ARRL VEC

VOLUNTEER EXAMINER MANUAL

Your Complete Guide to the ARRL Amateur Radio Volunteer Examiner Program

Ninth Edition

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ARRL VEC VOLUNTEER EXAMINER MANUAL

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Visit the ARRL **VE Resources** webpage for current forms and additional information and links for conducting exam sessions, including the VE Manual **supplemental information**.

FOREWORD

The candidates line up in the hallway outside your exam room. They are as nervous as you were when you took your exam to become a new licensee or upgrade your license for new privileges, remember? You could hardly sleep the night before, remember? You practiced questions and answers as you drove to the testing site, remember? The butterflies were flying, the palms sweaty, remember?

Now, you are the examiner. And you are still nervous: You have accepted the responsibility for maintaining the integrity of the long tradition of Amateur Radio examination and licensing. You want to provide the same supportive and professional testing environment that you received when you took your examinations. These are important responsibilities.

With responsibility, comes great reward. It is likely that today you will grade the exam paper of a candidate who has studied extremely hard to become a radio amateur. You will say something like: "Sir, congratulations, you have passed, and welcome to Amateur Radio!" There is nothing like the feeling that goes with it. As an ARRL Volunteer Examiner of seven years, it is a feeling that surpasses the other great experiences I have enjoyed in Amateur Radio, including QSOing with the Space Shuttle astronauts, or even my First Contact, or first DX.

The candidates in the hallway are counting on you to provide a seamless examination process to allow them to fulfill their Amateur Radio aspirations. And, you are counting on them to do their best on the exams, to succeed, and to further ensure the future of your beloved Amateur Radio service.

You will have dark moments, too. It is not easy to tell a young girl or boy brimming with enthusiasm and brightness in their eyes that they failed the test; or to tell the same thing to a disabled person in a wheelchair or an octogenarian, to see the crestfallen expression crawl across their faces. Believe me, it is difficult, a heartbreaking task that must be done at times. (It's not easy information to hear: I remember as a young ham taking the exam for the General class license on the FCC's fifteenth floor suite of the federal Customhouse in Boston in 1977 and being told that I had failed--the tears spilled like rain on the long ride down that rickety old elevator). But you have enough experience as a VE to know what to say and how to say it: "You were close. Don't give up. Come back soon and give it another try. You can do it. There's a local club here that can help." You smile and provide a small pat on the back. Your expression conveys your sincerity in wanting that person to come back and try again, so you can be the one to tell him or her next time, "You passed!"

You are about to embark on your course of becoming a Volunteer Examiner. You are about to embark on your most rewarding journey in Amateur Radio.

Rick Palm, K1CE, VE Team Liaison, Flagler-Palm Coast Amateur Radio Club, Florida

PREFACE

MORSE CODE EXAM REQUIREMENT IS HISTORY

On February 23, 2007, the U.S. joined the growing list of countries that no longer require Amateur Radio applicants to pass a Morse code test.

"We . . . believe that the public interest is not served by requiring facility in Morse code when the trend in amateur communications is to use voice and digital technologies for exchanging messages," the FCC said in its Report and Order. "Rather, we believe that because the international requirement for telegraphy proficiency has been eliminated, we should treat Morse code telegraphy no differently from other Amateur Service communications techniques."

The FCC says it deems the current regime of written examinations "sufficient to determine whether a person is qualified to be issued an Amateur Radio operator license."

The FCC also ordered that all Technician licensees present and future -- whether or not they have passed a Morse code test, will get privileges on 80, 40, 15 and 10 meters identical to those of Novice licensees. "In eliminating this disparity between Technician and Technician Plus licenses, we are simplifying the Amateur Service licensing structure and promoting regulatory parity," the FCC said.

The significance of the FCC action as it pertains to Volunteer Examiners is also great: testing for Morse code is eliminated, simplifying examination administration under the VE program. Historically, the Morse code exam seemed to generate the most questions and issues to be grappled with by VE Teams on site.

Now, there are only three written exam elements to be administered under the Volunteer Examiner Program:

Element 2: Technician Class

Element 3: General Class

Element 4: Amateur Extra Class

The FCC no longer issues Novice and Advanced Class licenses, although existing licenses of these classes will be renewed.

While the Morse code requirement has been eliminated, the role of the VE program has not been diminished: the longstanding integrity of the Amateur Service examination and licensing functions still depends on the VE program, now more than 25 years in service. The purposes of this booklet are to produce capable, qualified Volunteer Examiners, and to provide guidance for outstanding program performance.

The Volunteer Examiner still stands as the sentinel to a proud, high-quality radio service for the public interest, convenience, and necessity.

SECTION ONE: BEFORE THE EXAM

Chapter 1
Introduction

The Volunteer Examiner (VE) Program: A Brief History

Since the early days of Amateur Radio, there have been several classes of license available to anyone who qualified. To qualify, applicants were required to pass examinations based on Morse code proficiency and knowledge of electronic theory, practice, regulations, and safety as it pertained to Amateur Radio.

Today, the Morse code requirement is gone, but the written examination remains for three classes of license. The three license levels – Technician, General and Amateur Extra classes -- continue the tradition of the incentive of additional privileges for additional study and proficiency. It is a system that has withstood the test of time.

