offs involved in reliable multicast transport design and this requires an increased awareness of application and network architecture considerations. Performance requirements affecting design can include: group size, heterogeneity (e.g., capacity and/or delay), asymmetric delivery, data ordering, delivery delay, group dynamics, mobility, congestion control, and transport across low capacity connections. NORM contains various parameters to accommodate many of these differing requirements. The NORM protocol and its mechanisms MAY be applied in multicast applications outside of bulk data transfer, but there is an assumed model of bulk transfer transport service that drives the trade-offs that determine the scalability and performance described in this document.

The ability of NORM to provide reliable data delivery is also governed by any buffer constraints of the sender and receiver applications. NORM protocol implementations SHOULD be designed to operate with the greatest efficiency and robustness possible within application-defined buffer constraints. Buffer requirements for reliability, as always, are a function of the delay-bandwidth product of the network topology. NORM performs best when allowed more buffering resources than typical point-to-point transport protocols. This is because NORM feedback suppression is based upon randomly-delayed transmissions from the receiver set, rather than immediately transmitted feedback. There are definitive trade-offs between buffer utilization, group size scalability, and efficiency of performance. Large buffer sizes allow the NORM protocol to perform most efficiently in large delay-bandwidth topologies and allow for longer feedback suppression backoff timeouts. This yields improved group size scalability. NORM can operate with reduced buffering but at a cost of decreased efficiency (lower relative goodput) and reduced group size scalability.

### 3. Conformance Statement

This Protocol Instantiation document, in conjunction with the RMT Building Block documents of [RFC5401] and [RFC5052], completely specifies a working reliable multicast transport protocol that conforms to the requirements described in RFC 2357 [RFC2357].

This document specifies the following message types and mechanisms which are REQUIRED in complying NORM protocol implementations:

Message Type	Purpose
NORM_DATA	Sender message for application data transmission. Implementations must support at least one of the NORM_OBJECT_DATA, NORM_OBJECT_FILE, or NORM_OBJECT_STREAM delivery services. The use of the NORM FEC Object Transmission Information header extension is OPTIONAL with NORM_DATA messages.
NORM_CMD ( FLUSH )	Sender command to excite receivers for repair requests in lieu of ongoing NORM_DATA transmissions. Note the use of the NORM_CMD ( FLUSH ) for positive acknowledgment of data receipt is OPTIONAL.
NORM_CMD ( SQUELCH )	Sender command to advertise its current valid repair window in response to invalid requests for repair.
NORM_CMD ( REPAIR_ADV )	Sender command to advertise current repair (and congestion control state) to group when unicast feedback messages are detected. Used to control/suppress excessive receiver feedback in asymmetric multicast topologies.
NORM_CMD ( CC )	Sender command used in collection of round trip timing and congestion control status from group (this may be OPTIONAL if alternative congestion control mechanism and round trip timing collection is used).
NORM_NACK	Receiver message used to request repair of missing transmitted content.
NORM_ACK	Receiver message used to proactively provide feedback for congestion control purposes. Also used with the OPTIONAL NORM Positive Acknowledgment Process.

This document also describes the following message types and associated mechanisms which are OPTIONAL for complying NORM protocol implementations:

Message Type	Purpose
NORM_INFO	Sender message for providing ancillary context information associated with NORM transport objects. The use of the NORM FEC Object Transmission Information header extension is OPTIONAL with NORM_INFO messages.
NORM_CMD ( EOT )	Sender command to indicate it has reached end-of-transmission and will no longer respond to repair requests.
NORM_CMD ( ACK_REQ )	Sender command to support application-defined, positively acknowledged commands sent outside of the context of the bulk data content being transmitted.

<b>Message Type</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
	The NORM Positive Acknowledgment Procedure associated with this message type is OPTIONAL.
NORM_CMD ( APPLICATION )	Sender command containing application-defined commands sent outside of the context of the bulk data content being transmitted.
NORM_REPORT	Optional message type reserved for experimental implementations of the NORM protocol.





## 4.2.1 NORM\_DATA Message

The NORM\_DATA message is expected to be the predominant type transmitted by NORM senders. These messages are used to encapsulate segmented data content for objects of type NORM\_OBJECT\_DATA, NORM\_OBJECT\_FILE, and NORM\_OBJECT\_STREAM. NORM\_DATA messages may contain original or FEC-encoded application data content.

The format of NORM\_DATA messages is comprised of three logical portions: 1) a fixed-format NORM\_DATA header portion, 2) a FEC Payload ID portion with a format dependent upon the FEC encoding used, and 3) a payload portion containing source or encoded application data content. Note for objects of type NORM\_OBJECT\_STREAM, the payload portion contains additional fields used to appropriately recover stream content. NORM implementations MAY also extend the NORM\_DATA header to include a FEC Object Transmission Information (EXT\_FTI) header extension. This allows NORM receivers to automatically allocate resources and properly perform FEC decoding without the need for pre-configuration or out-of-band information.

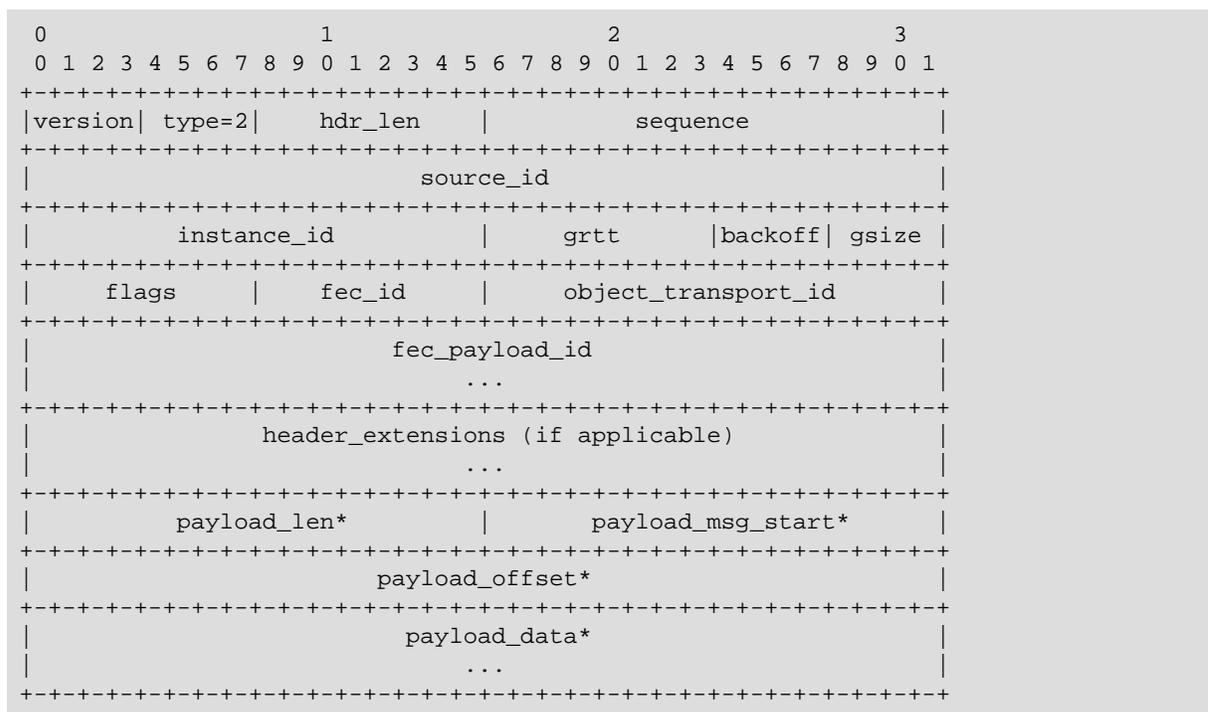


Figure 4: NORM\_DATA Message Format

**\*IMPORTANT NOTE:** The "payload\_len", "payload\_msg\_start" and "payload\_offset" fields are present ONLY for objects of type NORM\_OBJECT\_STREAM. These fields, as with the entire payload, are subject to any FEC encoding used. Thus, when systematic FEC codes are used, these values may be directly interpreted for packets containing source symbols only while packets containing FEC parity content require decoding before these fields can be interpreted.

The "version", "type", "hdr\_len", "sequence", and "source\_id" fields form the NORM Common Message Header as described in Section 4.1. The value of the NORM\_DATA "type" field is 2. The NORM\_DATA base "hdr\_len" value is 4 (32-bit words) plus the size of the "fec\_payload\_id" field. The "fec\_payload\_id" field size depends upon the FEC encoding type referenced by the "fec\_id" field. For example, when small block, systematic codes are used, a "fec\_id" value of 129 is indicated and the size of the "fec\_payload\_id" is two 32-bit words. In this case the "fec\_id" field is used to indicate the FEC coding type. For example, when small block, systematic codes are used, a "fec\_id" value of 129 is indicated and the size of the "fec\_payload\_id" is two 32-bit words. In this case the NORM\_DATA base "hdr\_len" value is 6. The cumulative size of any header extensions applied is added into the "hdr\_len" field.

The "instance\_id" field contains a value generated by the sender to uniquely identify its current instance of participation in the *NormSession*. This allows receivers to detect when senders have perhaps left and rejoined a session in progress. When a sender (identified by its "source\_id") is detected to have a new "instance\_id", the NORM receivers SHOULD drop their previous state on the sender and begin reception anew, or at least treat this "instance" as a new, separate sender.

The "grtt" field contains a non-linear quantized representation of the sender's current estimate of group round-trip time (GRTT) (this is also referred to as  $R_{max}$  in [TfmccPaper]). This value is used to control timing of the NACK repair process and other aspects of protocol operation as described in this document. Normally, the advertised "grtt" value will correspond to what the sender has measured based on feedback from the group, but, at low transmission rates, the advertised "grtt" SHALL be set to  $MAX(grtt_{measured}, NormSegmentSize / senderRate)$  where the *NormSegmentSize* is sender's segment size in bytes and the *senderRate* is the sender's current transmission rate in bytes per second. The algorithm for encoding and decoding this field is described in the RMT [Multicast NACK Building Block document](#) [RFC5401].

The "backoff" field value is used by receivers to determine the maximum backoff timer value used in the timer-based NORM NACK feedback suppression. This 4-bit field supports values from 0-15 which is multiplied by the sender GRTT to determine the maximum backoff timeout. The "backoff" field informs the receivers of the sender's backoff factor parameter  $K_{sender}$ . Recommended values and their use are described in the NORM receiver NACK procedure description in [Section 5.3](#).

The "gsize" field contains a representation of the sender's current estimate of group size. This 4-bit field can roughly represent values from ten to 500 million where the most significant bit value of 0 or 1 represents a mantissa of 1 or 5, respectively and the three least significant bits incremented by one represent a base 10 exponent (order of magnitude). For examples, a field value of "0x0" represents  $1.0e+01$  (10), a value of "0x8" represents  $5.0e+01$  (50), a value of "0x1" represents  $1.0e+02$  (100), and a value of "0xf" represents  $5.0e+08$ . For NORM feedback suppression purposes, the group size does not need to be represented with a high degree of precision. The group size may even be estimated somewhat conservatively (i.e., overestimated) to maintain low levels of feedback traffic. A default group size estimate of 10,000 ("gsize" = 0x3) is recommended for general purpose reliable multicast applications using the NORM protocol.

The "flags" field contains a number of different binary flags providing information and hints regarding how the receiver should handle the identified object. Defined flags in this field include:

Flag	Value	Purpose
NORM_FLAG_REPAIR	0x01	Indicates message is a repair transmission
NORM_FLAG_EXPLICIT	0x02	Indicates a repair segment intended to meet a specific receiver erasure, as compared to parity segments provided by the sender for general purpose (with respect to an FEC coding block) erasure filling.
NORM_FLAG_INFO	0x04	Indicates availability of NORM_INFO for object.
NORM_FLAG_UNRELIABLE	0x08	Indicates that repair transmissions for the specified object will be unavailable (One-shot, best effort transmission).
NORM_FLAG_FILE	0x10	Indicates object is file-based data (hint to use disk storage for reception).
NORM_FLAG_STREAM	0x20	Indicates object is of type NORM_OBJECT_STREAM.

NORM\_FLAG\_REPAIR is set when the associated message is a repair transmission. This information can be used by receivers to help observe a join policy where it is desired that newly joining receivers only begin participating

in the NACK process upon receipt of new (non-repair) data content. `NORM_FLAG_EXPLICIT` is used to mark repair messages sent when the data sender has exhausted its ability to provide "fresh" (not previously transmitted) parity segments as repair. This flag could possibly be used by intermediate systems implementing functionality to control sub-casting of repair content to different legs of a reliable multicast topology with disparate repair needs. `NORM_FLAG_INFO` is set only when optional `NORM_INFO` content is actually available for the associated object. Thus, receivers will NACK for retransmission of `NORM_INFO` only when it is available for a given object. `NORM_FLAG_UNRELIABLE` is set when the sender wishes to transmit an object with only "best effort" delivery and will not supply repair transmissions for the object. NORM receivers SHOULD NOT execute repair requests for objects marked with the `NORM_FLAG_UNRELIABLE` flag. Note that receivers may inadvertently request repair of such objects when all segments (or info content) for those objects are not received (i.e., a gap in the "object\_transport\_id" sequence is noted). In this case, the sender should invoke the `NORM_CMD(SQUELCH)` process as described in [Section 4.2.3](#).

`NORM_FLAG_FILE` can be set as a hint from the sender that the associated object should be stored in non-volatile storage. `NORM_FLAG_STREAM` is set when the identified object is of type `NORM_OBJECT_STREAM`. The presence of `NORM_FLAG_STREAM` overrides that of `NORM_FLAG_FILE` with respect to interpretation of object size and the format of `NORM_DATA` messages.

The "fec\_id" field corresponds to the FEC Encoding Identifier described in the FEC Building Block document [\[RFC5052\]](#). The "fec\_id" value implies the format of the "fec\_payload\_id" field and, coupled with FEC Object Transmission Information, the procedures to decode FEC encoded content. Small block, systematic codes ("fec\_id" = 129) are expected to be used for most NORM purposes and the `NORM_OBJECT_STREAM` requires systematic FEC codes for most efficient performance.

The "object\_transport\_id" field is a monotonically and incrementally increasing value assigned by the sender to *NormObjects* being transmitted. Transmissions and repair requests related to that object use the same "object\_transport\_id" value. For sessions of very long or indefinite duration, the "object\_transport\_id" field may be repeated, but it is presumed that the 16-bit field size provides an adequate enough sequence space to avoid object confusion amongst receivers and sources (i.e., receivers SHOULD re-synchronize with a server when receiving object sequence identifiers sufficiently out-of-range with the current state kept for a given source). During the course of its transmission within a NORM session, an object is uniquely identified by the concatenation of the sender "source\_id" and the given "object\_transport\_id". Note that `NORM_INFO` messages associated with the identified object carry the same "object\_transport\_id" value.

The "fec\_payload\_id" identifies the attached `NORM_DATA` "payload" content. The size and format of the "fec\_payload\_id" field depends upon the FEC type indicated by the "fec\_id" field. These formats are given in the descriptions of specific FEC schemes such as those described in the IETF [FEC Basic Schemes](#) [I-D.ietf-rmt-bb-fec-basic-schemes-revised] specification or in additional FEC Scheme documents that may be defined. As an example, the format of the "fec\_payload\_id" format for Small Block, Systematic codes ("fec\_id" = 129) from the [FEC Basic Schemes](#) [I-D.ietf-rmt-bb-fec-basic-schemes-revised] specification is given here:

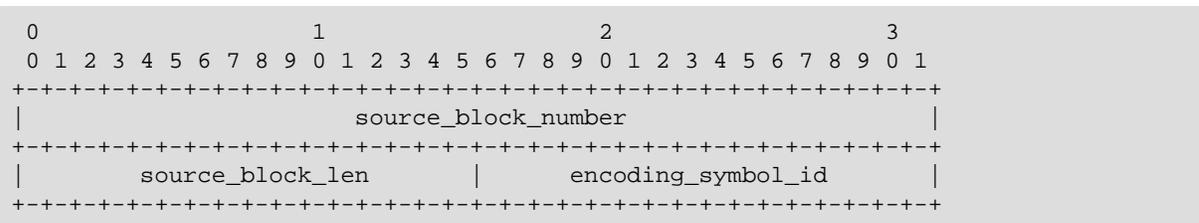


Figure 5: Example: FEC Payload Id Format for "fec\_id" = 129

In this example FEC payload identifier, the "source\_block\_number", "source\_block\_len", and "encoding\_symbol\_id" fields correspond to the "Source Block Number", "Source Block Length", and "Encoding Symbol ID" fields of the FEC Payload ID format for Small Block Systematic FEC Schemes identified by a "fec\_id" value of 129 as specified by the [FEC Basic Schemes](#) [I-D.ietf-rmt-bb-fec-basic-schemes-revised] document. The "source\_block\_number" identifies the coding block's relative position with a *NormObject*. Note that, for *NormObjects* of type `NORM_OBJECT_STREAM`, the "source\_block\_number" may wrap for very long lived sessions. The

"source\_block\_len" indicates the number of user data segments in the identified coding block. Given the "source\_block\_len" information of how many symbols of application data are contained in the block, the receiver can determine whether the attached segment is data or parity content and treat it appropriately. Some applications may dynamically "shorten" code blocks when the pending information content is not predictable (e.g. real-time message streams). In that case, the "source\_block\_len" value given for an "encoding\_symbol\_id" that contains FEC parity content SHALL take precedence over the "source\_block\_len" value provided for any packets containing source symbols. Also, the "source\_block\_len" value given for an ordinally higher "encoding\_symbol\_id" SHALL take precedence over the "source\_block\_len" given for prior encoding symbols. The reason for this is that the sender may only know the maximum source block length at the time is transmitting source symbols, but then subsequently "shorten" the code and then provide that last source symbol and/or encoding symbols with FEC parity content. The "encoding\_symbol\_id" identifies which specific symbol (segment) within the coding block the attached payload conveys. Depending upon the value of the "encoding\_symbol\_id" and the associated "source\_block\_len" parameters for the block, the symbol (segment) referenced may be a user data or an FEC parity segment. For systematic codes, encoding symbols numbered less than the source\_block\_len contain original application data while segments greater than or equal to source\_block\_len contain parity symbols calculated for the block. The concatenation of object\_transport\_id:fec\_payload\_id can be viewed as a unique transport protocol data unit identifier for the attached segment with respect to the NORM sender's instance within a session.

Additional FEC Object Transmission Information (FTI) (as described in the FEC Building Block document [RFC5052]) is required to properly receive and decode NORM transport objects. This information MAY be provided as out-of-band session information. However, in some cases, it may be useful for the sender to include this information "in-band" to facilitate receiver operation with minimal pre-configuration. For this purpose, the NORM FEC Object Transmission Information Header Extension (EXT\_FTI) is defined. This header extension MAY be applied to NORM\_DATA and NORM\_INFO messages to provide this necessary information. The format of the EXT\_FTI consists of two parts, a general part that contains the size of the associated transport object and a portion that depends upon the FEC scheme being used. The "fec\_id" field in NORM\_DATA and NORM\_INFO messages identifies the FEC scheme. The format of the EXT\_FTI general part is given here.

