



You want to be a Ham? (Amateur Radio Operator)

Amateur Radio License

Before you can start operating a radio, you need to be licensed and know the rules to operate legally. Licenses issued by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) are good for 10 years before renewal and anyone may hold one except a representative of a foreign government. There are three license classes—Technician, General and Extra.

Technician Class License

This class of license is the entry-level license for most new ham radio operators. To earn the Technician license requires passing one examination totaling 35 questions on radio theory, regulations and operating practices. The license gives access to all Amateur Radio frequencies above 30 megahertz, allowing these licensees the ability to communicate locally and most often within North America. It also allows for some limited privileges on the HF (also called "short wave") bands used for international communications.

General Class License

The General class license, the one you should aspire to after getting your Technician License, grants some operating privileges on all Amateur Radio bands and all operating modes. This license allows you to operate world-wide communications. Earning the General class license requires passing a 35 question examination. For most Hams, the General Class license provides plenty of enjoyment of this exciting hobby.

Amateur Extra License

After you have obtained your Technician and then General class licenses, try for the Amateur Extra class license, which conveys all available U.S. Amateur Radio operating privileges on all bands and all modes. Earning the license is more difficult since it requires passing a thorough 50 question examination.

Where to get training to pass the license exams

Self study materials

- Gordon West Books via <http://www.w5yi.org/catalog.php?sort=4> or phone 800-669-9594
- ARRL website for information at <http://www.arrl.org/getting-licensed>
- KB6NU No-nonsense free guides: <http://www.kb6nu.com/study-guides>

Training and Exams

- South Orange Amateur Radio Association, SOARA,
<http://www.soara.org/education/technician-ham-radio-class/>

W6LY club can provide advice, see any club member, see website
<http://www.qsl.net/w6ly/licenseexam.html>

The Ethics & Operating Procedures for the Radio Amateur can be found at
<http://www.arrl.org/operating-ethics>