Prior to today's volunteer-based examination system, the FCC conducted the testing at its field offices around the country on specified schedules. FCC examiners also traveled to remote locations to provide exams periodically.

But, in the early 1980s, budget cuts took its toll on the FCC's examination services. FCC exam opportunities shrank, and finally were eliminated. The amateur community would conduct the testing itself, under a new Volunteer Examiner Program drafted by the ARRL with the FCC staff.

In late 1982, the Goldwater-Wirth Bill was passed by Congress and signed into law by President Ronald Reagan. This bill, known as Public Law 97-259, amended the Communications Act of 1934, permitting the FCC to accept the voluntary and uncompensated services of licensed radio amateurs to serve in preparing and administering examinations. It also gave birth to the Volunteer Examiner Coordinator (VEC) program. Volunteer Examiner Coordinators (VECs) were formed in early 1984 to oversee the work of their certified Volunteer Examiners (VEs) and serve as a liaison between the VEs and the FCC.

The ARRL/VEC began coordinating exams in September 1984. With our first exam session held on September 2 at the ARRL Pacific Division Convention in California, the ARRL/VEC was on its way. Since then, the ARRL/VEC has accredited more than 50,000 VEs, who have administered more than 1,250,000 exam elements at more than 90,000 test sessions!

The ARRL is one of a handful of VEC organizations across the country, but it is by far the largest and most preeminent. In 1989, the ARRL Board of Directors adopted the following Statement of Purpose for its program:

ARRL/VEC Statement of Purpose

PURPOSE:

The Purpose of the ARRL/VEC is to provide initial licensing examination for prospective new hams and upgrade examination opportunities for those already licensed.

OBJECTIVES:

The ARRL/VEC will provide a sufficient number of examination opportunities to meet the above purpose, on a schedule that is convenient to the applicants.

The ARRL/VEC will provide the examination candidate with tests that meet all applicable requirements of current FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION Rules and Regulations and are administered in accordance with those requirements and generally accepted educational testing principles and practices.

The ARRL/VEC will provide a service level of the highest order to our customers, the Volunteer Examiners. -- Resolution of the ARRL Board of Directors (1989 Annual Meeting)

ARRL
VEC

Volunteer Examiner Coordinator (VEC)

A **Volunteer Examiner Coordinator (VEC)** is an organization that has entered into an agreement with the FCC to coordinate the efforts of individual Volunteer Examiners (VEs) in preparing and administering examinations for Amateur Radio licenses. At the completion of each examination session, the coordinating VEC must collect applicant information and test results from the administering VEs. The coordinating VEC screens the collected information; resolves all discrepancies and verifies that the VE's certifications are properly completed. For qualified examinees, the VEC forwards electronically all required data to the FCC. All data forwarded must be retained for at least 15 months and each VEC must make any examination records available to the FCC, upon request. [97.519(b)]

The FCC reserves the right to administer any examination element itself; re-administer any examination element previously administered by VEs, either itself or under the supervision of a VEC or VEs designated by the FCC; or cancel the operator/primary station license of any licensee who fails to appear for re-administration of an examination when directed by the FCC, or who does not successfully complete any required element that is re-administered. In an instance of such cancellation, the person will be granted an operator/primary station license consistent with completed examination elements that have not been invalidated by not appearing for, or by failing, the examination upon re-administration. [97.519(d)]

No organization may serve as a VEC unless it has entered into a written agreement with the FCC. The VEC must abide by the terms of the agreement. In order to be eligible to be a VEC, the entity must:

(a) Be an organization that exists for the purpose of furthering the amateur service;
(b) Be capable of serving as a VEC in at least the VEC region (see FCC Rules, Appendix 2) proposed;
(c) Agree to coordinate examinations for any class of amateur operator license;
(d) Agree to assure that, for any examination, every examinee qualified under these rules is registered without regard
    to race, sex, religion, national origin or membership (or lack thereof) in any amateur service organization. [97.521]

There are currently 14 VECs, all certified for all 13 FCC-defined regions (see FCC Rules, Appendix 2). The FCC Wireless Telecommunications Bureau (WTB) oversees all domestic wireless telecommunications programs and policies. The FCC-WTB believes that these VECs are enough to provide sufficient testing opportunities, and so no new applications for VEC certification have been approved.

A VEC announces throughout the regions it serves that it is recruiting volunteers to administer examinations. The ARRL/VEC has more than 35,000 currently accredited VEs in all 50 states and in several countries around the world. The ARRL/VEC is always looking for qualified amateurs to volunteer their services as examiners.

Volunteer Examiner (VE)

Volunteer Examiners (VEs) are individuals accredited by a VEC and are the people who actually administer the exams. Examination sessions must be coordinated by a VEC but are conducted in the field by VEs.