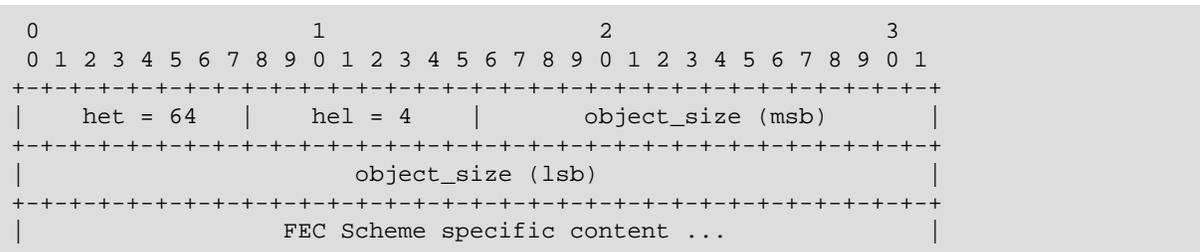


Figure 6: EXT\_FTI Header Extension General Portion Format

The header extension type "het" field value for the EXT\_FTI header extension is 64. The header extension length "hel" value depends upon the format of the FTI for encoding type identified by the "fec\_id" field.

The 48-bit "object\_size" field indicates the total length of the object (in bytes) for the static object types of NORM\_OBJECT\_FILE and NORM\_OBJECT\_DATA. This information is used by receivers to determine storage requirements and/or allocate storage for the received object. Receivers with insufficient storage capability may wish to forego reliable reception (i.e., not NACK for) of the indicated object. In the case of objects of type NORM\_OBJECT\_STREAM, the "object\_size" field is used by the sender to advertise the size of its stream buffer to the receiver group. In turn, the receivers SHOULD use this information to allocate a stream buffer for reception of corresponding size.

As noted, the format of the extension depends upon the FEC code in use, but in general it SHOULD contain any required details on the FEC code in use (e.g., FEC Instance ID, etc.). As an example, the format of the EXT\_FTI for small block systematic codes ("fec\_id" = 129) is given here:

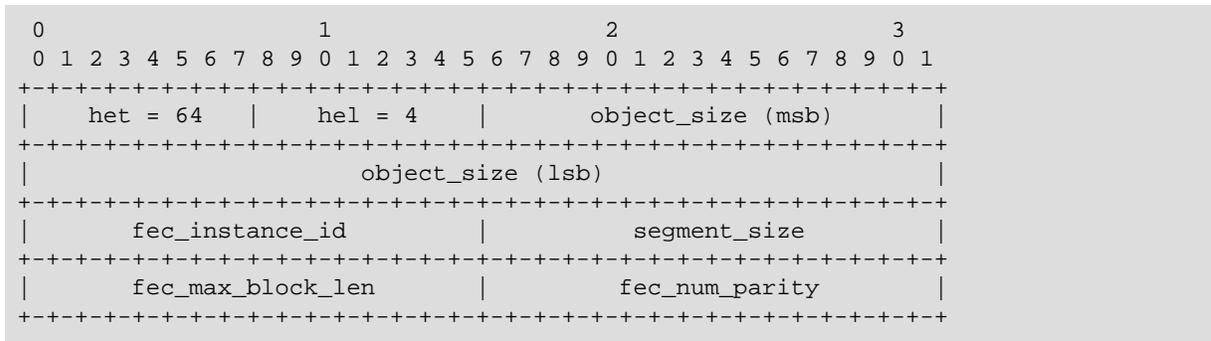


Figure 7: Example: EXT\_FTI Header Extension Format for "fec\_id" = 129

In this example (for "fec\_id" = 129), the "hel" field value is 4. The size of the EXT\_FTI header extension may be different for other FEC schemes.

The 48-bit "object\_size" serves the purpose described previously.

The "fec\_instance\_id" corresponds to the "FEC Instance ID" described in the FEC Building Block document [RFC5052]. In this case, the "fec\_instance\_id" is a value corresponding to the particular type of Small Block Systematic Code being used (e.g., Reed-Solomon GF(2<sup>8</sup>), Reed-Solomon GF(2<sup>16</sup>), etc). The standardized assignment of FEC Instance ID values is described in [RFC5052].

The "segment\_size" field indicates the sender's current setting for maximum message payload content (in bytes). This allows receivers to allocate appropriate buffering resources and to determine other information in order to properly process received data messaging. Typically, FEC parity symbol segments will be of this size.

The "fec\_max\_block\_len" indicates the current maximum number of user data segments per FEC coding block to be used by the sender during the session. This allows receivers to allocate appropriate buffer space for buffering blocks transmitted by the sender.

The "fec\_num\_parity" corresponds to the "maximum number of encoding symbols that can be generated for any source block" as described in for FEC Object Transmission Information for Small Block Systematic Codes in the FEC Building Block document [RFC5052]. For example, Reed-Solomon codes may be arbitrarily shortened to create different code variations for a given block length. In the case of Reed-Solomon (GF(2<sup>8</sup>) and GF(2<sup>16</sup>)) codes, this value indicates the maximum number of parity segments available from the sender for the coding blocks. This field MAY be interpreted differently for other systematic codes as they are defined.

The payload portion of NORM\_DATA messages includes source data or FEC encoded application content. The content of this payload depends upon the FEC scheme being employed, and support for streaming using the NORM\_OBJECT\_STREAM type, when applicable, necessitates some additional content in the payload.

The "payload\_len", "payload\_msg\_start", and "payload\_offset" fields are present ONLY for transport objects of type NORM\_OBJECT\_STREAM. These fields allow senders to arbitrarily vary the size of NORM\_DATA payload segments for streams. This allows applications to flush transmitted streams as needed to meet unique streaming requirements. For objects of types NORM\_OBJECT\_FILE and NORM\_OBJECT\_DATA, these fields are unnecessary since the receiver can calculate the payload length and offset information from the "fec\_payload\_id" using the REQUIRED block partitioning algorithm described in the FEC Building Block document [RFC5052]. When systematic FEC codes (e.g., "fec\_id" = 129) are used, the "payload\_len", "payload\_msg\_start", and "payload\_offset" fields contain actual payload\_data length, message start index (or stream control code), and byte offset values for the associated application stream data segment (the remainder of the "payload\_data" field content) for those NORM\_DATA messages containing source data symbols. In NORM\_DATA messages that contain FEC parity content, these fields do not contain values that can be directly interpreted, but instead are values computed from FEC encoding the "payload\_len", "payload\_msg\_start", and "payload\_offset" fields for the source data segments of the corresponding coding block. The actual "payload\_msg\_start", "payload\_len" and "payload\_offset" values of missing data content can be determined upon decoding a FEC coding block. Note that these fields do NOT contribute to the value of the NORM\_DATA "hdr\_len" field. These fields are present only when the "flags" portion of the NORM\_DATA message indicate the transport object is of type NORM\_OBJECT\_STREAM.

The "payload\_len" value, when non-zero, indicates the length (in bytes) of the source content contained in the associated "payload\_data" field. When the "payload\_len" value is equal to ZERO, this indicates that the "payload\_msg\_start" field should be alternatively interpreted as a "stream\_control\_code". The only "stream\_control\_code" value currently defined is `NORM_STREAM_END = 0`. The `NORM_STREAM_END` code indicates that the sender is terminating transmission of stream content at the corresponding position in the stream and the receiver should not expect content (or NACK for any content) following that position in the stream. Future versions of this specification may define additional stream control codes if necessary. Values of "stream\_control\_code" that are not understood SHOULD be ignored.

The "payload\_msg\_start" field serves one of two exclusive purposes. When the "payload\_len" value is non-zero, the "payload\_msg\_start" field, when also set to a non-zero value, indicates that the associated "payload\_data" content contains an application-defined message boundary (start-of-message). When such a message boundary is indicated, the first byte of an application-defined message, with respect to the "payload\_data" field, will be found at an offset of "payload\_msg\_start - 1" bytes. Thus, if a `NORM_DATA` payload for a `NORM_OBJECT_STREAM` contains the start of an application message at the first byte of the "payload\_data" field, the value of the "payload\_msg\_start" field will be '1'. `NORM` implementations SHOULD provide sender stream applications with a capability to mark message boundaries in this manner. Similarly, the `NORM` receiver implementation SHOULD enable the application to recover such message boundary information. This enables `NORM` receivers to "synchronize" reliable reception of transmitted message stream content in a meaningful way (i.e., meaningful to the application) at any time, whether joining a session already in progress, or departing the session and returning. Note that if the value of the "payload\_msg\_start" field is ZERO, no message boundary is present. The "payload\_msg\_start" value will always be less than or equal to the "payload\_len" value except for the special case of "payload\_len = 0", that indicates the "payload\_msg\_start" field should instead be interpreted as a "stream\_control\_code"

The "payload\_offset" field indicates the relative byte position (from the sender stream transmission start) of the source content contained in the "payload\_data" field. Note that for long-lived streams, the "payload\_offset" field may wrap.

The "payload\_data" field contains the original application source or parity content for the symbol identified by the "fec\_payload\_id". The length of this field SHALL be limited to a maximum of the sender's *NormSegmentSize* bytes as given in the FTI for the object. Note the length of this field for messages containing parity content will always be of length *NormSegmentSize*. When encoding data segments of varying sizes, the FEC encoder SHALL assume ZERO value padding for data segments with length less than the *NormSegmentSize*. It is RECOMMENDED that a sender's *NormSegmentSize* generally be constant for the duration of a given sender's term of participation in the session, but may possibly vary on a per-object basis. The *NormSegmentSize* is expected to be configurable by the sender application prior to session participation as needed for network topology maximum transmission unit (MTU) considerations. For IPv6, MTU discovery may be possibly leveraged at session startup to perform this configuration. The "payload\_data" content may be delivered directly to the application for source symbols (when systematic FEC encoding is used) or upon decoding of the FEC block. For `NORM_OBJECT_FILE` and `NORM_OBJECT_STREAM` objects, the data segment length and offset can be calculated using the block partitioning algorithm described in the FEC Building Block document [RFC5052]. For `NORM_OBJECT_STREAM` objects, the length and offset is obtained from the segment's corresponding embedded "payload\_len" and "payload\_offset" fields.

#### 4.2.2 NORM\_INFO Message

The `NORM_INFO` message is used to convey OPTIONAL, application-defined, out-of-band context information for transmitted *NormObjects*. An example `NORM_INFO` use for bulk file transfer is to place MIME type information for the associated file, data, or stream object into the `NORM_INFO` payload. Receivers may use the `NORM_INFO` content to make a decision as whether to participate in reliable reception of the associated object. Each *NormObject* can have an independent unit of `NORM_INFO` associated with it. `NORM_DATA` messages contain a flag to indicate the availability of `NORM_INFO` for a given *NormObject*. `NORM` receivers may NACK for retransmission of `NORM_INFO` when they have not received it for a given *NormObject*. The size of the `NORM_INFO` content is limited to that of a single *NormSegmentSize* for the given sender. This atomic nature allows the `NORM_INFO` to be rapidly and efficiently repaired within the `NORM` reliable transmission process.

When NORM\_INFO content is available for a *NormObject*, the NORM\_FLAG\_INFO flag SHALL be set in NORM\_DATA messages for the corresponding "object\_transport\_id" and the NORM\_INFO message shall be transmitted as the first message for the *NormObject*.

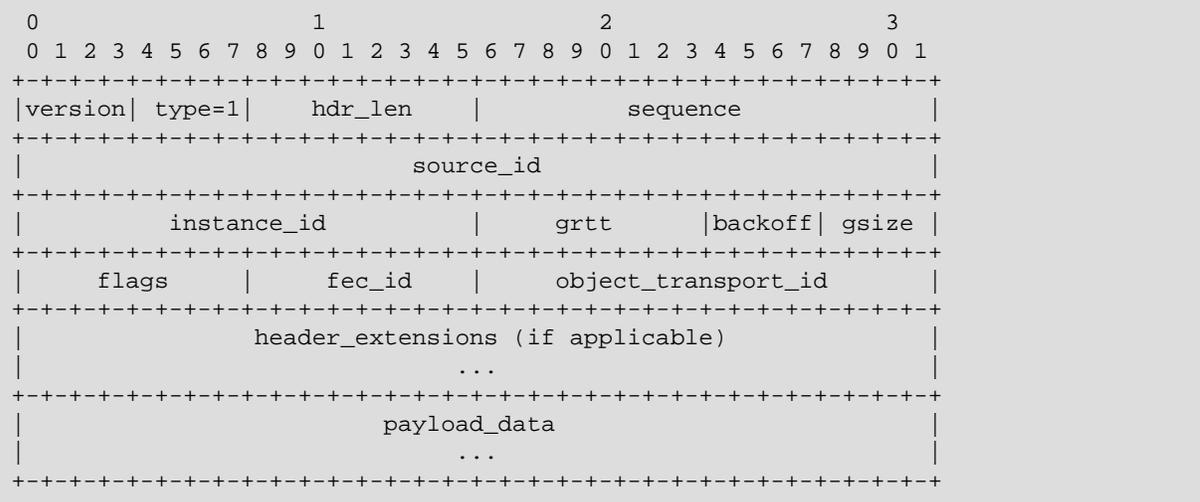


Figure 8: NORM\_INFO Message Format

The "version", "type", "hdr\_len", "sequence", and "source\_id" fields form the NORM Common Message Header as described in Section 4.1. The value of "hdr\_len" field when no header extensions are present is 4.

The "instance\_id", "grtt", "backoff", "gsize", "flags", "fec\_id", and "object\_transport\_id" fields carry the same information and serve the same purpose as with NORM\_DATA messages. These values allow the receiver to prepare appropriate buffering, etc, for further transmissions from the sender when NORM\_INFO is the first message received.

As with NORM\_DATA messages, the NORM FTI Header Extension (EXT\_FTI) may be optionally applied to NORM\_INFO messages. To conserve protocol overhead, some NORM implementations may wish to apply the EXT\_FTI when used to NORM\_INFO messages only and not to NORM\_DATA messages.

The NORM\_INFO "payload\_data" field contains sender application-defined content which can be used by receiver applications for various purposes as described above.

### 4.2.3 NORM\_CMD Messages

NORM\_CMD messages are transmitted by senders to perform a number of different protocol functions. This includes functions such as round-trip timing collection, congestion control functions, synchronization of sender/receiver repair "windows", and notification of sender status. A core set of NORM\_CMD messages is enumerated. Additionally, a range of command types remain available for potential application-specific use. Some NORM\_CMD types may have dynamic content attached. Any attached content will be limited to maximum length of the sender *NormSegmentSize* to retain the atomic nature of commands. All NORM\_CMD messages begin with a common set of fields, after the usual NORM message common header. The standard NORM\_CMD fields are:

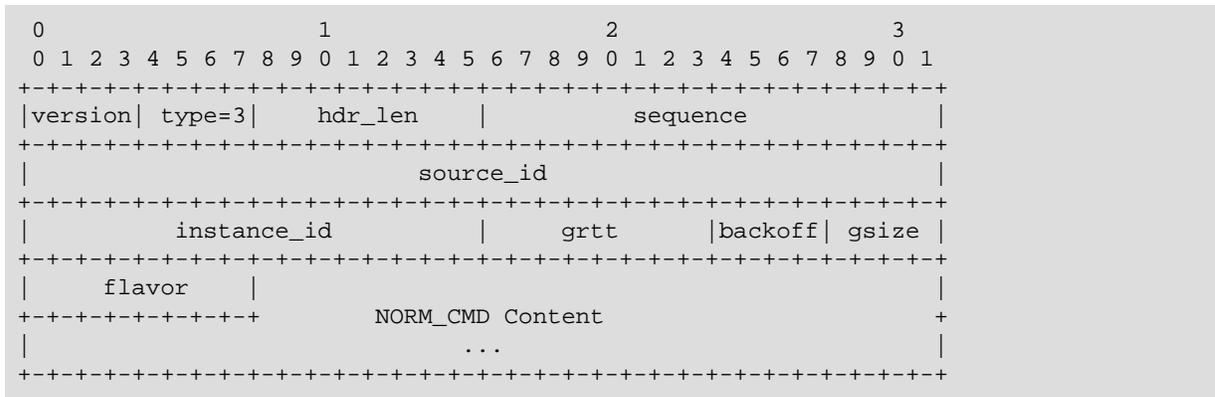


Figure 9: NORM\_CMD Standard Fields

The "version", "type", "hdr\_len", "sequence", and "source\_id" fields form the NORM Common Message Header as described in [Section 4.1](#). The value of the "hdr\_len" field for NORM\_CMD messages without header extensions present depends upon the "flavor" field.

The "instance\_id", "grtt", "backoff", and "gsize" fields provide the same information and serve the same purpose as with NORM\_DATA and NORM\_INFO messages. The "flavor" field indicates the type of command to follow. The remainder of the NORM\_CMD message is dependent upon the command type ("flavor"). NORM command flavors include:

Command	Flavor	Purpose
NORM_CMD ( FLUSH )	1	Used to indicate sender temporary end-of-transmission. (Assists in robustly initiating outstanding repair requests from receivers). May also be optionally used to collect positive acknowledgment of reliable reception from subset of receivers.
NORM_CMD ( EOT )	2	Used to indicate sender permanent end-of-transmission.
NORM_CMD ( SQUELCH )	3	Used to advertise sender's current repair window in response to out-of-range NACKs from receivers.
NORM_CMD ( CC )	4	Used for GRTT measurement and collection of congestion control feedback.
NORM_CMD ( REPAIR_ADV )	5	Used to advertise sender's aggregated repair/feedback state for suppression of unicast feedback from receivers.
NORM_CMD ( ACK_REQ )	6	Used to request application-defined positive acknowledgment from a list of receivers (OPTIONAL).
NORM_CMD ( APPLICATION )	7	Used for application-defined purposes which may need to temporarily preempt data transmission (OPTIONAL).

### 4.2.3.1 NORM\_CMD(FLUSH) Message

The NORM\_CMD(FLUSH) command is sent when the sender reaches the end of all data content and pending repairs it has queued for transmission. This may indicate a temporary or permanent end of data transmission, but the sender is still willing to respond to repair requests. This command is repeated once per  $2 * GRTT$  to excite the receiver set for any outstanding repair requests up to and including the transmission point indicated within the NORM\_CMD(FLUSH) message. The number of repeats is equal to NORM\_ROBUST\_FACTOR unless a list of receivers from which explicit positive acknowledgment is expected ("acking\_node\_list") is given. In that case, the "acking\_node\_list" is updated as acknowledgments are received and the NORM\_CMD(FLUSH) is repeated according to the mechanism described in Section 5.5.3. The greater the NORM\_ROBUST\_FACTOR, the greater the probability that all applicable receivers will be excited for acknowledgment or repair requests (NACKs) AND that the corresponding NACKs are delivered to the sender. A default value of NORM\_ROBUST\_FACTOR equal to 20 is RECOMMENDED. If a NORM\_NACK message interrupts the flush process, the sender SHALL re-initiate the flush process after any resulting repair transmissions are completed.

Note that receivers also employ a timeout mechanism to self-initiate NACKing (if there are outstanding repair needs) when no messages of any type are received from a sender. This inactivity timeout is related to the NORM\_CMD(FLUSH) and NORM\_ROBUST\_FACTOR and is specified in Section 5.3. Receivers SHALL self-initiate the NACK repair process when the inactivity has expired for a specific sender and the receiver has pending repairs needed from that sender. With a sufficiently large NORM\_ROBUST\_FACTOR value, data content is delivered with a high assurance of reliability. The penalty of a large NORM\_ROBUST\_FACTOR value is the potential transmission of excess NORM\_CMD(FLUSH) messages and a longer inactivity timeout for receivers to self-initiate a terminal NACK process.

For finite-size transport objects such as NORM\_OBJECT\_DATA and NORM\_OBJECT\_FILE, the flush process (if there are no further pending objects) occurs at the end of these objects. Thus, FEC repair information is always available for repairs in response to repair requests elicited by the flush command. However, for NORM\_OBJECT\_STREAM, the flush may occur at any time, including in the middle of an FEC coding block if systematic FEC codes are employed. In this case, the sender will not yet be able to provide FEC parity content for the concurrent coding block and will be limited to explicitly repairing the stream with source data content for that block. Applications that anticipate frequent flushing of stream content SHOULD be judicious in the selection of the FEC coding block size (i.e., do not use a very large coding block size if frequent flushing occurs). For example, a reliable multicast application transmitting an on-going series of intermittent, relatively small messages will need to trade-off using the NORM\_OBJECT\_DATA paradigm versus the NORM\_OBJECT\_STREAM paradigm with an appropriate FEC coding block size. This is analogous to application trade-offs for other transport protocols such as the selection of different TCP modes of operation such as "no delay", etc.

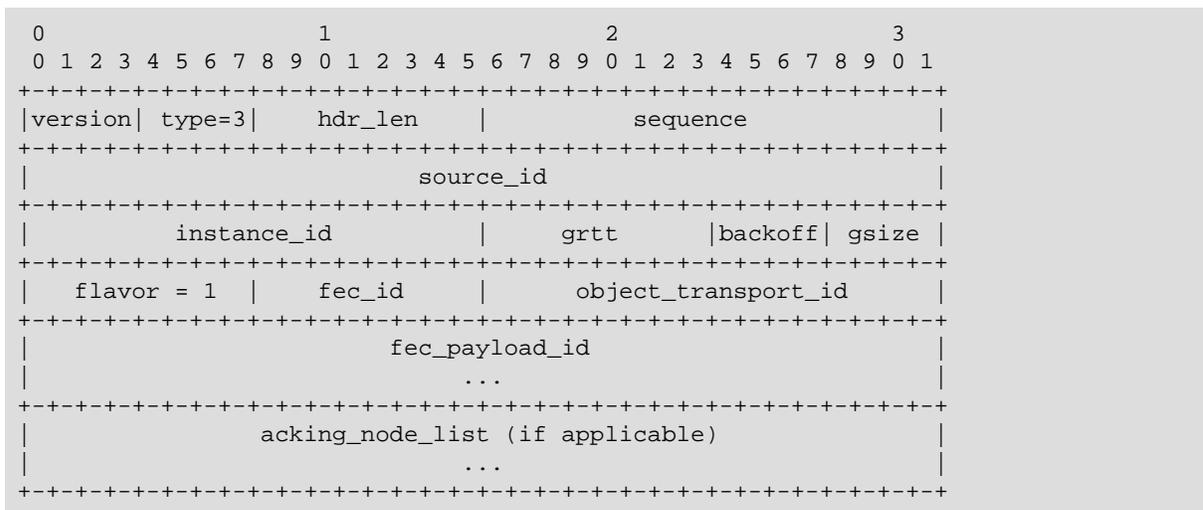


Figure 10: NORM\_CMD(FLUSH) Message Format

The "version", "type", "hdr\_len", "sequence", and "source\_id" fields form the NORM Common Message Header as described in [Section 4.1](#). In addition to the NORM common message header and standard NORM\_CMD fields, the NORM\_CMD(FLUSH) message contains fields to identify the current status and logical transmit position of the sender.

The "fec\_id" field indicates the FEC type used for the flushing "object\_transport\_id" and implies the size and format of the "fec\_payload\_id" field. Note the "hdr\_len" value for the NORM\_CMD(FLUSH) message is 4 plus the size of the "fec\_payload\_id" field when no header extensions are present.

The "object\_transport\_id" and "fec\_payload\_id" fields indicate the sender's current logical "transmit position". These fields are interpreted in the same manner as in the NORM\_DATA message type. Upon receipt of the NORM\_CMD(FLUSH), receivers are expected to check their completion state THROUGH (including) this transmission position. If receivers have outstanding repair needs in this range, they SHALL initiate the NORM NACK Repair Process as described in [Section 5.3](#). If receivers have no outstanding repair needs, no response to the NORM\_CMD(FLUSH) is generated.

For NORM\_OBJECT\_STREAM objects using systematic FEC codes, receivers MUST request "explicit-only" repair of the identified "source\_block\_number" if the given "encoding\_symbol\_id" is less than the "source\_block\_len". This condition indicates the sender has not yet completed encoding the corresponding FEC block and parity content is not yet available. An "explicit-only" repair request consists of NACK content for the applicable "source\_block\_number" which does not include any requests for parity-based repair. This allows NORM sender applications to "flush" an ongoing stream of transmission when needed, even if in the middle of an FEC block. Once the sender resumes stream transmission and passes the end of the pending coding block, subsequent NACKs from receivers SHALL request parity-based repair as usual. Note that the use of a systematic FEC code is assumed here. It should also be noted that a sender has the option of arbitrarily shortening a given code block when such an application "flush" occurs. In this case, the receiver will request explicit repair, but the sender MAY provide FEC-based repair (parity segments) in response. These parity segments MUST contain the corrected "source\_block\_len" for the shortened block and that "source\_block\_len" associated with segments containing parity content SHALL override the previously advertised "source\_block\_len". Similarly, the "source\_block\_len" associated with the highest ordinal "encoding\_symbol\_id" shall take precedence over prior symbols when a difference (e.g., due to code shortening at the sender) occurs. Normal receiver NACK initiation and construction is discussed in detail in [Section 5.3](#).

The OPTIONAL "acking\_node\_list" field contains a list of *NormNodeIds* for receivers from which the sender is requesting explicit positive acknowledgment of reception up through the transmission point identified by the "object\_transport\_id" and "fec\_payload\_id" fields. The length of the list can be inferred from the length of the received NORM\_CMD(FLUSH) message. When the "acking\_node\_list" is present, the lightweight positive acknowledgment process described in [Section 5.5.3](#) SHALL be observed.

#### 4.2.3.2 NORM\_CMD(EOT) Message

The NORM\_CMD(EOT) command is sent when the sender reaches permanent end-of-transmission with respect to the *NormSession* and will not respond to further repair requests. This allows receivers to gracefully reach closure of operation with this sender (without requiring any timeout) and free any resources that are no longer needed. The NORM\_CMD(EOT) command SHOULD be sent with the same robust mechanism as used for NORM\_CMD(FLUSH) commands to provide a high assurance of reception by the receiver set.

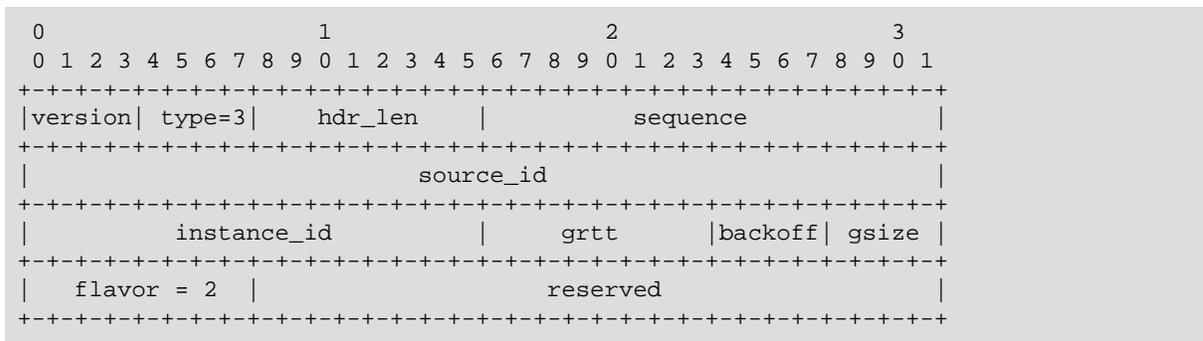


Figure 11: NORM\_CMD(EOT) Message Format

The value of the "hdr\_len" field for NORM\_CMD ( EOT ) messages without header extensions present is 4. The "reserved" field is reserved for future use and MUST be set to an all ZERO value. Receivers MUST ignore the "reserved" field.

#### 4.2.3.3 NORM\_CMD(SQUELCH) Message

The NORM\_CMD ( SQUELCH ) command is transmitted in response to outdated or invalid NORM\_NACK content received by the sender. Invalid NORM\_NACK content consists of repair requests for *NormObjects* for which the sender is unable or unwilling to provide repair. This includes repair requests for outdated objects, aborted objects, or those objects which the sender previously transmitted marked with the NORM\_FLAG\_UNRELIABLE flag. This command indicates to receivers what content is available for repair, thus serving as a description of the sender's current "repair window". Receivers SHALL not generate repair requests for content identified as invalid by a NORM\_CMD ( SQUELCH ).

The NORM\_CMD ( SQUELCH ) command is sent once per  $2 * GRTT$  at the most. The NORM\_CMD ( SQUELCH ) advertises the current "repair window" of the sender by identifying the earliest (lowest) transmission point for which it will provide repair, along with an encoded list of objects from that point forward that are no longer valid for repair. This mechanism allows the sender application to cancel or abort transmission and/or repair of specific previously enqueued objects. The list also contains the identifiers for any objects within the repair window that were sent with the NORM\_FLAG\_UNRELIABLE flag set. In normal conditions, it is expected the NORM\_CMD ( SQUELCH ) will be needed infrequently, and generally only to provide a reference repair window for receivers who have fallen "out-of-sync" with the sender due to extremely poor network conditions.

The starting point of the invalid *NormObject* list begins with the lowest invalid *NormTransportId* greater than the current "repair window" start from the invalid NACK(s) that prompted the generation of the squelch. The length of the list is limited by the sender's *NormSegmentSize*. This allows the receivers to learn the status of the sender's applicable object repair window with minimal transmission of NORM\_CMD ( SQUELCH ) commands. The format of the NORM\_CMD ( SQUELCH ) message is:

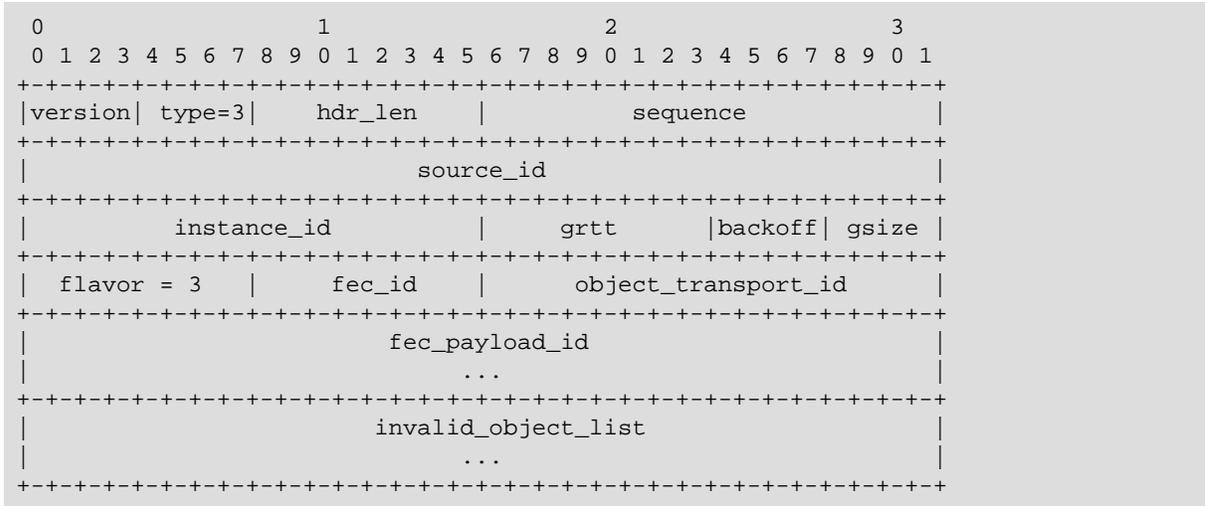


Figure 12: NORM\_CMD(SQUELCH) Message Format

In addition to the NORM common message header and standard NORM\_CMD fields, the NORM\_CMD(SQUELCH) message contains fields to identify the earliest logical transmit position of the sender's current repair window and an "invalid\_object\_list" beginning with the index of the logically earliest invalid repair request from the offending NACK message which initiated the NORM\_CMD(SQUELCH) transmission. The value of the "hdr\_len" field when no extensions are present is 4 plus the size of the "fec\_payload\_id" field that is dependent upon the FEC scheme identified by the "fec\_id" field.

The "object\_transport\_id" and "fec\_payload\_id" fields are concatenated to indicate the beginning of the sender's current repair window (i.e., the logically earliest point in its transmission history for which the sender can provide repair). The "fec\_id" field implies the size and format of the "fec\_payload\_id" field. This serves as an advertisement of a "synchronization" point for receivers to request repair. Note, that while an "encoding\_symbol\_id" may be included in the "fec\_payload\_id" field, the sender's repair window SHOULD be aligned on FEC coding block boundaries and thus the "encoding\_symbol\_id" SHOULD be zero.

The "invalid\_object\_list" is a list of 16-bit *NormTransportIds* that, although they are within the range of the sender's current repair window, are no longer available for repair from the sender. For example, a sender application may dequeue an out-of-date object even though it is still within the repair window. The total size of the "invalid\_object\_list" content is can be determined from the packet's payload length and is limited to a maximum of the *NormSegmentSize* of the sender. Thus, for very large repair windows, it is possible that a single NORM\_CMD(SQUELCH) message may not be capable of listing the entire set of invalid objects in the repair window. In this case, the sender SHALL ensure that the list begins with a *NormObjectId* that is greater than or equal to the lowest ordinal invalid *NormObjectId* from the NACK message(s) that prompted the NORM\_CMD(SQUELCH) generation. The *NormObjectIds* in the "invalid\_object\_list" MUST be ordinally greater than the "object\_transport\_id" marking the beginning of the sender's repair window. This insures convergence of the squelch process, even if multiple invalid NACK/ squelch iterations are required. This explicit description of invalid content within the sender's current window allows the sender application (most notably for discrete object transport) to arbitrarily invalidate (i.e., dequeue) portions of enqueued content (e.g., certain objects) for which it no longer wishes to provide reliable transport.

#### 4.2.3.4 NORM\_CMD(CC) Message

The NORM\_CMD(CC) messages contains fields to enable sender-to-receiver group greatest round-trip time (GRTT) measurement and to excite the group for congestion control feedback. A baseline NORM congestion control scheme (NORM-CC), based on the TCP-Friendly Multicast Congestion Control (TFMCC) scheme of [RFC4654] is described in Section 5.5.2 of this document. The NORM\_CMD(CC) message is usually transmitted as part of NORM-CC congestion control operation. A NORM header extension is defined below to be used with the NORM\_CMD(CC) message to support NORM-CC operation. Different header extensions may be defined for the

NORM\_CMD(CC) (and/or other NORM messages as needed) to support alternative congestion control schemes in the future. If NORM is operated in a private network with congestion control operation disabled, the NORM\_CMD(CC) message is then used for GRTT measurement only and may optionally be sent less frequently than with congestion control operation.

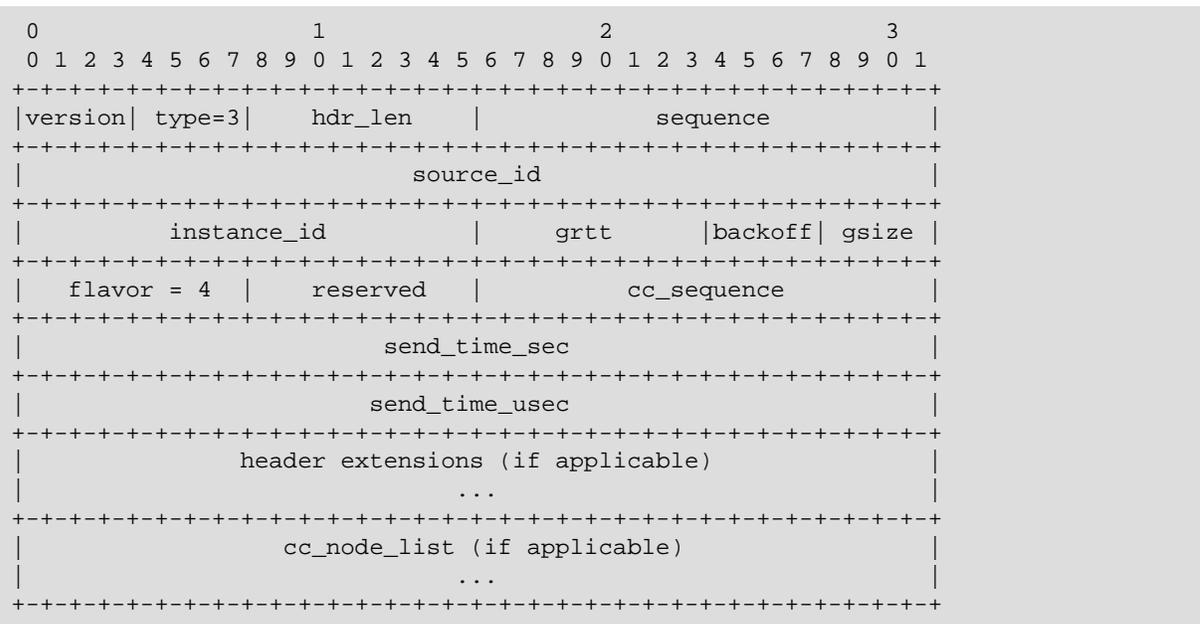


Figure 13: NORM\_CMD(CC) Message Format

The NORM common message header and standard NORM\_CMD fields serve their usual purposes. The value of the "hdr\_len" field when no header extensions are present is 6.

The "reserved" field is for potential future use and MUST be set to ZERO in this version of the NORM protocol and its baseline NORM-CC congestion control scheme. It may be possible that alternative congestion control schemes may use the NORM\_CMD(CC) message defined here and leverage the "reserved" field for scheme-specific purposes.

The "cc\_sequence" field is a sequence number applied by the sender. For NORM-CC operation, it is used to provide functionality equivalent to the "feedback round number" (fb\_nr) described in [RFC4654]. The most recently received "cc\_sequence" value is recorded by receivers and can be fed back to the sender in congestion control feedback generated by the receivers for that sender. The "cc\_sequence" number can also be used in NORM implementations to assess how recently a receiver has received NORM\_CMD(CC) probes from the sender. This can be useful instrumentation for complex or experimental multicast routing environments.

The "send\_time" field is a timestamp indicating the time that the NORM\_CMD(CC) message was transmitted. This consists of a 64-bit field containing 32-bits with the time in seconds ("send\_time\_sec") and 32-bits with the time in microseconds ("send\_time\_usec") since some reference time the source maintains (usually 00:00:00, 1 January 1970). The byte ordering of the fields is "Big Endian" network order. Receivers use this timestamp adjusted by the amount of delay from the time they received the NORM\_CMD(CC) message to the time of their response as the "grtt\_response" portion of NORM\_ACK and NORM\_NACK messages generated. This allows the sender to evaluate round-trip times to different receivers for congestion control and other (e.g., GRTT determination) purposes.

To facilitate the baseline NORM-CC scheme described in Section 5.5.2, a NORM-CC Rate header extension (EXT\_RATE) is defined to inform the group of the sender's current transmission rate. This is used along with the loss detection "sequence" field of all NORM sender messages and the NORM\_CMD(CC) GRTT collection process to support NORM-CC congestion control operation. The format of this header extension is as follows:



Flag	Value	Purpose
NORM_FLAG_CC_PLR	0x02	Receiver is a potential limiting receiver (PLR).
NORM_FLAG_CC_RTT	0x04	Receiver has measured RTT with respect to sender.
NORM_FLAG_CC_START	0x08	Sender/receiver is in "slow start" phase of congestion control operation (i.e., The receiver has not yet detected any packet loss and the "cc_rate" field is the receiver's actual measured receive rate).
NORM_FLAG_CC_LEAVE	0x10	Receiver is imminently leaving the session and its feedback should not be considered in congestion control operation.