Each written question set administered to an examinee must be prepared by a VE holding an Amateur Extra Class operator license, except that an Advanced class VE can administer the Technician and General class license exam, and a General class VE can administer the Technician class exam. [97.507(a)]

Each exam administered to an examinee must use questions taken from the approved, applicable question pool, and must be prepared, or obtained from a supplier, by the administering VEs according to instructions from the coordinating VEC. [97.507(b), (c)]

Each test must be administered by a team of at least 3 VEs at an examination session coordinated by a VEC. The number of examinees at the session may be limited. [97.509(a)]

Each administering VE must be accredited by the coordinating VEC and be at least 18 years of age. A VE cannot be a person whose amateur license has ever been revoked or suspended. [97.509(b)]

The specific functions and requirements of the Volunteer Examiner are addressed in the following chapter.

When a VE Team notifies the ARRL/VEC that they have scheduled an exam session, the VEC responds by sending all supplies necessary for the VE Team to successfully hold the session. And provided that sufficient advanced notice is given, the package is sent early, so the VE Team will receive all materials well before the day of the session. These materials include an ample supply of NCVEC Form 605s and CSCEs, sufficient quantities of each written-element exam, answer

sheets, answer keys, Candidate Rosters, Test Session Reports, overlay-grading templates, and other supplies. These forms are addressed in detail in subsequent chapters. Experienced teams that conduct exam sessions frequently are given the option of receiving a bulk stock of materials that will last for several months. These field-stocked VE Teams must be officially authorized by ARRL/VEC and must continue to regularly schedule sessions to retain field-stocked status.

The VEC serves as the interface between the FCC and the VEs, who administer the exams to the candidates. VEs serve under the umbrella of the VEC, while the VEC supports the VEs and provides data to the FCC for issuance of licenses and resolution of regulatory issues.	FCC ↕ VEC ↕ VEs ↓ EXAMINEES
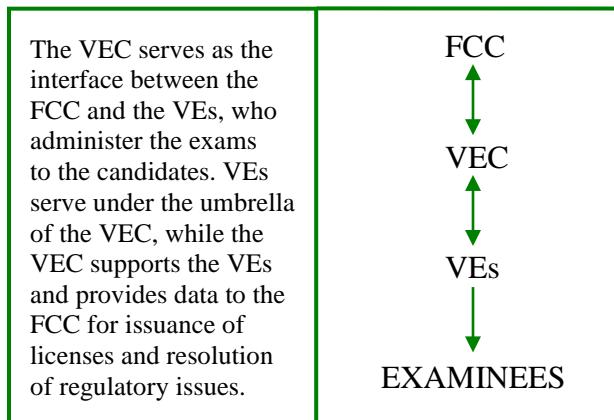
Test Fees

VEs and VECs may be reimbursed by examinees for out-of-pocket expenses incurred in preparing, processing, administering, or coordinating an examination for an amateur operator license. [97.527]

The FCC allows VECs to collect a fee from each candidate who takes one or more exam elements. These fees help the VEC recover its costs of providing its services.

If a VEC decides to collect a test fee for any of its exams during a calendar year, it must collect the same amount from every candidate it tests during that year. A VEC may determine each year whether it will collect a test fee, and, if so, what amount that test fee will be. The ARRL/VEC's current test fee is posted on the website at www.arrl.org/arrl-vec-exam-fees.

Test Fee Reimbursement

The ARRL/VEC permits its VEs to retain a portion of the test fees they collect to directly reimburse themselves for out-of-pocket expenses incurred in setting up and conducting their examination sessions. The maximum reimbursement the ARRL/VEC allows can be found on the website at www.arrl.org/arrl-vec-exam-fees.

As long as the expense is warranted and has been prudently incurred, and the expense is specifically related to exam administration, then the fee can be retained. The team should keep a complete record of the expenses paid (with receipts) in team records for two years. Records must be made available to ARRL/VEC upon request.

Exam Reporting to the FCC

The National Conference of VECs NCVEC Form 605 (paper and electronic versions) is the application form that is used by VE Teams for each person seeking an amateur license, whether it is for an applicant's initial ticket, or one that is being modified and upgraded.

The VE Team Liaison sends the completed application forms along with other test materials to the VEC for processing. The VEC screens the NCVEC Form 605s for completeness and authenticity before forwarding the application's data electronically to the FCC's licensing facility. The FCC will not allow a VEC to submit an application's data if there is any discrepancy on the application form, or in any related paperwork.

Although each candidate is responsible for completing his or her NCVEC Form 605 properly and accurately, the VE Team is also responsible for ensuring that mistakes do not slip through.

Test Designs and Question Pools

The responsibility for maintaining the sets of questions for the exams lays with the VECs [97.523], which elect and charge a subcommittee with developing, maintaining, and distributing the exam sets on behalf of all VECs, examiners, candidates, and publishers of Amateur Radio training materials. The National Conference of VECs (NCVEC) Question Pool Committee (QPC) consists of active VEC representatives. QPC members serve renewable one-year terms.

Every eligible radio amateur is welcome to submit comments on any question pool under revision. The revision process for each element starts with updating and revising the appropriate syllabus (a study guide listing topics to be covered by element), releasing the rough draft of the syllabus, and soliciting comments. This is followed by evaluating comments on the actual pool of questions and eventually revising and releasing the pool to all VECs.