The "cc\_rtt" contains a quantized representation of the RTT as measured by the sender with respect to the indicated receiver. This field is valid only if the NORM\_FLAG\_CC\_RTT flag is set in the "cc\_flags" field. This one byte field is a quantized representation of the RTT using the algorithm described in the [Multicast NACK Building Block document \[RFC5401\]](#).

The "cc\_rate" field contains a representation of the receiver's current calculated (during steady-state congestion control operation) or twice its measured (during the *slow start* phase) congestion control rate. This field is encoded and decoded using the same technique as described for the NORM\_CMD(CC) "send\_rate" field.

#### 4.2.3.5 NORM\_CMD(REPAIR\_ADV) Message

The NORM\_CMD(REPAIR\_ADV) message is used by the sender to "advertise" its aggregated repair state from NORM\_NACK messages accumulated during a repair cycle and/or congestion control feedback received. This message is sent only when the sender has received NORM\_NACK and/or NORM\_ACK(CC) (when congestion control is enabled) messages via unicast transmission instead of multicast. By relaying this information to the receiver set, suppression of feedback can be achieved even when receivers are unicasting that feedback instead of multicasting it among the group [[NormFeedback](#)].

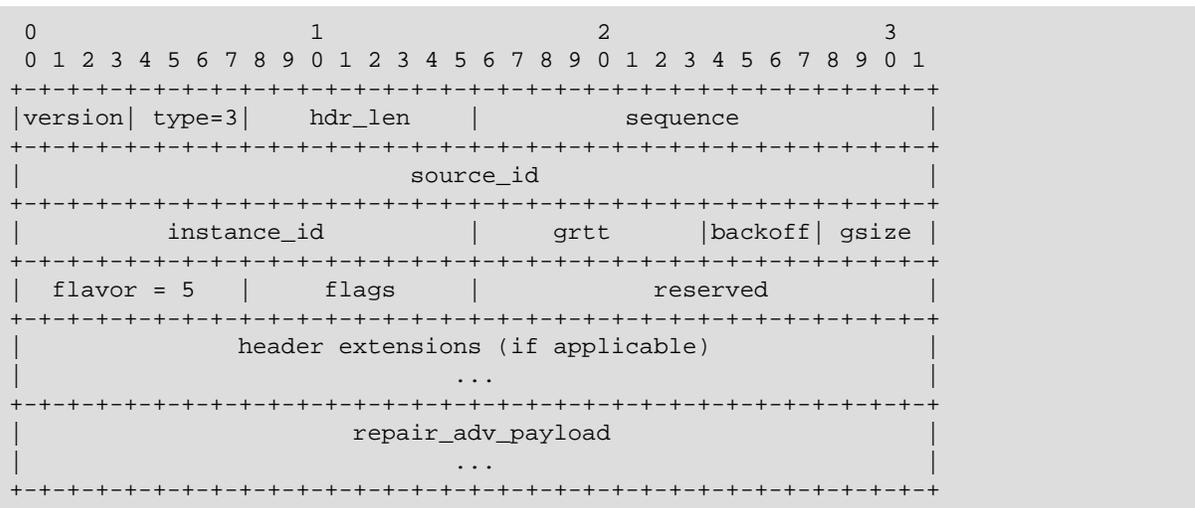


Figure 14: NORM\_CMD(REPAIR\_ADV) Message Format

The "instance\_id", "grtt", "backoff", "gsize", and "flavor" fields serve the same purpose as in other NORM\_CMD messages. The value of the "hdr\_len" field when no extensions are present is 4.

The "flags" field provide information on the NORM\_CMD(REPAIR\_ADV) content. There is currently one NORM\_CMD(REPAIR\_ADV) flag defined:

```
NORM_REPAIR_ADV_FLAG_LLIMIT = 0x01
```

This flag is set by the sender when it is unable to fit its full current repair state into a single *NormSegmentSize*. If this flag is set, receivers should limit their NACK response to generating NACK content only up through the maximum ordinal transmission position (*objectId::fecPayloadId*) included in the "repair\_adv\_content".

When congestion control operation is enabled, a header extension may be applied to the NORM\_CMD(REPAIR\_ADV) representing the most limiting (in terms of congestion control feedback suppression) congestion control response. This allows the NORM\_CMD(REPAIR\_ADV) message to suppress receiver congestion control responses as well as NACK feedback messages. The field is defined as a header extension so that alternative congestion control schemes may be used with NORM without revision to this document. A NORM-CC Feedback Header Extension (EXT\_CC) is defined to encapsulate congestion control feedback within NORM\_NACK, NORM\_ACK, and NORM\_CMD(REPAIR\_ADV) messages. If another congestion control technique (e.g., Pragmatic General Multicast Congestion Control (PGMCC) [[PgmccPaper](#)]) is used within a NORM implementation, an additional header extension MAY need to be defined encapsulate any required feedback content. The NORM-CC Feedback Header Extension format is:

```

0                               1                               2                               3
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 1
+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+
|   het = 3   |   hel = 3   |   cc_sequence   |
+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+
|   cc_flags   |   cc_rtt   |   cc_loss   |
+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+
|           cc_rate           |   cc_reserved   |
+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+

```

The "cc\_sequence" field contains the current greatest "cc\_sequence" value receivers have received in NORM\_CMD(CC) messages from the sender. This information assists the sender in congestion control operation by providing an indicator of how current ("fresh") the receiver's round-trip measurement reference time is and whether the receiver has been successfully receiving recent congestion control probes. For example, if it is apparent the receiver has not been receiving recent congestion control probes (and thus possibly other messages from the sender), the sender may choose to take congestion avoidance measures. For NORM\_CMD(REPAIR\_ADV) messages, the sender SHALL set the "cc\_sequence" field value to the value set in the last NORM\_CMD(CC) message sent.

The "cc\_flags" field contains bits representing the receiver's state with respect to congestion control operation. The possible values for the "cc\_flags" field are those specified for the NORM\_CMD(CC) message node list item flags. These fields are used by receivers in controlling (suppressing as necessary) their congestion control feedback. For NORM\_CMD(REPAIR\_ADV) messages, the NORM\_FLAG\_CC\_RTT should be set *only* when *all* feedback messages received by the sender have the flag set. Similarly, the NORM\_FLAG\_CC\_CLR or NORM\_FLAG\_CC\_PLR should be set only when *no* feedback has been received from non-CLR or non-PLR receivers. And the NORM\_FLAG\_CC\_LEAVE should be set only when all feedback messages the sender has received have this flag set. These heuristics for setting the flags in NORM\_CMD(REPAIR\_ADV) ensure the most effective suppression of receivers providing unicast feedback messages.

The "cc\_rtt" field SHALL be set to a default maximum value and the NORM\_FLAG\_CC\_RTT flag SHALL be cleared when no receiver has yet received RTT measurement information. When a receiver has received RTT measurement information, it shall set the "cc\_rtt" value accordingly and set the NORM\_FLAG\_CC\_RTT flag in the "cc\_flags" field. For NORM\_CMD(REPAIR\_ADV) messages, the sender SHALL set the "cc\_rtt" field value to the largest non-CLR/non-PLR RTT it has measured from receivers for the current feedback round.

The "cc\_loss" field represents the receiver's current packet loss fraction estimate for the indicated source. The loss fraction is a value from 0.0 to 1.0 corresponding to a range of zero to 100 percent packet loss. The 16-bit "cc\_loss" value is calculated by the following formula:

```
"cc_loss" = decimal_loss_fraction * 65535.0
```

For NORM\_CMD(REPAIR\_ADV) messages, the sender SHALL set the "cc\_loss" field value to the largest non-CLR/non-PLR loss estimate it has received from receivers for the current feedback round.

The "cc\_rate" field represents the receivers current local congestion control rate. During "slow start", when the receiver has detected no loss, this value is set to twice the actual rate it has measured from the corresponding sender and the NORM\_FLAG\_CC\_START is set in the "cc\_flags" field. Otherwise, the receiver calculates a congestion control rate based on its loss measurement and RTT measurement information (even if default) for the "cc\_rate" field. For NORM\_CMD(REPAIR\_ADV) messages, the sender SHALL set the "cc\_loss" field value to the lowest non-CLR/non-PLR "cc\_rate" report it has received from receivers for the current feedback round.

The "cc\_reserved" field is reserved for future NORM protocol use. Currently, senders SHALL set this field to ZERO, and receivers SHALL ignore the content of this field.

The "repair\_adv\_payload" is in exactly the same form as the "nack\_content" of NORM\_NACK messages and can be processed by receivers for suppression purposes in the same manner, with the exception of the condition when the NORM\_REPAIR\_ADV\_FLAG\_LIMIT is set.

#### 4.2.3.6 NORM\_CMD(ACK\_REQ) Message

The NORM\_CMD(ACK\_REQ) message is used by the sender to request acknowledgment from a specified list of receivers. This message is used in providing a lightweight positive acknowledgment mechanism that is OPTIONAL for use by the reliable multicast application. A range of acknowledgment request types is provided for use at the application's discretion. Provision for application-defined, positively-acknowledged commands allows the application to automatically take advantage of transmission and round-trip timing information available to the NORM protocol. The details of the NORM positive acknowledgment process including transmission of the NORM\_CMD(ACK\_REQ) messages and the receiver response (NORM\_ACK) are described in Section 5.5.3. The format of the NORM\_CMD(ACK\_REQ) message is:

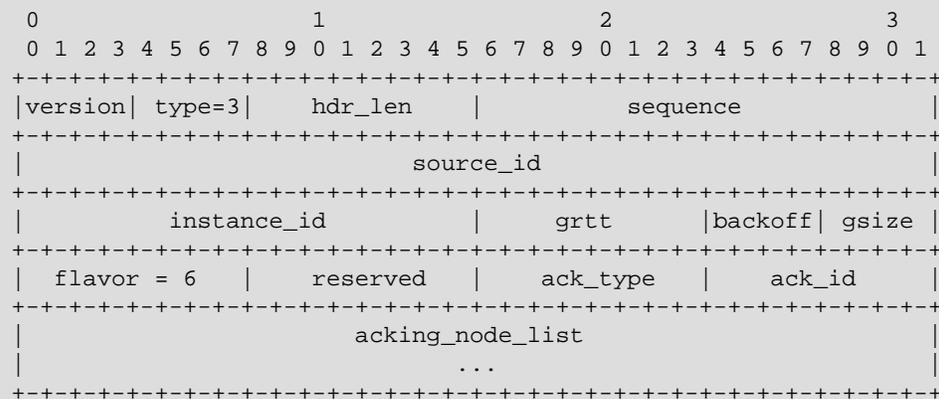


Figure 15: NORM\_CMD(ACK\_REQ) Message Format

The NORM common message header and standard NORM\_CMD fields serve their usual purposes. The value of the "hdr\_len" field for NORM\_CMD(ACK\_REQ) messages with no header extension present is 4.

The "ack\_type" field indicates the type of acknowledgment being requested and thus implies rules for how the receiver will treat this request. The following "ack\_type" values are defined and are also used in NORM\_ACK messages described later:

ACK Type	Value	Purpose
NORM_ACK_CC	1	Used to identify NORM_ACK messages sent in response to NORM_CMD(CC) messages.

ACK Type	Value	Purpose
NORM_ACK_FLUSH	2	Used to identify NORM_ACK messages sent in response to NORM_CMD ( FLUSH ) messages.
NORM_ACK_RESERVED	3-15	Reserved for possible future NORM protocol use.
NORM_ACK_APPLICATION	16-255	Used at application's discretion.

The NORM\_ACK\_CC value is provided for use only in NORM\_ACKs generated in response to the NORM\_CMD ( CC ) messages used in congestion control operation. Similarly, the NORM\_ACK\_FLUSH is provided for use only in NORM\_ACKs generated in response to applicable NORM\_CMD ( FLUSH ) messages. NORM\_CMD ( ACK\_REQ ) messages with "ack\_type" of NORM\_ACK\_CC or NORM\_ACK\_FLUSH SHALL NOT be generated by the sender.

The NORM\_ACK\_RESERVED range of "ack\_type" values is provided for possible future NORM protocol use.

The NORM\_ACK\_APPLICATION range of "ack\_type" values is provided so that NORM applications may implement application-defined, positively-acknowledged commands that are able to leverage internal transmission and round-trip timing information available to the NORM protocol implementation.

The "ack\_id" provides a sequenced identifier for the given NORM\_CMD ( ACK\_REQ ) message. This "ack\_id" is returned in NORM\_ACK messages generated by the receivers so that the sender may associate the response with its corresponding request.

The "reserved" field is reserved for possible future protocol use and SHALL be set to ZERO by senders and ignored by receivers.

The "acking\_node\_list" field contains the *NormNodeIds* of the current NORM receivers that are desired to provide positive acknowledge ( NORM\_ACK ) to this request. The packet payload length implies the length of the "acking\_node\_list" and its length is limited to the sender *NormSegmentSize*. The individual *NormNodeId* items are listed in network (Big Endian) byte order. If a receiver's *NormNodeId* is included in the "acking\_node\_list", it SHALL schedule transmission of a NORM\_ACK message as described in [Section 5.5.3](#).

#### 4.2.3.7 NORM\_CMD(APPLICATION) Message

This command allows the NORM application to robustly transmit application-defined commands. The command message preempts any ongoing data transmission and is repeated up to NORM\_ROBUST\_FACTOR times at a rate of once per  $2 * GRTT$ . This rate of repetition allows the application to observe any response (if that is the application's purpose for the command) before it is repeated. Possible responses may include initiation of data transmission, other NORM\_CMD ( APPLICATION ) messages, or even application-defined, positively-acknowledge commands from other *NormSession* participants. The transmission of these commands will preempt data transmission when they are scheduled and may be multiplexed with ongoing data transmission. This type of robustly transmitted command allows NORM applications to define a complete set of session control mechanisms with less state than the transfer of FEC encoded reliable content requires while taking advantage of NORM transmission and round-trip timing information.

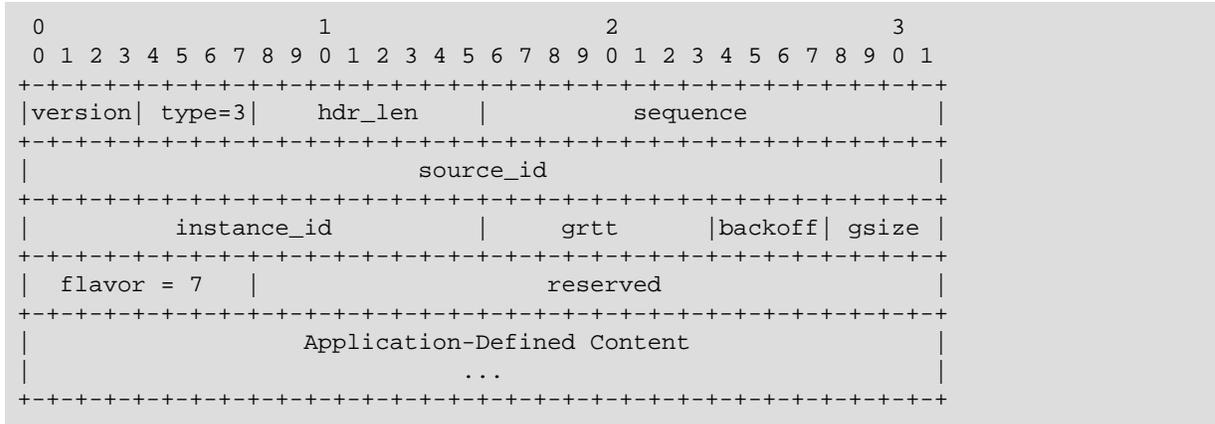


Figure 16: NORM\_CMD(APPLICATION) Message Format

The NORM common message header and NORM\_CMD fields are interpreted as previously described. The value of the NORM\_CMD (APPLICATION) "hdr\_len" field when no header extensions are present is 4.

The "Application-Defined Content" area contains information in a format at the discretion of the application. The size of this payload SHALL be limited to a maximum of the sender's *NormSegmentSize* setting. Upon reception, the NORM protocol implementation SHALL deliver the content to the receiver application. Note that any detection of duplicate reception of a NORM\_CMD (APPLICATION) message is the responsibility of the application.

### 4.3 Receiver Messages

The NORM message types generated by participating receivers consist of the NORM\_NACK and NORM\_ACK message types. NORM\_NACK messages are sent to request repair of missing data content from sender transmission and NORM\_ACK messages are generated in response to certain sender commands including NORM\_CMD (CC) and NORM\_CMD (ACK\_REQ).

#### 4.3.1 NORM\_NACK Message

The principal purpose of NORM\_NACK messages is for receivers to request repair of sender content via selective, negative acknowledgment upon detection of incomplete data. NORM\_NACK messages will be transmitted according to the rules of NORM\_NACK generation and suppression described in [Section 5.3](#). NORM\_NACK messages also contain additional fields to provide feedback to the sender(s) for purposes of round-trip timing collection and congestion control.

The payload of NORM\_NACK messages contains one or more repair requests for different objects or portions of those objects. The NORM\_NACK message format is as follows:

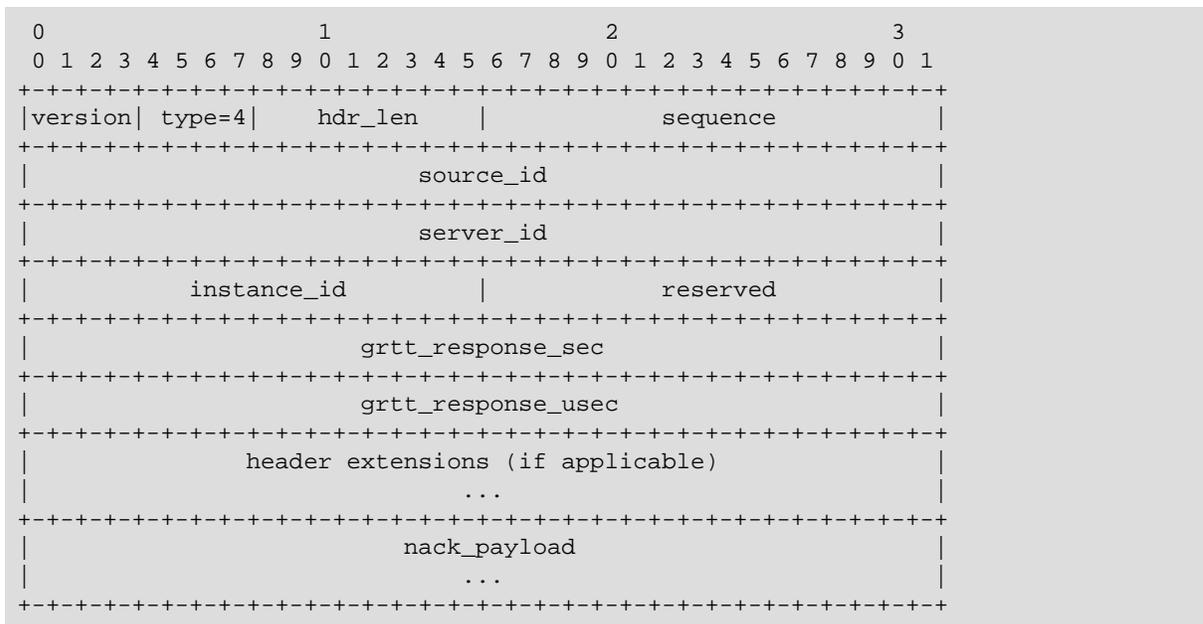


Figure 17: NORM\_NACK Message Format

The NORM common message header fields serve their usual purposes. The value of the "hdr\_len" field for NORM\_NACK messages without header extensions present is 6.