Anyone who holds the appropriate operator class license is eligible to submit questions to the NCVEC QPC. The requirements [97.507(a)] are:

To Submit For:	Must Hold:
Element 2 (Technician)	General or higher
Element 3 (General)	Advanced or higher
Element 4 (Extra)	Extra

Question pools are revised based on a timetable established by the NCVEC QPC at its annual meetings. If you want to contribute questions, with distractors and answers, to the QPC, you must use the proper format. For more information visit the NCVEC website www.ncvec.org, email the QPC at qpcinput@ncvec.org or contact the ARRL/VEC. The question pools can be viewed on the ARRL website at www.arrl.org/question-pools.

On to Business

In the pages that follow, the VE program will be presented in more detail. The ARRL/VEC is the leading VEC because of the excellent work of thousands of volunteer examiners who have given so generously of their time, energy, and skill so that many thousands of amateurs could advance through the ranks. The ARRL hopes that you will choose to become an ARRL Volunteer Examiner!

Real Life Experience Box

The VE Team of the Flagler-Palm Coast ARC, Florida, has a lot of experience in administering examinations in our area. We have worked with only one VEC: the ARRL/VEC. Through many sessions, the ARRL/VEC staff has been there for us, supplying information and materials on a timely basis, answering our questions in a friendly, competent, patient manner and, in general, supporting our morale as the troops in the field giving exams.

We chose to work with the ARRL/VEC, and we hope you choose the ARRL/VEC, too. -- K1CE, FPCARC VE TEAM LIAISON

SECTION ONE: BEFORE THE EXAM

Chapter 2
Becoming a Volunteer Examiner

Volunteer Examiner Qualifications

As a Volunteer Examiner (VE), you are the gatekeeper to the integrity of the Volunteer Examiner Program. To that end, you must have certain qualifications and be accredited by a Volunteer Examiner Coordinator.

To qualify to be a Volunteer Examiner, you must:

- **be 18 years of age or older; and**

- **never have had your amateur station or operator licenses suspended or revoked; and**

- **hold a valid General, Advanced or Extra Class license.** [97.509]

If you meet these criteria, the ARRL/VEC would like to hear from you. To be accredited by the ARRL/VEC, you must complete a training program. Examiners may be accredited by more than one VEC. VEs are not required to work with only one VE Team or VEC and are not restricted to any particular area. A VEC does not have to accept the services of a VE if it does not want to.

The Gold Standard: Accreditation as an ARRL/VEC Volunteer Examiner

VE Application

First, you will need to complete an ARRL/VEC application form, reproduced at the end of this chapter. The ARRL/VEC office at ARRL Headquarters in Newington, Connecticut, needs a certain amount of basic information from each of its potential examiners to meet FCC requirements and to ensure the smooth operation of the VE Program. For you to become an accredited VE, and maintain your accreditation with the ARRL/VEC, you must have on file with the VEC:

- a properly completed and signed VE Application;
- a photocopy (or other verification) of your current General, Advanced, or Extra Class license;
- a completed open-book review test; or
- if applying for 'instant accreditation,' attach a copy of your other VEC accreditation credentials. Any prospective ARRL VE seeking 'instant accreditation' will be subject to ARRL/VEC review and approval before an ARRL VE badge and accreditation certificate is issued.

Open-Book Review

For quality assurance that ARRL/VEC Volunteer Examiners are competent to perform their tasks, you must successfully complete an open-book review based on the information provided in this manual, or you must have on-the-job training through participation at one or more exam sessions with another VEC and be in good standing. The open book review is located at the end of this chapter.

Instant VE Accreditation

Because training is the key to successfully preparing volunteer examiners for the challenges they will encounter, it is clear that on-the-job training can be a substitute for the open-book review process. Many in-the-trenches trained VEs who have been actively participating with the programs of other VECs are well prepared to be VEs in the ARRL program because most procedures are similar--or are the same--from VEC to VEC.

The ARRL 'instant accreditation' feature attracts VEs from other VECs who have participated in the program. You may become accredited with the ARRL/VEC instantly by completing the ARRL VE Application form and submitting a copy of your current accreditation credentials from another VEC. Once these requirements have been met, you are instantly accredited as an ARRL VE with the VEC's approval email. Then you may begin participating as an administering VE at ARRL sessions (assuming the ARRL/VEC has not previously formally denied accreditation to you, and you are in good standing with the other VEC).

Once the accreditation is accepted and recorded in the ARRL/VEC database, ARRL VE accreditation credentials will be forthcoming. No ARRL VE accreditation badge will be initially required of you.

FCC-License Grant Required

A prospective VE who has upgraded to General or Extra Class cannot be accredited at that license class level until he/she is actually **granted** their FCC license. A license grant occurs when the newly upgraded license data appears in the FCC's Universal Licensing System (ULS) database https://www.fcc.gov/wireless/universal-licensing-system.

A General or Advanced class VE who upgrades to Extra Class can participate as an Extra Class VE as soon as the new Extra Class license data appears in the FCC's ULS database. The VE can bring proof of that fact along with his/her General or Advanced class VE credentials to the test session (a copy of the new license Form 660 as received from the FCC will also suffice). A Novice or Technician class license holder who has recently upgraded cannot become accredited as a VE until the actual General or Extra Class license has been granted by the FCC. The accreditation process is completed once the ARRL VE Badge and Accreditation Certificate have been issued by ARRL/VEC.