The "server\_id" field identifies the NORM sender to which the NORM\_NACK message is destined.

The "instance\_id" field contains the current session identifier given by the sender identified by the "server\_id" field in its sender messages. The sender SHOULD ignore feedback messages which contain an invalid "instance\_id" value.

The "grtt\_response" fields contain an adjusted version of the timestamp from the most recently received NORM\_CMD (CC) message for the indicated NORM sender. The format of the "grtt\_response" is the same as the "send\_time" field of the NORM\_CMD (CC). The "grtt\_response" value is relative to the "send\_time" the source provided with a corresponding NORM\_CMD (CC) command. The receiver adjusts the source's NORM\_CMD (CC) "send\_time" timestamp by adding the time delta from when the receiver received the NORM\_CMD (CC) to when the NORM\_NACK is transmitted in response to calculate the value in the "grtt\_response" field. This is the "receive\_to\_response\_delta" value used in the following formula:

$$\text{grtt\_response} = \text{NORM\_CMD(CC) send\_time} + \text{receive\_to\_response\_delta}$$

The receiver SHALL set the "grtt\_response" to a ZERO value, to indicate that it has not yet received a NORM\_CMD (CC) message from the indicated sender and that the sender should ignore the "grtt\_response" in this message.

For NORM-CC operation, the NORM-CC Feedback Header Extension, as described in the NORM\_CMD (REPAIR\_ADV) message description, is added to NORM\_NACK messages to provide feedback on the receivers current state with respect to congestion control operation. Note that alternative header extensions for congestion control feedback may be defined for alternative congestion control schemes for NORM use in the future.

The "reserved" field is for potential future NORM use and SHALL be set to ZERO for this version of the protocol.

The "nack\_payload" of the NORM\_NACK message specifies the repair needs of the receiver with respect to the NORM sender indicated by the "server\_id" field. The receiver constructs repair requests based on the NORM\_DATA and/or NORM\_INFO segments it requires from the sender in order to complete reliable reception up to the sender's transmission position at the moment the receiver initiates the NACK Procedure as described in Section 5.3. A single NORM Repair Request consists of a list of items, ranges, and/or FEC coding block erasure counts for

needed NORM\_DATA and/or NORM\_INFO content. Multiple repair requests may be concatenated within the "nack\_payload" field of a NORM\_NACK message. Note that a single NORM Repair Request can possibly include multiple "items", "ranges", or "erasure\_counts". In turn, the "nack\_payload" field MAY contain multiple repair requests. A single NORM Repair Request has the following format:

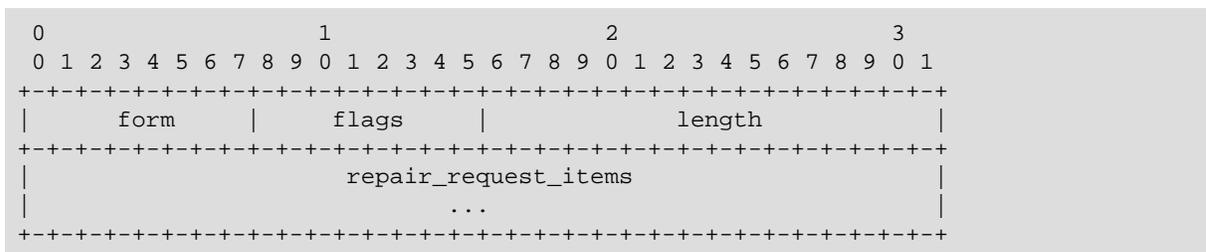


Figure 18: NORM Repair Request Format

The "form" field indicates the type of repair request items given in the "repair\_request\_items" list. Possible values for the "form" field include:

Form	Value
NORM_NACK_ITEMS	1
NORM_NACK_RANGES	2
NORM_NACK_ERASURES	3

A "form" value of NORM\_NACK\_ITEMS indicates each repair request item in the "repair\_request\_items" list is to be treated as an individual request. A value of NORM\_NACK\_RANGES indicates that the "repair\_request\_items" list consists of *pairs* of repair request items that correspond to inclusive ranges of repair needs. And the NORM\_NACK\_ERASURES "form" indicates that the repair request items are to be treated individually and that the "encoding\_symbol\_id" portion of the "fec\_payload\_id" field of the repair request item (see below) is to be interpreted as an erasure count for the FEC coding block identified by the repair request item's "source\_block\_number".

The "flags" field is currently used to indicate the level of data content for which the repair request items apply (i.e., an individual segment, entire FEC coding block, or entire transport object). Possible flag values include:

Flag	Value	Purpose
NORM_NACK_SEGMENT	0x01	Indicates the listed segment(s) or range of segments are required as repair.
NORM_NACK_BLOCK	0x02	Indicates the listed block(s) or range of blocks in entirety are required as repair.
NORM_NACK_INFO	0x04	Indicates that NORM_INFO is required as repair for the listed object(s).
NORM_NACK_OBJECT	0x08	Indicates the listed object(s) or range of objects in entirety are required as repair.

When the NORM\_NACK\_SEGMENT flag is set, the "object\_transport\_id" and "fec\_payload\_id" fields are used to determine which sets or ranges of individual NORM\_DATA segments are needed to repair content at the receiver. When the NORM\_NACK\_BLOCK flag is set, this indicates the receiver is completely missing the indicated coding block(s) and requires transmissions sufficient to repair the indicated block(s) in their entirety. When the NORM\_NACK\_INFO flag is set, this indicates the receiver is missing the NORM\_INFO segment for the indicated "object\_transport\_id". Note the NORM\_NACK\_INFO may be set in combination with the NORM\_NACK\_BLOCK or NORM\_NACK\_SEGMENT flags, or may be set alone. When the NORM\_NACK\_OBJECT flag is set, this indicates the receiver is missing the entire *NormTransportObject* referenced by the "object\_transport\_id". This also implicitly

requests any available NORM\_INFO for the *NormObject*, if applicable. The "fec\_payload\_id" field is ignored when the flag NORM\_NACK\_OBJECT is set.

The "length" field value is the length in bytes of the "repair\_request\_items" field.

The "repair\_request\_items" field consists of a list of individual or range pairs of transport data unit identifiers in the following format.

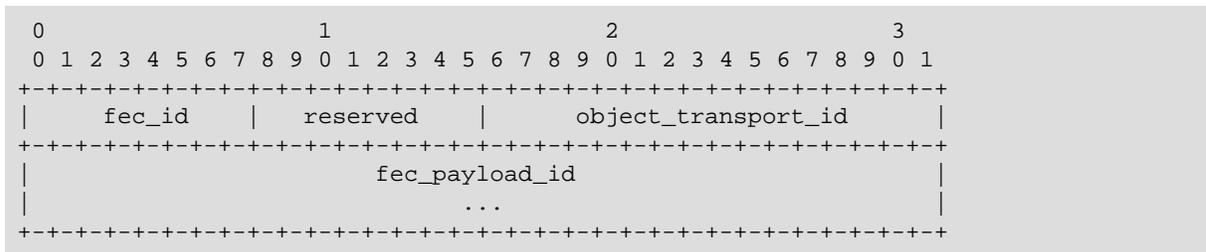


Figure 19: NORM Repair Request Item Format

The "fec\_id" indicates the FEC type and can be used to determine the format of the "fec\_payload\_id" field. The "reserved" field is kept for possible future use and SHALL be set to a ZERO value and ignored by NORM nodes processing NACK content.

The "object\_transport\_id" corresponds to the *NormObject* for which repair is being requested and the "fec\_payload\_id" identifies the specific FEC coding block and/or segment being requested. When the NORM\_NACK\_OBJECT flag is set, the value of the "fec\_payload\_id" field is ignored. When the NORM\_NACK\_BLOCK flag is set, only the FEC code block identifier portion of the "fec\_payload\_id" is to be interpreted.

The format of the "fec\_payload\_id" field depends upon the "fec\_id" field value.

When the receiver's repair needs dictate that different forms (mixed ranges and/or individual items) or types (mixed specific segments and/or blocks or objects in entirety) are required to complete reliable transmission, multiple NORM Repair Requests with different "form" and or "flags" values can be concatenated within a single NORM\_NACK message. Additionally, NORM receivers SHALL construct NORM\_NACK messages with their repair requests in ordinal order with respect to "object\_transport\_id" and "fec\_payload\_id" values. The "nack\_payload" size SHALL NOT exceed the *NormSegmentSize* for the sender to which the NORM\_NACK is destined.

#### NORM\_NACK Content Examples:

In these examples, a small block, systematic FEC code ("fec\_id" = 129) is assumed with a user data block length of 32 segments. In Example 1, a list of individual NORM\_NACK\_ITEMS repair requests is given. In Example 2, a list of NORM\_NACK\_RANGES requests AND a single NORM\_NACK\_ITEMS request are concatenated to illustrate the possible content of a NORM\_NACK message. Note that FEC coding block erasure counts could also be provided in each case. However, the erasure counts are not really necessary since the sender can easily determine the erasure count while processing the NACK content. However, the erasure count option may be useful for operation with other FEC codes or for intermediate system purposes.

Example 1: NORM\_NACK "nack\_payload" for: Object 12, Coding Block 3, Segments 2,5,and 8

```

0          1          2          3
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 1
+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+
| form = 1 | flags = 0x01 | length = 36 |
+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+
| fec_id = 129 | reserved | object_transport_id = 12 |
+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+
| source_block_number = 3 |
+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+
| source_block_length = 32 | encoding_symbol_id = 2 |
+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+
| fec_id = 129 | reserved | object_transport_id = 12 |
+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+
| source_block_number = 3 |
+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+
| source_block_length = 32 | encoding_symbol_id = 5 |
+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+
| fec_id = 129 | reserved | object_transport_id = 12 |
+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+
| source_block_number = 3 |
+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+
| source_block_length = 32 | encoding_symbol_id = 8 |
+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+

```

Example 2: NORM\_NACK "nack\_payload" for: Object 18, Coding Block 6, Segments 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10; and Object 19 NORM\_INFO and Coding Block 1, segment 3

```

0          1          2          3
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 1
+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+
| form = 2 | flags = 0x01 | length = 24 |
+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+
| fec_id = 129 | reserved | object_transport_id = 18 |
+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+
| source_block_number = 6 |
+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+
| source_block_length = 32 | encoding_symbol_id = 5 |
+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+
| fec_id = 129 | reserved | object_transport_id = 18 |
+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+
| source_block_number = 6 |
+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+
| source_block_length = 32 | encoding_symbol_id = 10 |
+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+
| form = 1 | flags = 0x05 | length = 12 |
+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+
| fec_id = 129 | reserved | object_transport_id = 19 |
+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+
| source_block_number = 1 |
+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+
| source_block_length = 32 | encoding_symbol_id = 3 |
+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+

```

### 4.3.2 NORM\_ACK Message

The NORM\_ACK message is intended to be used primarily as part of NORM congestion control operation and round-trip timing measurement. As mentioned in the NORM\_CMD (ACK\_REQ) message description, the

acknowledgment type `NORM_ACK_CC` is provided for this purpose. The generation of `NORM_ACK(CC)` messages for round-trip timing estimation and congestion-control operation is described in [Section 5.5.1](#) and [Section 5.5.2](#), respectively. However, some multicast applications may benefit from some limited form of positive acknowledgment for certain functions. A simple, scalable positive acknowledgment scheme is defined in [Section 5.5.3](#) that can be leveraged by protocol implementations when appropriate. The `NORM_CMD(FLUSH)` may be used for OPTIONAL collection of positive acknowledgment of reliable reception to a certain "watermark" transmission point from specific receivers using this mechanism. The `NORM_ACK` type `NORM_ACK_FLUSH` is provided for this purpose and the format of the "ack\_payload" for this acknowledgment type is given below. Beyond that, a range of application-defined "ack\_type" values is provided for use at the NORM application's discretion. Implementations making use of application-defined positive acknowledgments may also make use the "ack\_payload" as needed, observing the constraint that the "ack\_payload" field size be limited to a maximum of the *NormSegmentSize* for the sender to which the `NORM_ACK` is destined.

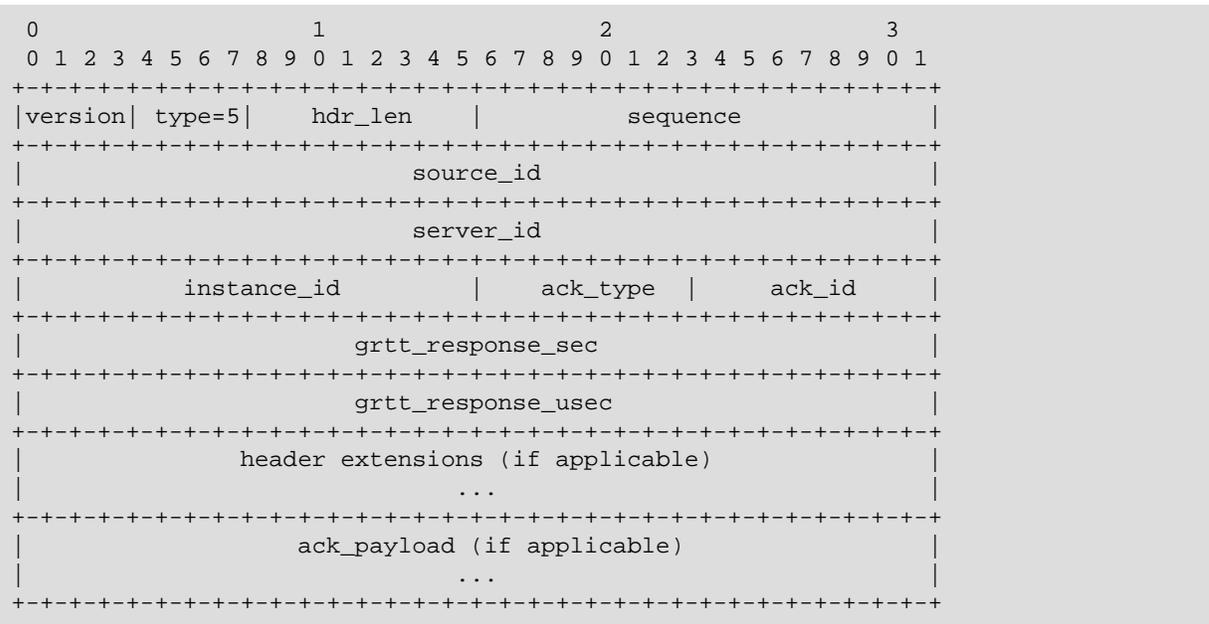


Figure 20: NORM\_ACK Message Format

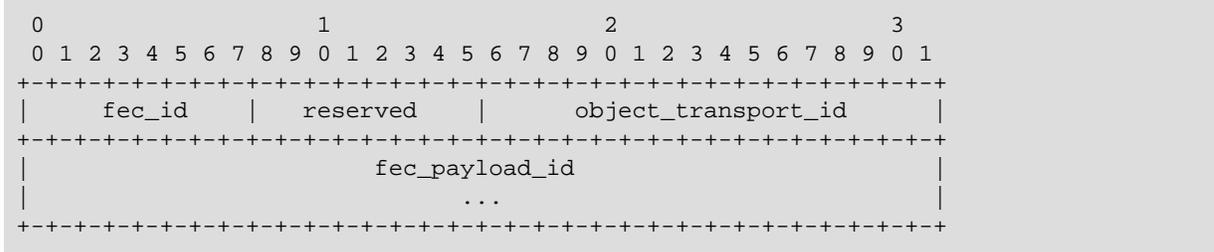
The NORM common message header fields serve their usual purposes. The value of the "hdr\_len" field when no header extensions are present is 6.

The "server\_id", "instance\_id", and "grtt\_response" fields serve the same purpose as the corresponding fields in `NORM_NACK` messages. And header extensions may be applied to support congestion control feedback or other functions in the same manner.

The "ack\_type" field indicates the nature of the `NORM_ACK` message. This directly corresponds to the "ack\_type" field of the `NORM_CMD(ACK_REQ)` message to which this acknowledgment applies.

The "ack\_id" field serves as a sequence number so that the sender can verify that a `NORM_ACK` message received actually applies to a current acknowledgment request. The "ack\_id" field is not used in the case of the `NORM_ACK_CC` and `NORM_ACK_FLUSH` acknowledgment types.

The "ack\_payload" format is a function of the "ack\_type". The `NORM_ACK_CC` message has no attached content. Only the `NORM_ACK` header applies. In the case of `NORM_ACK_FLUSH`, a specific "ack\_payload" format is defined:



The "object\_transport\_id" and "fec\_payload\_id" are used by the receiver to acknowledge applicable NORM\_CMD( FLUSH ) messages transmitted by the sender identified by the "server\_id" field.

The "ack\_payload" of NORM\_ACK messages for application-defined "ack\_type" values is specific to the application but is limited in size to a maximum the *NormSegmentSize* of the sender referenced by the "server\_id".

## 4.4 General Purpose Messages

Some additional message formats are defined for general purpose in NORM multicast sessions whether the participant is acting as a sender and/or receiver within the group.

### 4.4.1 NORM\_REPORT Message

This is an optional message generated by NORM participants. This message could be used for periodic performance reports from receivers in experimental NORM implementations. The format of this message is currently undefined. Experimental NORM implementations may define NORM\_REPORT formats as needed for test purposes. These report messages SHOULD be disabled for interoperability testing between different NORM implementations.

## 5. Detailed Protocol Operation

This section describes the detailed interactions of senders and receivers participating in a NORM session. A simple synopsis of protocol operation is given here:

1. The sender periodically transmits `NORM_CMD ( CC )` messages as needed to initialize and collect round-trip timing and congestion control feedback from the receiver set.
2. The sender transmits an ordinal set of *NormObjects* segmented in the form of `NORM_DATA` messages labeled with *NormTransportIds* and logically identified with FEC encoding block numbers and symbol identifiers. `NORM_INFO` messages may optionally precede the transmission of data content for NORM transport objects.
3. As receivers detect missing content from the sender, they initiate repair requests with `NORM_NACK` messages. Note the receivers track the sender's most recent *objectId:fecPayloadId* transmit position and `NACK ONLY` for content ordinally prior to that transmit position. The receivers schedule random backoff timeouts before generating `NORM_NACK` messages and wait an appropriate amount of time before repeating the `NORM_NACK` if their repair request is not satisfied.
4. The sender aggregates repair requests from the receivers and logically "rewinds" its transmit position to send appropriate repair messages. The sender sends repairs for the earliest ordinal transmit position first and maintains this ordinal repair transmission sequence. FEC parity content not previously transmitted for the applicable FEC coding block is used for repair transmissions to the greatest extent possible. If the sender exhausts its available FEC parity content on multiple repair cycles for the same coding block, it resorts to an explicit repair strategy (possibly using parity content) to complete repairs. (The use of explicit repair is expected to be an exception in general protocol operation, but the possibility does exist for extreme conditions). The sender immediately assumes transmission of new content once it has sent pending repairs.
5. The sender transmits `NORM_CMD ( FLUSH )` messages when it reaches the end of enqueued transmit content and pending repairs. Receivers respond to the `NORM_CMD ( FLUSH )` messages with `NORM_NACK` transmissions (following the same suppression backoff timeout strategy as for data) if they require further repair.
6. The sender transmissions are subject to rate control limits determined by congestion control mechanisms. In the baseline NORM-CC operation, each sender in a *NormSession* maintains its own independent congestion control state. Receivers provide congestion control feedback in `NORM_NACK` and `NORM_ACK` messages. `NORM_ACK` feedback for congestion control purposes is governed using a suppression mechanism similar to that for `NORM_NACK` messages.