Credentials

Once accredited as an examiner in the ARRL/VEC's program, your accreditation credentials will be current as long as you remain active by participating in an exam session at least once every 5 years. Your accreditation is valid at any ARRL/VEC coordinated session. Accreditation does not, however, convey any rights to participate as an examiner. That is, the VE Team conducting the session has the authority to specify the number of VEs needed and who will serve. Contact the VE Team you would like to work with and find out if they can use your services. ARRL/VEC urges you to observe and gain experience slowly at first.

Certificate of VE Accreditation and VE Badge

A handsome certificate of accreditation, suitable for framing, is issued to newly accredited VEs. With the certificate comes an official ARRL/VEC accreditation badge, which once received from the ARRL/VEC must be worn or at least clearly displayed, when you serve at an ARRL/VEC test session. A VE's accreditation status must be ensured by the VEC before any successful application's data is forwarded to the FCC.

ARRL/VEC badges are laminated so that they cannot be altered. The badges are also color-coded: blue and black on a white background for General class VEs; green and black on white for Advanced class VEs; and red and black on white for Extras. When you wear your badge, anyone at the session will be able to tell at a glance which exam elements you are authorized to administer. ARRL/VEC accreditation will not necessarily authorize you to administer exams in any other VEC's program. Be sure to verify that you meet all of the requirements of any other VEC's program before you participate in their sessions.

Verifying Accreditation Status

VEs who do not have a badge, who have lost their badge, or have not yet received one from the VEC, may still participate in the examination session if the VE Team Liaison (leader) is satisfied that the VE is currently accredited in the ARRL/VEC

program. Often the VEC staff will inform VEs over the telephone or by email that their accreditation is current and encourage that VE to advise the VE Team Liaison of the telephone or email discussion so that the Team Liaison can verify this information, if desired. A VE's accreditation status can also be confirmed via the ARRL/VEC's VE Session Counts webpage at www.arrl.org/ve-session-counts. The listings are in alphanumeric call sign order according to VE location by state (the VEs address in ARRL/VEC records). Only currently accredited ARRL VEs are listed on our site.

Maintaining Your Accreditation

ARRL accreditation renewal is automatic for ARRL VEs who maintain a current address, contact phone number and/or email address on file at the VEC office and have participated at an exam session within the past 5 years. Renewal stickers, extending the ARRL VE's accreditation expiration date, are issued and should be placed on your credentials. By issuing automatic accreditation renewals, the ARRL/VEC can ensure that the needs of our VEs are met; as well as the amateur radio community. After 5 years of inactivity, your VE accreditation will be placed on hold until you contact the VEC office. Depending on the amount of time that has passed, you may be required to reapply. No one's accreditation will be permanently revoked solely because of his or her inactivity because many factors can contribute to a VE's activity level.

We ask those VEs who no longer wish to continue in the VE program to contact the ARRL/VEC by mail, email, or by telephone. At your request, we will remove your name from our VE roster and change your "accredited" status to "inactive" status. Renewal stickers will not be issued.

VEs who may not actually have administered Amateur Radio exams, but who are reported (on the back of the Test Session Report form) as having helped with an ARRL/VEC test session are credited with serving and will qualify for automatic renewal.

The badge you wear at a test session must reflect your current VE status. VE Teams are responsible for ensuring that each participating VE's accreditation is valid before team members administer exams at an ARRL/VEC test session. Failure to do so can have serious consequences. If VEs are later found to have been ineligible to serve, any elements administered by ineligible VEs may be declared invalid. The ARRL/VEC is also obligated to review the VE's performance to determine whether any further action--such as permanent removal from the program--is necessary. In the VE program, an ounce of prevention is well worth a pound of cure.

Of paramount importance to the success of the VE program is the need to ensure that examiners who administer tests are actually authorized to do so. Fortunately, very few ARRL/VEC test sessions have been invalidated because one of the three VEs who signed the applications had not applied for accreditation in the ARRL/VEC's program.

Reaccreditation--License Expiration

A Volunteer Examiner whose FCC license has expired is not eligible to administer any exam element while the license remains expired. The VE accreditation is valid only if the VE's amateur license is current and valid.

To ensure the eligibility of each VE whose license--and, therefore, his or her accreditation--is about to expire, the ARRL/VEC will issue renewed credentials after FCC-licensing data reflects a current license status, and once ARRL/VEC is made aware of the status change. Let the ARRL/VEC staff know when you receive your renewed license (send a copy or inform the VEC by phone or email vec@arrl.org).

Reaccreditation--ARRL/VEC Credentials Expire

If you advise the ARRL/VEC that your accreditation is about to expire, the staff will routinely renew your accreditation credentials upon request. As mentioned above, the ARRL/VEC will also automatically renew them if your contact information is up to date in our files and if you have participated at an exam session within the past 5 years.

If you have been active with ARRL/VEC, and if you have not yet received renewal stickers for your accreditation within 20 days of your expiration, please contact the ARRL/VEC office. This is an excellent time to update your records with the VEC office if you have not done so earlier.

VEs Who Upgrade

If you were a General or an Advanced class VE and have just upgraded to Extra Class, you may only begin serving as an Extra Class VE when your new Extra Class license data appears in the FCC's data base. You may participate as an Extra class VE only if you bring (1) your original signed Extra Class license, or proof that the FCC's data base has been updated and (2) your current General or Advanced class VE badge (or verification of accreditation) to the test session. Also, be sure to send a copy of your Extra Class license to the ARRL/VEC office, or call or email the staff, so that a new VE badge can be issued and sent out to you for a modest fee.

Vanity Call Signs

All amateurs have the opportunity to apply to FCC to obtain a special "vanity" call sign of their choosing. Call sign changes may cause VE credentials to appear out of date when they show a former call sign. VEs with badges not reflecting their new call sign may continue to participate as ARRL VEs so long as they bring their present ARRL VE badge, and a copy of their new FCC license (with new call sign) to exam sessions in which they participate. VEs should always use their current call sign on the Test Session Report's participating VE list, CSCEs and NCVEC Form 605s (anywhere a VEs call is entered).

If you are a VE with a new vanity call sign, the ARRL/VEC will send you a new VE Badge and Certificate depicting your new call sign for a modest fee. An alternative to paying the fee is to simply wait until your accreditation is regularly scheduled to expire; vanity call sign holders can then simply mention that the ARRL/VEC staff needs to replace their credentials due to the call sign change.

Lost Badge

If you have lost your VE badge, contact the ARRL/VEC for a replacement. Typically, it is sent out for a modest fee.

Drop-In VEs

What do you do when you are set to start your exam session and an unknown VE shows up unexpectedly saying, "Hi! Where do you want me?" Depending on your needs for the session, your team's style and the visiting VE's personality, this could be a blessing or a curse. The call is yours. As long as the visitor has the proper, current ARRL/VEC credentials, you may use his or her services--or not, at your discretion. If you neither need nor want the services of another accredited VE at this late stage of the game, yet the VE is adamant about serving, please show him or her this section of the manual:

Any interference at any session by an ARRL/VEC accredited VE should be reported to the ARRL/VEC office immediately.

> Visiting VEs with the proper credentials may or may not be used by a VE team at a particular exam session at the VE Team's discretion. Anyone (VE, observer or candidate) who is disruptive or otherwise interferes with an exam session will be asked to leave the test site. Although sessions must be "open" to the public, no VE team need tolerate any interference. ARRL/VEC accreditation does not mean that a VE's services must be used by a particular VE Team or at a particular session. Note, however, that anyone showing up to observe must be permitted to do so unless their presence is disruptive.

Handicapped VEs

In February 1991, the FCC stated its opinion regarding how handicapped VEs may, or may not, participate in administration of examinations. The FCC allows VECs to accredit disabled licensees to become VEs. The FCC also stated that "any VE who is not competent to perform the VE functions required for any particular examination should not administer that examination."

The ARRL/VEC's policy is to accredit all qualified individuals--regardless of disability. By signing the certification on the VE Application form, however, individuals (handicapped and non-handicapped) certify that they understand that even

though they may be accredited as a VE, if they are not able or competent to perform certain VE functions required for any particular examination they should not administer that examination.

If a VE Team plans to use the services of a disabled VE, the VE Team may determine in which ways that person's assistance is accepted. For example, if a VE Team is not comfortable accepting the participation of a VE who is not competent to grade an exam paper, the VE Team could assign the VE to another responsibility that is consistent with his/her competency. A fourth VE would need to be in attendance to perform the principal duties.

A VE Team does not have to accept the services of ANY VE if it does not want to.

Classes of VEs

Some VECs or VE Teams do not accept the services of General or Advanced class amateurs who otherwise qualify for VE accreditation. The ARRL/VEC, however, recognizes the potential contributions General and Advanced class VEs can make.

Under the FCC's Rules, General class VEs are permitted to administer Element 2 (Technician exam), which will qualify a candidate for the Technician license, while the Advanced class VE can also administer Element 3 (the General written exam). With the Technician class license the most sought after ticket, General and Advanced class VEs are definitely needed. Thus, General and Advanced class VEs can be carrying a large part of the workload, and they are accredited by the ARRL/VEC.

Every VEC is charged with ensuring that all of its VEs are qualified to administer tests, not just eligible to do so. That is why the ARRL/VEC publishes this VE Manual and why the ARRL/VEC requires that all prospective VEs complete the associated open-book review or have on-the-job training. The ARRL/VEC fields the largest, most active VE program in the country. This is true, thanks to the ARRL/VEC's Volunteer Examiner's commitment to excellence.

ARRL VE Participation on Webpage and in *QST*

The ARRL/VEC website makes it possible to access a list of the number of ARRL/VEC exam sessions each Volunteer Examiner has served in. The listings are in alphanumeric call sign order according to VE location by state (VEs address in ARRL/VEC records). The VE Session Counts page recognizes the accomplishments of the 35,000-plus current and actively accredited ARRL VEs and is also a fun way for VEs to keep track of their participation. A few days after a session is transmitted to FCC, the participating VE's records are updated on the webpage. Access your ARRL VE session participation total via the **VE Session Counts** page at www.arrl.org/ve-session-counts.