While this overall concept is relatively simple, there are details to each of these aspects that need to be addressed for successful, efficient, robust, and scalable NORM protocol operation.

### 5.1 Sender Initialization and Transmission

Upon startup, the NORM sender immediately begins sending `NORM_CMD ( CC )` messages to collect round trip timing and other information from the potential group. If NORM-CC congestion control operation is enabled, the NORM-CC Rate header extension **MUST** be included in these messages. Congestion control operation **SHALL** be observed at all times when operating in the general Internet. Even if congestion control operation is disabled at the sender, it may be desirable to use the `NORM_CMD ( CC )` messaging to collect feedback from the group using the baseline NORM-CC feedback mechanisms. This proactive feedback collection can be used to establish a GRTT estimate prior to data transmission and potential `NACK` operation.

In some cases, applications may wish for the sender to also proceed with data transmission immediately. In other cases, the sender may wish to defer data transmission until it has received some feedback or request from the receiver set indicating that receivers are indeed present. Note, in some applications (e.g., web push), this indication may come out-of-band with respect to the multicast session via other means. As noted, the periodic transmission of `NORM_CMD ( CC )` messages may precede actual data transmission in order to have an initial GRTT estimate.

With inclusion of the OPTIONAL NORM FEC Object Transmission Information Header Extension (`EXT_FTI`), the NORM protocol sender message headers can contain all information necessary to prepare receivers for subsequent reliable reception. This includes FEC coding parameters, the sender *NormSegmentSize*, and other information. If this header extension is not used, it is presumed that receivers have received the FEC Object

Transmission Information via other means. Additionally, applications may leverage the use of `NORM_INFO` messages associated with the session data objects in the session to provide application-specific context information for the session and data being transmitted. These mechanisms allow for operation with minimal pre-coordination among the senders and receivers.

The NORM sender begins segmenting application-enqueued data into `NORM_DATA` segments and transmitting it to the group. For objects of type `NORM_OBJECT_DATA` and `NORM_OBJECT_FILE`, the segmentation algorithm described in [FEC Building Block document \[RFC5052\]](#) is RECOMMENDED. For objects of type `NORM_OBJECT_STREAM`, segmentation will typically be into uniform FEC coding block sizes, with individual segment sizes controlled by the application. In most cases, the application and NORM implementation SHOULD strive to produce full-sized (`NormSegmentSize`) segments when possible. The rate of transmission is controlled via congestion control mechanisms or is a fixed rate if desired for closed network operations. The receivers participating in the multicast group provide feedback to the sender as needed. When the sender reaches the end of data it has enqueued for transmission or any pending repairs, it transmits a series of `NORM_CMD(FLUSH)` messages at a rate of one per  $2 * \text{GRTT}$ . Receivers may respond to these `NORM_CMD(FLUSH)` messages with additional repair requests. A protocol parameter "NORM\_ROBUST\_FACTOR" determines the number of flush messages sent. If receivers request repair, the repair is provided and flushing occurs again at the end of repair transmission. The sender may attach an OPTIONAL "acking\_node\_list" to `NORM_CMD(FLUSH)` containing the *NormNodeIds* for receivers from which it expects explicit positive acknowledgment of reception. The `NORM_CMD(FLUSH)` message may be also used for this optional function any time prior to the end of data enqueued for transmission with the `NORM_CMD(FLUSH)` messages multiplexed with ongoing data transmissions. The OPTIONAL NORM positive acknowledgment procedure is described in [Section 5.5.3](#).

### 5.1.1 Object Segmentation Algorithm

NORM senders and receivers MUST use a common algorithm for logically segmenting transport data into FEC encoding blocks and symbols so that appropriate NACKs can be constructed to request repair of missing data. NORM FEC coding blocks are comprised of multi-byte symbols (segments) that are transmitted in the payload of `NORM_DATA` messages. Each `NORM_DATA` message will contain one or more source or encoding symbol(s) identified by the "fec\_payload\_id" field and the *NormSegmentSize* sender parameter defines the maximum size (in bytes) of the "payload\_data" field containing the content (a "segment"). The FEC encoding type and associated parameters govern the source block size (number of source symbols per coding block, etc.). NORM senders and receivers use these FEC parameters, along with the *NormSegmentSize* and transport object size to compute the source block structure for transport objects. These parameters are provided in the FEC Object Transmission Information for each object. The block partitioning algorithm described in the [FEC Building Block document \[RFC5052\]](#) is RECOMMENDED for use to compute a source block structure such that all source blocks are as close to being equal length as possible. This helps avoid the performance disadvantages of "short" FEC blocks. Note this algorithm applies only to the statically-sized `NORM_OBJECT_DATA` and `NORM_OBJECT_FILE` transport object types where the object size is fixed and predetermined. For `NORM_OBJECT_STREAM` objects, the object is segmented according to the maximum source block length given in the FEC Transmission Information, unless the FEC Payload ID indicates an alternative size for a given block.

## 5.2 Receiver Initialization and Reception

The NORM protocol is designed such that receivers may join and leave the group at will. However, some applications may be constrained such that receivers need to be members of the group prior to start of data transmission. NORM applications may use different policies to constrain the impact of new receivers joining the group in the middle of a session. For example, a useful implementation policy is for new receivers joining the group to limit or avoid repair requests for transport objects already in progress. The NORM sender implementation may wish to impose additional constraints to limit the ability of receivers to disrupt reliable multicast performance by joining, leaving, and rejoining the group often. Different receiver "join policies" may be appropriate for different applications and/or scenarios. For general purpose operation, a default policy where receivers are allowed to request repair only for coding blocks with a *NormTransportId* and FEC coding block number greater than or equal to the first non-repair `NORM_DATA` or `NORM_INFO` message received upon joining the group is RECOMMENDED.

For objects of type `NORM_OBJECT_STREAM` it is RECOMMENDED that the join policy constrain receivers to start reliable reception at the current FEC coding block for which non-repair content is received.

For typical operation, it is expected that NORM receivers will join a specified multicast group and/or listen on an specific port number for sender transmissions. As the NORM receiver receives `NORM_DATA` messages it will provide content to its application as appropriate.

### 5.3 Receiver NACK Procedure

When the receiver detects it is missing data from a sender's NORM transmissions, it initiates its NACKing procedure. The NACKing procedure SHALL be initiated ONLY at FEC coding block boundaries, *NormObject* boundaries, upon receipt of a `NORM_CMD (FLUSH)` message, or upon an "inactivity" timeout when `NORM_DATA` or `NORM_INFO` transmissions are no longer received from a previously active sender. The RECOMMENDED value of such an inactivity timeout is:

```
T_inactivity = NORM_ROBUST_FACTOR * 2 * GRTTsender
```

where the "GRTTsender" value corresponds to the GRTT estimate advertised in the "grtt" field of NORM sender messages. A minimum "T\_inactivity" value of 1 second is RECOMMENDED. The NORM receiver SHOULD reset this inactivity timer and repeat NACK initiation upon timeout for up to `NORM_ROBUST_FACTOR` times or more depending upon the application's need for persistence by its receivers. It is also important that receivers rescale the "T\_inactivity" timeout as the sender's advertised GRTT changes.

The NACKing procedure begins with a random backoff timeout. The duration of the backoff timeout is chosen using the "RandomBackoff" algorithm described in the [Multicast NACK Building Block document \[RFC5401\]](#) using ( $K_{sender} * GRTT_{sender}$ ) for the `maxTime` parameter and the sender advertised group size (`GSizeSender`) as the `groupSize` parameter. NORM senders provide values for `GRTTsender`, `Ksender` and `GSizeSender` via the "grtt", "backoff", and "gsize" fields of transmitted messages. The `GRTTsender` value is determined by the sender based on feedback it has received from the group while the `Ksender` and `GSizeSender` values may determined by application requirements and expectations or ancillary information. The backoff factor "`Ksender`" MUST be greater than one to provide for effective feedback suppression. A value of  $K = 4$  is RECOMMENDED for the Any Source Multicast (ASM) model while a value of  $K = 6$  is RECOMMENDED for Single Source Multicast (SSM) operation.

Thus:

```
T_backoff = RandomBackoff(Ksender*GRTTsender, GSizeSender)
```

To avoid the possibility of NACK implosion in the case of sender or network failure during SSM operation, the receiver SHALL automatically suppress its NACK and immediately enter the "holdoff" period described below when `T_backoff` is greater than  $(K_{sender} - 1) * GRTT_{sender}$ . Otherwise, the backoff period is entered and the receiver MUST accumulate external pending repair state from `NORM_NACK` messages and `NORM_CMD (REPAIR_ADV)` messages received. At the end of the backoff time, the receiver SHALL generate a `NORM_NACK` message only if the following conditions are met:

1. The sender's current transmit position (in terms of `objectId::fecPayloadId`) exceeds the earliest repair position of the receiver.
2. The repair state accumulated from `NORM_NACK` and `NORM_CMD (REPAIR_ADV)` messages do not equal or supersede the receiver's repair needs up to the sender transmission position at the time the NACK procedure (backoff timeout) was initiated.

If these conditions are met, the receiver immediately generates a `NORM_NACK` message when the backoff timeout expires. Otherwise, the receiver's NACK is considered to be "suppressed" and the message is not sent. At this time, the receiver begins a "holdoff" period during which it constrains itself to not re-initiate the NACKing process. The purpose of this timeout is to allow the sender worst-case time to respond to the repair needs before the receiver requests repair again. The value of this "holdoff" timeout (`T_rcvrHoldoff`) as described in [\[RFC5401\]](#) is:

```
T_rcvrHoldoff = (Ksender+2)*GRTTsender
```

The NORM\_NACK message contains repair request content beginning with lowest ordinal repair position of the receiver up through the coding block prior to the most recently heard ordinal transmission position for the sender. If the size of the NORM\_NACK content exceeds the sender's *NormSegmentSize*, the NACK content is truncated so that the receiver only generates a single NORM\_NACK message per NACK cycle for a given sender. In summary, a single NACK message is generated containing the receiver's lowest ordinal repair needs.

For each partially-received FEC coding block requiring repair, the receiver SHALL, on its FIRST repair attempt for the block, request the parity portion of the FEC coding block beginning with the lowest ordinal parity "encoding\_symbol\_id" (i.e., "encoding\_symbol\_id" = "source\_block\_len") and request the number of FEC symbols corresponding to its data segment erasure count for the block. On subsequent repair cycles for the same coding block, the receiver SHALL request only those repair symbols from the first set it has not yet received up to the remaining erasure count for that applicable coding block. Note that the sender may have provided other different, additional parity segments for other receivers that could also be used to satisfy the local receiver's erasure-filling needs. In the case where the erasure count for a partially-received FEC coding block exceeds the maximum number of parity symbols available from the sender for the block (as indicated by the NORM\_DATA "fec\_num\_parity" field), the receiver SHALL request all available parity segments plus the ordinally highest missing data segments required to satisfy its total erasure needs for the block. The goal of this strategy is for the overall receiver set to request a lowest common denominator set of repair symbols for a given FEC coding block. This allows the sender to construct the most efficient repair transmission segment set and enables effective NACK suppression among the receivers even with uncorrelated packet loss. This approach also requires no synchronization among the receiver set in their repair requests for the sender.

For FEC coding blocks or *NormObjects* missed in their entirety, the NORM receiver constructs repair requests with NORM\_NACK\_BLOCK or NORM\_NACK\_OBJECT flags set as appropriate. The request for retransmission of NORM\_INFO is accomplished by setting the NORM\_NACK\_INFO flag in a corresponding repair request.

## 5.4 Sender NACK Processing and Response

The principle goal of the sender is to make forward progress in the transmission of data its application has enqueued. However, the sender must occasionally "rewind" its logical transmission point to satisfy the repair needs of receivers who have NACKed. Aggregation of multiple NACKs is used to determine an optimal repair strategy when a NACK event occurs. Since receivers initiate the NACK process on coding block or object boundaries, there is some loose degree of synchronization of the repair process even when receivers experience uncorrelated data loss.

### 5.4.1 Sender Repair State Aggregation

When a sender is in its normal state of transmitting new data and receives a NACK, it begins a procedure to accumulate NACK repair state from NORM\_NACK messages before beginning repair transmissions. Note that this period of aggregating repair state does NOT interfere with its ongoing transmission of new data.

As described in [RFC5401], the period of time during which the sender aggregates NORM\_NACK messages is equal to:

```
T_sndrAggregate = (Ksender+1)*GRTT
```

where "Ksender" is the same backoff scaling value used by the receivers, and GRTT is the sender's current estimate of the group's greatest round-trip time. Note that for NORM unicast sessions the "T\_sndrAggregate" time can be set to ZERO since there is only one receiver. Similarly, the "Ksender" value should be set to ZERO for NORM unicast sessions to minimize repair latency.

When this period ends, the sender "rewinds" by incorporating the accumulated repair state into its pending transmission state and begins transmitting repair messages. After pending repair transmissions are completed, the sender continues with new transmissions of any enqueued data. Also, at this point in time, the sender begins a

"holdoff" timeout during which time the sender constrains itself from initiating a new repair aggregation cycle, even if NORM\_NACK messages arrive. As described in [RFC5401], the value of this sender "holdoff" period is:

```
T_sndrHoldoff = (1*GRTT)
```

If additional NORM\_NACK messages are received during this sender "holdoff" period, the sender will immediately incorporate these late-arriving messages into its pending transmission state ONLY if the NACK content is ordinaly greater than the sender's current transmission position. This "holdoff" time allows worst case time for the sender to propagate its current transmission sequence position to the group, thus avoiding redundant repair transmissions. After the holdoff timeout expires, a new NACK accumulation period can be begun (upon arrival of a NACK) in concert with the pending repair and new data transmission. Recall that receivers are not to initiate the NACK repair process until the sender's logical transmission position exceeds the lowest ordinal position of their repair needs. With the new NACK aggregation period, the sender repeats the same process of incorporating accumulated repair state into its transmission plan and subsequently "rewinding" to transmit the lowest ordinal repair data when the aggregation period expires. Again, this is conducted in concert with ongoing new data and/or pending repair transmissions.

### 5.4.2 Sender FEC Repair Transmission Strategy

The NORM sender should leverage transmission of FEC parity content for repair to the greatest extent possible. Recall that the receivers use a strategy to request a lowest common denominator of explicit repair (including parity content) in the formation of their NORM\_NACK messages. Before falling back to explicitly satisfying different receivers' repair needs, the sender can make use of the general erasure-filling capability of FEC-generated parity segments. The sender can determine the maximum erasure filling needs for individual FEC coding blocks from the NORM\_NACK messages received during the repair aggregation period. Then, if the sender has a sufficient number (less than or equal to the maximum erasure count) of previously unsent parity segments available for the applicable coding blocks, the sender can transmit these in lieu of the specific packets the receiver set has requested. Only after exhausting its supply of "fresh" (unsent) parity segments for a given coding block should the sender resort to explicit transmission of the receiver set's repair needs. In general, if a sufficiently powerful FEC code is used, the need for explicit repair will be an exception, and the fulfillment of reliable multicast can be accomplished quite efficiently. However, the ability to resort to explicit repair allows the protocol to be reliable under even very extreme circumstances.

NORM\_DATA messages sent as repair transmissions SHALL be flagged with the NORM\_FLAG\_REPAIR flag. This allows receivers to obey any policies that limit new receivers from joining the reliable transmission when only repair transmissions have been received. Additionally, the sender SHOULD additionally flag NORM\_DATA transmissions sent as explicit repair with the NORM\_FLAG\_EXPLICIT flag.

Although NORM end system receivers do not make use of the NORM\_FLAG\_EXPLICIT flag, this message transmission status could be leveraged by intermediate systems wishing to "assist" NORM protocol performance. If such systems are properly positioned with respect to reciprocal reverse-path multicast routing, they need to sub-cast only a sufficient count of non-explicit parity repairs to satisfy a multicast routing sub-tree's erasure filling needs for a given FEC coding block. When the sender has resorted to explicit repair, then the intermediate systems should sub-cast all of the explicit repair packets to those portions of the routing tree still requiring repair for a given coding block. Note the intermediate systems will be required to conduct repair state accumulation for sub-routes in a manner similar to the sender's repair state accumulation in order to have sufficient information to perform the sub-casting. Additionally, the intermediate systems could perform additional NORM\_NACK suppression/aggregation as it conducts this repair state accumulation for NORM repair cycles. The detail of this type of operation are beyond the scope of this document, but this information is provided for possible future consideration.

### 5.4.3 Sender NORM\_CMD(SQUELCH) Generation

If the sender receives a NORM\_NACK message for repair of data it is no longer supporting, the sender generates a NORM\_CMD ( SQUELCH ) message to advertise its repair window and squelch any receivers from additional NACKing of invalid data. The transmission rate of NORM\_CMD ( SQUELCH ) messages is limited to once per

2\*GRTT. The "invalid\_object\_list" (if applicable) of the NORM\_CMD ( SQUELCH ) message SHALL begin with the lowest "object\_transport\_id" from the invalid NORM\_NACK messages received since the last NORM\_CMD ( SQUELCH ) transmission. Lower ordinal invalid "object\_transport\_ids" should be included only while the NORM\_CMD ( SQUELCH ) payload is less than the sender's *NormSegmentSize* parameter.

#### 5.4.4 Sender NORM\_CMD(REPAIR\_ADV) Generation

When a NORM sender receives NORM\_NACK messages from receivers via unicast transmission, it uses NORM\_CMD ( REPAIR\_ADV ) messages to advertise its accumulated repair state to the receiver set since the receiver set is not directly sharing their repair needs via multicast communication. A NORM sender implementation MAY use a separate port number from the *NormSession* port number as the source port for its transmissions. Thus NORM receivers can direct any unicast feedback messages to this sender port number that is distinct from the NORM session (or destination) port number. Then, the NORM sender implementation can discriminate unicast feedback messages from multicast feedback messages when there is a mix of multicast and unicast feedback receivers. The NORM\_CMD ( REPAIR\_ADV ) message is multicast to the receiver set by the sender. The payload portion of this message has content in the same format as the NORM\_NACK receiver message payload. Receivers are then able to perform feedback suppression in the same manner as with NORM\_NACK messages directly received from other receivers. Note the sender does not merely retransmit NACK content it receives, but instead transmits a representation of its aggregated repair state. The transmission of NORM\_CMD ( REPAIR\_ADV ) messages are subject to the sender transmit rate limit and *NormSegmentSize* limitation. When the NORM\_CMD ( REPAIR\_ADV ) message is of maximum size, receivers SHALL consider the maximum ordinal transmission position value embedded in the message as the senders current transmission position and implicitly suppress requests for ordinally higher repair. For congestion control operation, the sender may also need to provide information so that dynamic congestion control feedback can be suppressed as needed among receivers. This document specifies the NORM-CC Feedback Header Extension that is applied for baseline NORM-CC operation. If other congestion control mechanisms are used within a NORM implementation, other header extensions may be defined. Whatever content format is used for this purpose should ensure that maximum possible suppression state is conveyed to the receiver set.

### 5.5 Additional Protocol Mechanisms

In addition to the principal function of data content transmission and repair, there are some other protocol mechanisms that help NORM to adapt to network conditions and play fairly with other coexistent protocols.

#### 5.5.1 Greatest Round-trip Time Collection

For NORM receivers to appropriately scale backoff timeouts and the senders to use proper corresponding timeouts, the participants must agree on a common timeout basis. Each NORM sender monitors the round-trip time of active receivers and determines the group greatest round-trip time (GRTT). The sender advertises this GRTT estimate in every message it transmits so that receivers have this value available for scaling their timers. To measure the current GRTT, the sender periodically sends NORM\_CMD ( CC ) messages that contain a locally generated timestamp. Receivers are expected to record this timestamp along with the time the NORM\_CMD ( CC ) message is received. Then, when the receivers generate feedback messages to the sender, an adjusted version of the sender timestamp is embedded in the feedback message (NORM\_NACK or NORM\_ACK). The adjustment adds the amount of time the receiver held the timestamp before generating its response. Upon receipt of this adjusted timestamp, the sender is able to calculate the round-trip time to that receiver.

The round-trip time for each receiver is fed into an algorithm that weights and smoothes the values for a conservative estimate of the GRTT. The algorithm and methodology are described in the [Multicast NACK Building Block document](#) [RFC5401] in the section entitled "One-to-Many Sender GRTT Measurement". A conservative estimate helps guarantee feedback suppression at a small cost in overall protocol repair delay. The sender's current estimate of GRTT is advertised in the "grtt" field found in all NORM sender messages. The advertised GRTT is also limited to a minimum of the nominal inter-packet transmission time given the sender's current transmission rate and system clock granularity. The reason for this additional limit is to keep the receiver somewhat event-driven by making sure the sender has had adequate time to generate any response to repair requests from receivers given transmit rate limitations due to congestion control or configuration.

When the NORM-CC Rate header extension is present in NORM\_CMD(CC) messages, the receivers respond to NORM\_CMD(CC) messages as described in Section 5.5.2, "NORM Congestion Control Operation". The NORM\_CMD(CC) messages are periodically generated by the sender as described for congestion control operation. This provides for proactive, but controlled, feedback from the group in the form of NORM\_ACK messages. This provides for GRTT feedback even if no NORM\_NACK messages are being sent. If operating without congestion control in a closed network, the NORM\_CMD(CC) messages may be sent periodically without the NORM-CC Rate header extension. In this case, receivers will only provide GRTT measurement feedback when NORM\_NACK messages are generated since no NORM\_ACK messages are generated. In this case, the NORM\_CMD(CC) messages may be sent less frequently, perhaps as little as once per minute, to conserve network capacity. Note that the NORM-CC Rate header extension may also be used to proactively solicit RTT feedback from the receiver group per congestion control operation even though the sender may not be conducting congestion control rate adjustment. NORM operation without congestion control should be considered only in closed networks.

### 5.5.2 NORM Congestion Control Operation

This section describes baseline congestion control operation for the NORM protocol (NORM-CC). The supporting NORM message formats and approach described here are an adaptation of the equation-based TCP-Friendly Multicast Congestion Control (TFMCC) approach described in [RFC4654]. This congestion control scheme is REQUIRED for operation within the general Internet unless the NORM implementation is adapted to use another IETF-sanctioned reliable multicast congestion control mechanism (e.g., PGMCC [PgmccPaper]). With this TFMCC-based approach, the transmissions of NORM senders are controlled in a rate-based manner as opposed to window-based congestion control algorithms as in TCP. However, it is possible that the NORM protocol message set may alternatively be used to support a window-based multicast congestion control scheme such as PGMCC. The details of that alternative may be described separately or in a future revision of this document. In either case (rate-based TFMCC or window-based PGMCC), successful control of sender transmission depends upon collection of sender-to-receiver packet loss estimates and RTTs to identify the congestion control bottleneck path(s) within the multicast topology and adjust the sender rate accordingly. The receiver with loss and RTT estimates that correspond to the lowest resulting calculated transmission rate is identified as the "current limiting receiver" (CLR). In the case of a tie (where candidate CLR's are within 10% of the same calculated rate), the receiver with the largest RTT value SHOULD be designated as the CLR.

As described in [TcpModel], a steady-state sender transmission rate, to be "friendly" with competing TCP flows can be calculated as:

$$R_{\text{sender}} = \frac{S}{t_{\text{RTT}} * (\sqrt{(2/3)*p} + 12 * \sqrt{(3/8)*p}) * p * (1 + 32 * (p^2))}$$

where

S = nominal transmitted packet size. (In NORM, the "nominal" packet size can be determined by the sender as an exponentially weighted moving average (EWMA) of transmitted packet sizes to account for variable message sizes).

t<sub>RTT</sub> = RTT estimate of the current "current limiting receiver" (CLR).

p = loss event fraction of the CLR.

To support congestion control feedback collection and operation, the NORM sender periodically transmits NORM\_CMD(CC) command messages. NORM\_CMD(CC) messages are multiplexed with NORM data and repair transmissions and serve several purposes:

1. Stimulate explicit feedback from the general receiver set to collect congestion control information.
2. Communicate state to the receiver set on the sender's current congestion control status including details of the CLR.
3. Initiate rapid (immediate) feedback from the CLR in order to closely track the dynamics of congestion control for that current worst path in the group multicast topology.

The format of the `NORM_CMD(CC)` message is describe in [Section 4.2.3](#) of this document. The `NORM_CMD(CC)` message contains information to allow measurement of RTTs, to inform the group of the congestion control CLR, and to provide feedback of individual RTT measurements to the receivers in the group. The `NORM_CMD(CC)` also provides for exciting feedback from OPTIONAL "potential limiting receiver" (PLR) nodes that may be determined administratively or possibly algorithmically based on congestion control feedback. PLR nodes are receivers that have been identified to have potential for (perhaps soon) becoming the CLR and thus immediate, up-to-date feedback is beneficial for congestion control performance. The details of PLR selection are not discussed in this document.

### 5.5.2.1 `NORM_CMD(CC)` Transmission

The `NORM_CMD(CC)` message is transmitted periodically by the sender along with its normal data transmission. Note that the repeated transmission of `NORM_CMD(CC)` messages may be initiated some time before transmission of user data content at session startup. This may be done to collect some estimation of the current state of the multicast topology with respect to group and individual RTT and congestion control state.

A `NORM_CMD(CC)` message is immediately transmitted at sender startup. The interval of subsequent `NORM_CMD(CC)` message transmission is determined as follows:

1. By default, the interval is set according to the current sender GRTT estimate. A startup GRTT of 0.5 seconds is recommended when no feedback has yet been received from the group.
2. Until a CLR has been identified (based on previous receiver feedback) or when no data transmission is pending, the `NORM_CMD(CC)` interval is doubled up from its current interval to a maximum of once per 30 seconds. This results in a low duty cycle for `NORM_CMD(CC)` probing when no CLR is identified or there is no pending data to transmit.
3. When a CLR has been identified (based on receiver feedback) and data transmission is pending, the probing interval is set to the RTT between the sender and the CLR (`RTT_clr`).
4. Additionally, when the data transmission rate is low with respect to the `RTT_clr` interval used for probing, the implementation should ensure that no more than one `NORM_CMD(CC)` message is sent per `NORM_DATA` message when there is data pending transmission. This ensures that the transmission of this control message is not done to the exclusion of user data transmission.

The `NORM_CMD(CC)` "cc\_sequence" field is incremented with each transmission of a `NORM_CMD(CC)` command. The greatest "cc\_sequence" recently received by receivers is included in their feedback to the sender. This allows the sender to determine the age of feedback to assist in congestion avoidance.

The NORM-CC Rate Header Extension is applied to the `NORM_CMD(CC)` message and the sender advertises its current transmission rate in the "send\_rate" field. The rate information is used by receivers to initialize loss estimation during congestion control startup or restart.

The "cc\_node\_list" contains a list of entries identifying receivers and their current congestion control state (status "flags", "rtt" and "loss" estimates). The list may be empty if the sender has not yet received any feedback from the group. If the sender has received feedback, the list will minimally contain an entry identifying the CLR. A `NORM_FLAG_CC_CLR` flag value is provided for the "cc\_flags" field to identify the CLR entry. It is RECOMMENDED that the CLR entry be the first in the list for implementation efficiency. Additional entries in the list are used to provide sender-measured individual RTT estimates to receivers in the group. The number of additional entries in this list is dependent upon the percentage of control traffic the sender application is willing to send with respect to user data message transmissions. More entries in the list may allow the sender to be more responsive to congestion control dynamics. The length of the list may be dynamically determined according to the current transmission rate and scheduling of `NORM_CMD(CC)` messages. The maximum length of the list corresponds to the sender's *NormSegmentSize* parameter for the session. The inclusion of additional entries in the list based on receiver feedback are prioritized with following rules:

1. Receivers that have not yet been provided a RTT measurement get first priority. Of these, those with the greatest loss fraction receive precedence for list inclusion.
2. Secondly, receivers that have previously been provided a RTT measurement are included with receivers yielding the lowest calculated congestion rate getting precedence.

There are "cc\_flag" values in addition to NORM\_FLAG\_CC\_CLR that are used for other congestion control functions. The NORM\_FLAG\_CC\_PLR flag value is used to mark additional receivers from that the sender would like to have immediate, non-suppressed feedback. These may be receivers that the sender algorithmically identified as potential future CLR's or that have been pre-configured as potential congestion control points in the network. The NORM\_FLAG\_CC\_RTT indicates the validity of the "cc\_rtt" field for the associated receiver node. Normally, this flag will be set since the receivers in the list will typically be receivers from which the sender has received feedback. However, in the case that the NORM sender has been pre-configured with a set of PLR nodes, feedback from those receivers may not yet have been collected and thus the "cc\_rtt" field does not contain a valid value when this flag is not set. Similarly, a value of ZERO for the "cc\_rate" field here should be treated as an invalid value and be ignored for the purposes of feedback suppression, etc.

### 5.5.2.2 NORM\_CMD(CC) Feedback Response

Receivers explicitly respond to NORM\_CMD(CC) messages in the form of a NORM\_ACK(RTT) message. The goal of the congestion control feedback is to determine the receivers with the lowest congestion control rates. Receivers that are marked as CLR or PLR nodes in the NORM\_CMD(CC) "cc\_node\_list" immediately provide feedback in the form of a NORM\_ACK to this message. When a NORM\_CMD(CC) is received, non-CLR or non-PLR nodes initiate random feedback backoff timeouts similar to that used when the receiver initiates a repair cycle (see Section 5.3) in response to detection of data loss. The backoff timeout for the congestion control response is generated as follows:

```
T_backoff = RandomBackoff(K*GRTTsender, GSIZEsender)
```

The "RandomBackoff()" algorithm provides a truncated exponentially distributed random number and is described in the [Multicast NACK Building Block document \[RFC5401\]](#). The same backoff factor  $K = K_{sender}$  MAY be used as with NORM\_NACK suppression. However, in cases where the application purposefully specifies a very small  $K_{sender}$  backoff factor to minimize the NACK repair process latency (trading off group size scalability), it is RECOMMENDED that a larger backoff factor for congestion control feedback is maintained, since there may often be a larger volume of congestion control feedback than NACKs in many cases and some congestion control feedback latency may be tolerable where reliable delivery latency is not. As previously noted, a backoff factor value of  $K = 4$  is generally recommended for ASM operation and  $K = 6$  for SSM operation. A receiver SHALL cancel the backoff timeout and thus its pending transmission of a NORM\_ACK(RTT) message under the following conditions:

1. The receiver generates another feedback message (NORM\_NACK or other NORM\_ACK) before the congestion control feedback timeout expires (these messages will convey the current congestion control feedback information),
2. A NORM\_CMD(CC) or other receiver feedback with an ordinaly greater "cc\_sequence" field value is received before the congestion control feedback timeout expires (this is similar to the TFMCC feedback round number),
3. When the  $T_{backoff}$  is greater than  $1 * GRTT_{sender}$ . This prevents NACK implosion in the event of sender or network failure,
4. "Suppressing" congestion control feedback is heard from another receiver (in a NORM\_ACK or NORM\_NACK) or via a NORM\_CMD(REPAIR\_ADV) message from the sender. The local receiver's feedback is "suppressed" if the rate of the competing feedback ( $R_{fb}$ ) is sufficiently close to or less than the local receiver's calculated rate ( $R_{calc}$ ). The local receiver's feedback is canceled when  $R_{calc} > (0.9 * R_{fb})$ . Also note receivers that have not yet received an RTT measurement from the sender are suppressed only by other receivers that have not yet measured RTT. Additionally, receivers whose RTT estimate has aged considerably (i.e., they haven't been included in the NORM\_CMD(CC) "cc\_node\_list" in a long time) may wish to compete as a receiver with no prior RTT measurement after some long term expiration period.

When the backoff timer expires, the receiver SHALL generate a NORM\_ACK(RTT) message to provide feedback to the sender and group. This message may be multicast to the group for most effective suppression in ASM topologies or unicast to the sender depending upon how the NORM protocol is deployed and configured.

Whenever any feedback is generated (including this NORM\_ACK(RTT) message), receivers include an adjusted version of the sender timestamp from the most recently received NORM\_CMD(CC) message and the "cc\_sequence"

value from that command in the applicable NORM\_ACK or NORM\_NACK message fields. For NORM-CC operation, any generated feedback message SHALL also contain the NORM-CC Feedback header extension. The receiver provides its current "cc\_rate" estimate, "cc\_loss" estimate, "cc\_rtt" if known, and any applicable "cc\_flags" via this header extension.

During *slow start* (when the receiver has not yet detected loss from the sender), the receiver uses a value equal to two times its measured rate from the sender in the "cc\_rate" field. For steady-state congestion control operation, the receiver "cc\_rate" value is from the equation-based value using its current loss event estimate and sender->receiver RTT information. (The GRTT is used when the receiver has not yet measured its individual RTT).

The "cc\_loss" field value reflects the receiver's current loss event estimate with respect to the sender in question.

When the receiver has a valid individual RTT measurement, it SHALL include this value in the "cc\_rtt" field.

The NORM\_FLAG\_CC\_RTT MUST be set when the "cc\_rtt" field is valid.

After a congestion control feedback message is generated or when the feedback is suppressed, a non-CLR receiver begins a "holdoff" timeout period during which it will restrain itself from providing congestion control feedback, even if NORM\_CMD(CC) messages are received from the sender (unless the receive becomes marked as a CLR or PLR node). The value of this holdoff timeout (T\_ccHoldoff) period is:

$$T_{ccHoldoff} = (K * GRTT)$$

Thus, non-CLR receivers are constrained to providing explicit congestion control feedback once per  $K * GRTT$  intervals. Note, however, that as the session progresses, different receivers will be responding to different NORM\_CMD(CC) messages and there will be relatively continuous feedback of congestion control information while the sender is active.

### 5.5.2.3 Congestion Control Rate Adjustment

During steady-state operation, the sender will directly adjust its transmission rate to the rate indicated by the feedback from its currently selected CLR. As noted in [TfmccPaper], the estimation of parameters (loss and RTT) for the CLR will generally constrain the rate changes possible within acceptable bounds. For rate increases, the sender SHALL observe a maximum rate of increase of one packet per RTT at all times during steady-state operation.

The sender processes congestion control feedback from the receivers and selects the CLR based on the lowest rate receiver. Receiver rates are either determined directly from the *slow start* "cc\_rate" provided by the receiver in the NORM-CC Feedback header extension or by performing the equation-based calculation using individual RTT and loss estimates ("cc\_loss") as feedback is received.

The sender can calculate a current RTT for a receiver (RTT\_rcvrNew) using the "grtt\_response" timestamp included in feedback messages. When the "cc\_rtt" value in a response is not valid, the sender simply uses this RTT\_rcvrNew value as the receiver's current RTT (RTT\_rcvr). For non-CLR and non-PLR receivers, the sender can use the "cc\_rtt" value provided in the NORM-CC Feedback header extension as the receiver's previous RTT measurement (RTT\_rcvrPrev) to smooth according to:

$$RTT_{rcvr} = 0.5 * RTT_{rcvrPrev} + 0.5 * RTT_{rcvrNew}$$

For CLR receivers where feedback is received more regularly, the sender SHOULD maintain a more smoothed RTT estimate upon new feedback from the CLR where:

$$RTT_{clr} = 0.9 * RTT_{clr} + 0.1 * RTT_{clrNew}$$

"RTT\_clrNew" is the new RTT calculated from the timestamp in the feedback message received from the CLR. The RTT\_clr is initialized to RTT\_clrNew on the first feedback message received. Note that the same procedure is observed by the sender for PLR receivers and that if a PLR is "promoted" to CLR status, the smoothed estimate can be continued.

There are some additional periods besides steady-state operation that need to be considered in NORM-CC operation. These periods are:

1. during session startup,
2. when no feedback is received from the CLR, and
3. when the sender has a break in data transmission.

During session startup, the congestion control operation SHALL observe a "slow start" procedure to quickly approach its fair bandwidth share. An initial sender startup rate is assumed where:

```
Rinitial = MIN(NormSegmentSize / GRTT, NormSegmentSize) bytes/second.
```

The rate is increased only when feedback is received from the receiver set. The "slow start" phase proceeds until any receiver provides feedback indicating that loss has occurred. Rate increase during *slow start* is applied as:

```
Rnew = Rrecv_min
```

where `Rrecv_min` is the minimum reported receiver rate in the "cc\_rate" field of congestion control feedback messages received from the group. Note that during *slow start*, receivers use two times their measured rate from the sender in the "cc\_rate" field of their feedback. Rate increase adjustment is limited to once per GRTT during slow start.

If the CLR or any receiver intends to leave the group, it will set the `NORM_FLAG_CC_LEAVE` in its congestion control feedback message as an indication that the sender should not select it as the CLR. When the CLR changes to a lower rate receiver, the sender should immediately adjust to the new lower rate. The sender is limited to increasing its rate at one additional packet per RTT towards any new, higher CLR rate.

The sender should also track the age of the feedback it has received from the CLR by comparing its current "cc\_sequence" value (`Seq_sender`) to the last "cc\_sequence" value received from the CLR (`Seq_clr`). As the age of the CLR feedback increases with no new feedback, the sender SHALL begin reducing its rate once per `RTT_clr` as a congestion avoidance measure. The following algorithm is used to determine the decrease in sender rate (`Rsender` bytes/sec) as the CLR feedback, unexpectedly, excessively ages:

```
Age = Seq_sender - Seq_clr;
if (Age > 4) Rsender = Rsender * 0.5;
```

This rate reduction is limited to the lower bound on NORM transmission rate. After `NORM_ROBUST_FACTOR` consecutive `NORM_CMD(CC)` rounds without any feedback from the CLR, the sender SHOULD assume the CLR has left the group and pick the receiver with the next lowest rate as the new CLR. Note this assumes that the sender does not have explicit knowledge that the CLR intentionally left the group. If no receiver feedback is received, the sender MAY wish to withhold further transmissions of `NORM_DATA` segments and maintain `NORM_CMD(CC)` transmissions only until feedback is detected. After such a CLR timeout, the sender will be transmitting with a minimal rate and should return to slow start as described here for a break in data transmission.

When the sender has a break in its data transmission, it can continue to probe the group with `NORM_CMD(CC)` messages to maintain RTT collection from the group. This will enable the sender to quickly determine an appropriate CLR upon data transmission restart. However, the sender should exponentially reduce its target rate to be used for transmission restart as time since the break elapses. The target rate SHOULD be recalculated once per `RTT_clr` as:

```
Rsender = Rsender * 0.5;
```

If the minimum NORM rate is reached, the sender should set the `NORM_FLAG_START` flag in its `NORM_CMD(CC)` messages upon restart and the group should observe *slow start* congestion control procedures until any receiver experiences a new loss event.