The VE Honor Roll runs quarterly in *QST* in September, December, March, and June. The honor roll recognizes the top 25 ARRL VEs according to the total number of exam sessions they have participated in since their accreditation.

The VE Honor Roll and the VE Session Counts webpage give us the opportunity to express our appreciation to ALL our Volunteer Examiners for their generous contributions to the ARRL/VEC program and the amateur radio community. You are our most valuable asset, and we thank you for your support!

ARRL/VEC Service to its VEs

Once you have been accredited with the ARRL/VEC, its staff is available to answer any questions that you may have. When the ARRL/VEC has new information to share with you, the staff will tell you about it. Information will be disseminated to you by special mailings, email messages, or through the ARRL VE Newsletter.

Toll-Free Telephone Access: By dialing 800-9-ARRL-VE (800-927-7583), ARRL VEs from across the country can conveniently contact the ARRL/VEC to discuss any questions or needs that they may have. This serves all of the U.S., Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. **NOTE: This number is for VE use only!** Please do not offer or provide it to license candidates looking for new call sign or future testing location information. Keep the line open for your own access to ARRL/VEC. Although the staff is normally in the office weekdays from 8 AM until 5 PM (ET), the number has voicemail during non-business hours. If you are not able to reach the staff during the day, please leave a message.

Other Contact Media for ARRL/VEC Staff

VEC Customer Service: 860-594-0300 -- weekdays 8 AM until 5 PM (ET); voicemail during non-business hours

FAX: 860-594-0339 or 860-594-0259 -- 24 hours

EMAIL: vec@arrl.org

Address: ARRL VEC, 225 Main St., Newington, CT 06111 USA

Prospective VE Applications

Email (quickest turn-around time), mail, or fax forms (PDF file or scanned JPEG image showing your real signature).

Web Resources for ARRL VEs
The ARRL VEC VE Resources page offers information you will need to help conduct exam session business. Our support page offers easy access to exam forms and session information, online exams and remote video sessions, question pools, FCC Rules, basic qualification question information, and much more!

ARRL VEC VE Resources page: http://www.arrl.org/resources-for-ves
Expired License Credit and Exam Element Credit information: http://www.arrl.org/exam-element-credit
FCC Basic Qualification Question information and instructions: http://www.arrl.org/fcc-qualification-question
Candidates - what to bring to a session: http://www.arrl.org/what-to-bring-to-an-exam-session
Obtain a license copy: http://www.arrl.org/obtain-license-copy (The FCC ceased printing paper licenses.)
Exam Session search: http://www.arrl.org/exam
Teams Conducting Online Exams: http://www.arrl.org/online-exam-session
FCC Application Fees: http://www.arrl.org/fcc-application-fee
VE Home page: www.arrl.org/volunteer-examiners

VE Manual Supplemental Information
Read the information that extends and supports the published manual: VE Manual Supplemental Information
Visit the ARRL VEC VE Resources page for a large repository of exam session information and forms.

ARRL VE Newsletter
The VE Newsletter and other periodic newsworthy updates are distributed via email, to the "ARRL VE-List".

To subscribe:
1. On the VE-List page follow the "**Subscribing to ve-list**" instructions.
   Enter your email address, and name and call sign. Create a password.
   Click the Subscribe button.
2. The list moderator / administrator must give approval before you may
   join the list. You will receive an automated reply to that effect.
3. After you have been approved and have been added to the list, you may
   access your account and change your preferences. If this process does
   not work, email your name, call sign, and email address to vec@arrl.org
   and type "subscribe ve-list" in the subject line to be added to the ve-list.

The instructions can also be found on our VE-List Updates webpage at www.arrl.org/ve-enewsletter.
If you ever have a question, please call 800-927-7583.

ARRLVEC
volunteer examiner coordinator®

ARRL VEC, 225 Main Street, Newington, CT 06111
Phone: 1-860-594-0300   web: arrl.org/volunteer-examiners

VOLUNTEER EXAMINER APPLICATION FORM

PLEASE Type or Print Clearly in Ink   (check one)
                                                 ☐ **General**
                                                 ☐ **Advanced**
Call Sign: _____   ☐ **Extra**   **License Expiration Date:** _____

Name: _____ _____
                                     (First, Middle Initial, Last)

Mailing Address (street or POB): _____

_____ _____

City: _____   **State:** _____   **ZIP:** _____   **Country:** _____

Phone: (_____)_____   **Email Address:** _____

Has your FCC license ever been suspended or revoked? ……………………….   ☐ YES ☐ NO

Have you ever been disaccredited by another VEC? ……………………………   ☐ YES ☐ NO

 If yes, which VEC(s) and when? _____

For Instant Accreditation, have you participated as a VE in another VEC program

 and is your accreditation in that program current?...   ☐ **YES** ☐ **NO**

 If yes, which VEC coordinated the test session? (enter VEC name here) _____

 You MUST attach a copy of your credentials from that VEC to this form as proof.