### 5.5.3 NORM Positive Acknowledgment Procedure

NORM provides options for the source application to request positive acknowledgment (ACK) of NORM\_CMD(FLUSH) and NORM\_CMD(ACK\_REQ) messages from members of the group. There are some specific acknowledgment requests defined for the NORM protocol and a range of acknowledgment request types that are left to be defined by the application. One predefined acknowledgment type is the NORM\_ACK\_FLUSH type. This acknowledgment is used to determine if receivers have achieved completion of reliable reception up through a specific logical transmission point with respect to the sender's sequence of transmission. The NORM\_ACK\_FLUSH acknowledgment may be used to assist in application flow control when the sender has information on a portion of the receiver set. Another predefined acknowledgment type is NORM\_ACK(CC), which is used to explicitly provide congestion control feedback in response to NORM\_CMD(CC) messages transmitted by the sender for NORM-CC operation. Note the NORM\_ACK(CC) response does NOT follow the positive acknowledgment procedure described here. The NORM\_CMD(ACK\_REQ) and NORM\_ACK messages contain an "ack\_type" field to identify the type of acknowledgment requested and provided. A range of "ack\_type" values is provided for application-defined use. While the application is responsible for initiating the acknowledgment request and interprets application-defined "ack\_type" values, the acknowledgment procedure SHOULD be conducted within the protocol implementation to take advantage of timing and transmission scheduling information available to the NORM transport.

The NORM positive acknowledgment procedure uses polling by the sender to query the receiver group for response. Note this polling procedure is not intended to scale to very large receiver groups, but could be used in large group setting to query a critical subset of the group. Either the NORM\_CMD(ACK\_REQ), or when applicable, the NORM\_CMD(FLUSH) message is used for polling and contains a list of *NormNodeIds* for receivers that should respond to the command. The list of receivers providing acknowledgment is determined by the source application with *a priori* knowledge of participating nodes or via some other application-level mechanism.

The ACK process is initiated by the sender that generates NORM\_CMD(FLUSH) or NORM\_CMD(ACK\_REQ) messages in periodic rounds. For NORM\_ACK\_FLUSH requests, the NORM\_CMD(FLUSH) contain a "object\_transport\_id" and "fec\_payload\_id" denoting the watermark transmission point for which acknowledgment is requested. This watermark transmission point is echoed in the corresponding fields of the NORM\_ACK(FLUSH) message sent by the receiver in response. NORM\_CMD(ACK\_REQ) messages contain an "ack\_id" field which is similarly echoed in response so that the sender may match the response to the appropriate request.

In response to the NORM\_CMD(ACK\_REQ), the listed receivers randomly spread NORM\_ACK messages uniformly in time over a window of (1\*GRTT). These NORM\_ACK messages are typically unicast to the sender. (Note that NORM\_ACK(CC) messages SHALL be multicast or unicast in the same manner as NORM\_NACK messages).

The ACK process is self-limiting and avoids ACK implosion in that:

1. Only a single NORM\_CMD(ACK\_REQ) message is generated once per (2\*GRTT), and,
2. The size of the "acking\_node\_list" of *NormNodeIds* from which acknowledgment is requested is limited to a maximum of the sender *NormSegmentSize* setting per round of the positive acknowledgment process.

Because the size of the included list is limited to the sender's *NormSegmentSize* setting, multiple NORM\_CMD(ACK\_REQ) rounds may be required to achieve responses from all receivers specified. The content of the attached *NormNodeId* list will be dynamically updated as this process progresses and NORM\_ACK responses are received from the specified receiver set. As the sender receives valid responses (i.e., matching watermark point or "ack\_id") from receivers, it SHALL eliminate those receivers from the subsequent NORM\_CMD(ACK\_REQ) message "acking\_node\_list" and add in any pending receiver *NormNodeIds* while keeping within the *NormSegmentSize* limitation of the list size. Each receiver is queried a maximum number of times (NORM\_ROBUST\_FACTOR, by default). Receivers not responding within this number of repeated requests are removed from the payload list to make room for other potential receivers pending acknowledgment. The transmission of the NORM\_CMD(ACK\_REQ) is repeated until no further responses are required or until the repeat threshold is exceeded for all pending receivers. The transmission of NORM\_CMD(ACK\_REQ) or NORM\_CMD(FLUSH) messages to conduct the positive acknowledgment process is multiplexed with ongoing sender data transmissions. However, the NORM\_CMD(FLUSH) positive acknowledgment process may be interrupted in response to negative acknowledgment repair requests (NACKs) received from receivers during the

acknowledgment period. The NORM\_CMD ( FLUSH ) positive acknowledgment process is restarted for receivers pending acknowledgment once any the repairs have been transmitted.

In the case of NORM\_CMD ( FLUSH ) commands with an attached "acking\_node\_list", receivers will not ACK until they have received complete transmission of all data up to and including the given watermark transmission point. All receivers SHALL interpret the watermark point provided in the request NACK for repairs if needed as for NORM\_CMD ( FLUSH ) commands with no attached "acking\_node\_list".

#### 5.5.4 Group Size Estimate

NORM sender messages contain a "gsize" field that is a representation of the group size and is used in scaling random backoff timer ranges. The use of the group size estimate within the NORM protocol does not require a precise estimation and works reasonably well if the estimate is within an order of magnitude of the actual group size. By default, the NORM sender group size estimate may be administratively configured. Also, given the expected scalability of the NORM protocol for general use, a default value of 10,000 is RECOMMENDED for use as the group size estimate.

It is possible that group size may be algorithmically approximated from the volume of congestion control feedback messages which follow the exponentially weighted random backoff. However, the specification of such an algorithm is currently beyond the scope of this document.

## 6. Security Considerations

The same security considerations that apply to the NORM, TFMCC, and FEC Building Blocks also apply to the NORM protocol. In addition to vulnerabilities that any IP and IP multicast protocol implementation may be generally subject to, the NACK-based feedback of NORM may be exploited by replay attacks which force the NORM sender to unnecessarily transmit repair information. This MAY be addressed by network layer IP security implementations that guard against this potential security exploitation. The NORM protocol is compatible with the use of the IP security (IPsec) architecture described in [RFC4301] and the IPsec Encapsulating Security Payload (ESP) protocol or Authentication Header (AH) extension MAY be used to secure IP packets transmitted by NORM participants.

Alternatively, a header extension may be applied to the NORM protocol to provide authentication of NORM messages. For this purpose the EXT\_AUTH header extension (HET = 1) is defined. The format of this header extension and its processing is outside the scope of this document and is to be communicated out-of-band as part of the session description. It is possible that an EXT\_AUTH implementation of MAY also provide for encryption of NORM message payloads as well as authentication. The use of this approach as compared to IPsec can allow for header compression techniques to be applied jointly to IP and NORM protocol headers. In cases where security analysis deems that encryption of NORM protocol header content is beneficial or necessary, the aforementioned use of IPsec ESP may be more appropriate. If EXT\_AUTH is present, whatever packet authentication checks that can be performed immediately upon reception of the packet SHOULD be performed before accepting the packet and performing any congestion control-related action on it. Some packet authentication schemes impose a delay of several seconds between when a packet is received and when the packet is fully authenticated. Any congestion control related action that is appropriate MUST NOT be postponed by any such full packet authentication. Consideration SHOULD also be given to the potential for replay-attacks that would transplant authenticated packets from one NORM session to another to disrupt service. To avoid this potential, unique keys SHOULD be used on a per-session basis or NORM sender nodes SHOULD use unique "instance\_id" identifiers that are managed as part of the security association for the sessions.

It is RECOMMENDED that such security mechanisms be used when available. It should be noted that NORM participants can use the "sequence" field from the NORM Common Message Header to detect replay attacks. This can be accomplished if the NORM sender is willing to maintain state on receivers which are NACKing. A cache of such receiver state can be used to provide protection against NACK replay attacks. NORM receivers SHOULD also maintain similar state for protection against possible replay of other receiver messages in ASM operation as well. For example, a receiver could be suppressed from providing NACK or congestion control feedback by replay of certain receiver messages. For these reasons, authentication of NORM messages (e.g., via IPsec) is RECOMMENDED for protection against similar attacks that might use fabricated messages. Also, encryption of messages to provide confidentiality of application data and protect privacy of users MAY also be applied using IPsec or similar mechanisms. When any such cryptographic measures are used, it is RECOMMENDED that an approach such as described in the Group Domain of Interpretation (GDOI) [RFC3547], Multimedia Internet KEYing (MIKEY) [RFC3830] or Group Secure Association Key Management Protocol (GSAKMP) [RFC4535] specifications for automated key management is applied.

It is also important to note that while NORM does leverage FEC-based repair for scalability, this alone does not guarantee integrity of received data. Application-level integrity-checking of data content is highly RECOMMENDED.

### 6.1 Baseline Secure NORM Operation

This section describes a baseline mode of secure NORM protocol operation based on application of the IPsec security protocol. This approach is documented here to provide a reference, interoperable secure mode of operation. However, additional approaches to NORM security, including other forms of IPsec application, MAY be specified in the future. For example, the use of the EXT\_AUTH header extension could enable NORM-specific authentication or security encapsulation headers similar to those of IPsec to be specified and inserted into the NORM protocol message headers. This would allow header compression techniques to be applied to IP and NORM protocol headers when needed in a similar fashion to that of RTP [RFC1889] and as preserved in the specification for Secure Real Time Protocol (SRTP) [RFC3711].

The baseline approach described is applicable to NORM operation configured for SSM (or SSM-like) operation where there is a single sender and the receivers are providing unicast feedback. This form of NORM operation allows for IPsec to be used with a manageable number of security associations (SA).

### 6.1.1 IPsec Approach

For NORM one-to-many SSM operation with unicast feedback from receivers, each node SHALL be configured with two transport mode IPsec security associations and corresponding Security Policy Database (SPD) entries. One entry will be used for sender-to-group multicast packet authentication and optionally encryption while the other entry will be used to provide security for the unicast feedback messaging from the receiver(s) to the sender.

The NORM sender SHALL use an IPsec SA configured for ESP protocol [RFC4303] operation with the option for data origination authentication enabled. It is also RECOMMENDED that this IPsec ESP SA be also configured to provide confidentiality protection for IP packets containing NORM protocol messages. This is suggested to make the realization of complex replay attacks much more difficult. The encryption key for this SA SHALL be preplaced at the sender and receiver(s) prior to NORM protocol operation. Use of automated key management is RECOMMENDED as a rekey SHALL be required prior to expiration of the sequence space for the SA. This is necessary so that receivers may use the built-in IPsec replay attack protection possible for an IPsec SA with a single source (the NORM sender). Thus the receivers SHALL enable replay attack protection for this SA used to secure NORM sender traffic. An IPsec SPD entry MUST be configured to process outbound packets to the session (destination) address and UDP port number of the applicable (*NormSession*).

The NORM receiver(s) MUST be configured with the SA and SPD entry to properly process the IPsec-secured packets from the sender. The NORM receiver(s) SHALL also use a common, second IPsec SA (common Security Parameter Index (SPI) and encryption key) configured for ESP operation with the option for data origination authentication enabled. Similar to the NORM sender, is RECOMMENDED this IPsec ESP SA be also configured to provide confidentiality protection for IP packets containing NORM protocol messages. The receivers MUST have an IPsec SPD entry configured to process outbound NORM/UDP packets directed to the NORM sender source address and port number using this second SA. As noted for NORM unicast feedback, the sender's transmission port number SHOULD be distinct from the multicast session port number to allow discrimination between unicast and multicast feedback messages when access to the IP destination address is not possible (e.g., a user-space NORM implementation). For processing of packets from receivers, the NORM sender SHALL be configured with this common, second SA (and the corresponding SPD entry needed) in order to properly process messages from the receiver. Note that built-in IPsec replay attack protection for this second SA at the sender MUST be disabled.

Multiple receivers using a common IPsec SA for traffic directed to the NORM sender (i.e., many-to-one) prevents the use of built-in IPsec replay attack protection by the NORM sender with current IPsec implementations. So, to support a fully secure mode of operation, the NORM sender implementation MUST provide replay attack protection based upon the "sequence" field of NORM protocol messages from receivers. This can be accomplished with high assurance of security, even with the limited size (16-bits) of this field, because

1. NORM receiver NACK and non-CLR ACK feedback messages are sparse.
2. The more frequent NORM\_ACK feedback from CLR or PLR nodes are only a small set of receivers for which the sender must keep more persistent replay attack state.
3. NORM\_NACK feedback messages that precede the sender's current repair window do not significantly impact protocol operation (generation of NORM\_CMD ( SQUELCH ) is limited) and could be in fact ignored. This means the sender can prune any replay attack state for receivers that precede the current repair window.
4. NORM\_ACK messages correspond to either a specific sender "ack\_id", the sender "cc\_sequence" for ACKs sent in response to NORM\_CMD ( CC ), or the sender's current repair window in the case of ACKs sent in response to NORM\_CMD ( FLUSH ). Thus, the sender can prune any replay attack state for receivers that precede the current applicable sequence or repair window space.

Note that use of ESP confidentiality, as RECOMMENDED, for secure NORM protocol operation makes it more difficult for adversaries to conduct effective replay attacks. Additionally, it should be noted that a NORM sender implementation with access to the full ESP protocol header could also use the ESP sequence information to make

this form of replay attack protection even more robust. The design of this baseline security approach for NORM intentionally places any more complex processing state or processing (e.g. replay attack protection given multiple receivers) at the NORM sender since NORM receiver implementations may need to have a more light-weight realization in many cases.

This baseline approach can be used for NORM protocol sessions with multiple senders if the SA pairs described are established for each sender. For small-sized groups, it is even possible that many-to-many (ASM) IPsec configuration could be achieved where each participant uses a unique SA (with a unique SPI). This does not scale to larger group sizes given the complex set of SA and SPD entries each participant would need to maintain.

It is anticipated in early deployments of this baseline approach to NORM security that key management will be conducted out-of-band with respect to NORM protocol operation. In the case of one-to-many NORM operation, it is possible that receivers may retrieve keying information from a central server as needed or otherwise conduct group key updates with a similar centralized approach. However, it may be possible with some key management schemes for rekey messages to be transmitted to the group as a message or transport object within the NORM reliable transfer session. Similarly, for group-wise communication sessions it is possible that potential group participants may request keying and/or rekeying as part of NORM communications. Additional specification is necessary to define an in-band key management scheme for NORM sessions perhaps using the mechanisms of the automated group key management specifications cited in this document.

## 6.1.2 IPsec Requirements

In order to implement this secure mode of NORM protocol operation, the following IPsec capabilities are required.

### 6.1.2.1 Selectors

The implementation **MUST** be able to use the source address, destination address, protocol (UDP), and UDP port numbers as selectors in the SPD.

### 6.1.2.2 Mode

IPsec in transport mode **MUST** be supported. The use of IPsec [RFC4301] processing for secure NORM traffic **SHOULD** also be **REQUIRED** such that unauthenticated packets are not received by the NORM protocol implementation .

### 6.1.2.3 Key Management

An automated key management scheme for group key distribution and rekeying such as GDOI [RFC3547], GSAKMP [RFC4535], or MIKEY [RFC3830] **SHOULD** be used. Relatively short-lived NORM sessions **MAY** be able to use Manual Keying with a single, preplaced key, particularly if Extended Sequence Numbering (ESN) [RFC4303] is available in the IPsec implementation used. It should also be noted that it may be possible for key update messages (e.g., the GDOI GROUPKEY-PUSH message) to be included in the NORM application reliable data transmission if appropriate interfaces were available between the NORM application and the key management daemon.

### 6.1.2.4 Security Policy

Receivers **SHOULD** accept connections only from the designated, authorized sender(s). It is expected that appropriate key management will provide encryption keys only to receivers authorized to participate in a designated session. The approach outlined here allows receiver sets to be controlled on a per-sender basis.

### 6.1.2.5 Authentication and Encryption

Large NORM group sizes will necessitate some form of key management that does rely upon shared secrets. The GDOI and GSAKMP protocols mentioned here allow for certificate-based authentication. These certificates **SHOULD** use IP addresses for authentication although it may alternatively possible to have authentication associated with pre-assigned NormNodeId values. However, it is likely that available group key management implementations will not be NORM-specific.

### **6.1.2.6 Availability**

The IPsec requirements profile outlined here is commonly available on many potential NORM hosts. The principal issue is that configuration and operation of IPsec typically requires privileged user authorization. Automated key management implementations are typically configured with the privileges necessary to effect system IPsec configuration needed.

## 7. IANA Considerations

Header extension identifiers for the NORM protocol are subject to IANA registration. Additionally, building blocks components used by this NORM Protocol specification may introduce additional IANA considerations. In particular, the FEC Building Block used by NORM does require IANA registration of the FEC codecs used. The registration instructions for FEC codecs are provided in [\[RFC5052\]](#).

### 7.1 Explicit IANA Assignment Guidelines

This document defines a name-space for NORM Header Extensions named:

```
ietf:rmt:norm:extensions
```

These values represent extended header fields that allow the protocol functionality to be expanded to include additional optional features and operating modes. The values that can be assigned within the `ietf:rmt:norm:extension` name-space are numeric indexes in the range {0, 255}, boundaries included. Values in the range {0,127} indicate variable length extended header fields while values in the range {128,255} indicate extension of a fixed 4-byte length. NORM header extension identifier value assignment requests are granted on a "Specification Required" basis as defined in [\[RFC2434\]](#). Additional header extension specifications MUST include a description of protocol actions to be taken when the extended header is encountered by a protocol implementation not supporting that specific option. For example, it may be possible for protocol implementations to ignore unknown header extensions in many cases.

This specification registers the following NORM Header Extension types in namespace

```
ietf:rmt:norm:extensions:
```

Value	Name	Reference
1	EXT_AUTH	This specification
3	EXT_CC	This specification
64	EXT_FTI	This specification
128	EXT_RATE	This specification

## 8. Suggested Use

The present NORM protocol is seen as useful tool for the reliable data transfer over generic IP multicast services. It is not the intention of the authors to suggest it is suitable for supporting all envisioned multicast reliability requirements. NORM provides a simple and flexible framework for multicast applications with a degree of concern for network traffic implosion and protocol overhead efficiency. NORM-like protocols have been successfully demonstrated within the Mbone for bulk data dissemination applications, including weather satellite compressed imagery updates servicing a large group of receivers and a generic web content reliable "push" application.

In addition, this framework approach has some design features making it attractive for bulk transfer in asymmetric and wireless internetwork applications. NORM is capable of successfully operating independent of network structure and in environments with high packet loss, delay, and out-of-order delivery. Hybrid proactive/reactive FEC-based repairing improve protocol performance in some multicast scenarios. A sender-only repair approach often makes additional engineering sense in asymmetric networks. NORM's unicast feedback capability may be suitable for use in asymmetric networks or in networks where only unidirectional multicast routing/delivery service exists. Asymmetric architectures supporting multicast delivery are likely to make up an important portion of the future Internet structure (e.g., DBS/cable/PSTN hybrids) and efficient, reliable bulk data transfer will be an important capability for servicing large groups of subscribed receivers.

## 9. Changes from RFC3940

This section lists the changes between the Experimental version of this specification, [\[RFC3940\]](#), and this version:

1. Removal of the `NORM_FLAG_MSG_START` for `NORM_OBJECT_STREAM`, replacing it with the "payload\_msg\_start" field in the FEC-encoded preamble of the `NORM_OBJECT_STREAM` `NORM_DATA` payload,
2. Definition of IANA namespace for header extension assignment,
3. Removal of file blocking scheme description that is now specified in the FEC Building Block document [\[RFC5052\]](#),
4. Removal of restriction of NORM receiver feedback message rate to local NORM sender rate (This caused congestion control failures in high speed operation. The extremely low feedback rate of the NORM protocol as compared to TCP avoids any resultant impact to the network as shown in [\[Mdpc\]](#)),
5. Correction of errors in some message format descriptions, and
6. Correction of inconsistency in specification of the inactivity timeout.
7. Addition of IPsec secure mode description with IPsec requirements.
8. Clarification of interpretation of "Source Block Length" when FEC codes are arbitrarily shortened by the sender.

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