CERTIFICATION

**By signing the ARRL VE Application Form, I certify that to the best of my knowledge
that the above information AND the following statements are true:**

1) **I am at least 18 years of age.**
2) **I agree to comply with the FCC Part 97 Amateur Radio Service Rules, especially Subpart F (§97.509).**
3) **I agree to comply with examination procedures established by the ARRL as Volunteer Examiner Coordinator.**
4) **I understand that the ARRL as my coordinating VEC, or I as an accredited ARRL VE, may terminate this
    relationship at any time, with or without any reason or cause.**
5) **I understand that violation of the FCC Rules or willful noncompliance with the VEC will result in the loss
    of my VE accreditation and could result in loss of my Amateur Radio operator or station licenses, or both.**
6) **I understand that, even though I may be accredited as a VE, if I am not able or competent to perform certain
    VE functions required for any particular examination, I should not administer that examination (§97.525).**

_____   _____   _____
            Signature Required*   **Call Sign**   **Date**

***By typing your name above, you are signing this form electronically. Understand that your electronic
 signature is legally binding, as if you had physically signed the document by hand.**

ARRL VEC Open-Book Review

ARRL VEC Office -- Accreditations
225 Main Street
Newington, CT 06111
Email: VEC@arrl.org / Fax: 860-594-0339

You, as a prospective ARRL VEC Volunteer Examiner, are expected to read and thoroughly understand the *ARRL VEC Volunteer Examiner Manual*, on which this review is based. Complete this Open-Book Review as soon as possible and return it to the ARRL VEC for processing. We strongly recommend that you keep a copy of your completed review for your records.

This review is not a test. It is simply a review that covers the material in the *ARRL VEC Volunteer Examiner Manual*. Nevertheless, it is an important part of the accreditation process, the concept of which is not shared by other VECs. Your having successfully completed this Open-Book Review certifies to us and the FCC that your training in the ARRL VEC program is concluded and that you are prepared to serve as a Volunteer Examiner with the thousands of others who share your enthusiasm. Remember, though, that you may not serve as an ARRL VEC accredited Volunteer Examiner until we have reviewed your application (and its attachments) and formally approve your accreditation. Our approval is reported to you when you receive your ARRL VEC accreditation credentials in the mail or by email.

Please allow three weeks for the ARRL VEC staff to grade your Open-Book Review and process your VE credentials.

When completing this Open-Book Review, you may work alone or with others in researching the answers to the questions. However, please remember that all ARRL VEC accredited Volunteer Examiners will be individually responsible for understanding and abiding by the regulations and procedures as presented in this edition. To ensure this, each of you must return an individually completed review. Good luck, and thanks for working with the ARRL VEC.

Please provide your full name and call…(name): _____(call sign)_____

---

1. When may all or a portion of the test fees collected by a VE team be used to offset expenses not related to examinations (such as instruction or club expenses)? _____

2. By how much can a VEC or a VE team vary the test fee that it charges each candidate to offset expenses incurred in coordinating sessions during the calendar year? _____

3. Which FCC bureau administers the VE Program? _____

4. What is the test fee charged to each candidate who takes examination elements for Technician or higher class licenses, including upgrades, at an ARRL VEC coordinated session during this calendar year? _____

5. How old must an amateur be to be eligible for VE accreditation? _____

6. May an amateur be accredited by a VEC if his/her license was ever suspended or revoked?   YES   NO

7. May a VE be accredited concurrently by more than one VEC?   YES   NO

8. How long is the term of accreditation for ARRL VEC Volunteer Examiners? _____

9. What is the name of the ARRL VEC program feature where an ARRL VEC VE team (with the appropriate documentation provided) can accept the services of a VE who is accredited with a different VEC?

    _____

10. What is the minimum number of VEs needed to conduct a VEC coordinated test session? _____

11. Who must grade the examinations of each examinee? _____

12. May VEs who are related, e.g., husband/wife, administer elements at the same session?   YES   NO

    May they administer exams to their relatives?   YES   NO

13. On the NCVEC 605 form, in addition to name and address, what other items are required by the FCC on the application?

    _____

14. Which element(s) can be administered by a General class VE? _____

    Which element(s) can be administered by an Advanced class VE? _____

15. In the ARRL VEC program may a VE Team Liaison (or VE Session Manager) who holds a General or Advanced class license receive test papers for Elements 2, 3, and 4?   YES   NO

16. Which license class, if any, must the VE Team Contact Person hold? _____

17. Who decides when and where a test session will be held? _____

18. Who is responsible for maintaining question pools from which all written element exams must be designed and assembled?

    _____

19. Under what circumstances may a VE team conduct a test session without having publicly announced it in advance?

    _____

20. If exams are administered at a convention or hamfest, under what conditions may an examinee be required to pay to gain access to the test session site/room? _____

21. How long does an average ARRL VEC test session last? _____

22. What VEC form should be used for recording each examinee's progress and pass/fail results for a test session?

    _____

23. When an applicant answers "yes" to the FCC basic qualification question (felony question), where and to whom do they submit (email) their exhibit/explanation? _____

24. If an unlicensed applicant passes Elements 2 and 3 at an ARRL VEC coordinated session, what new license class (earned) should be indicated on the CSCE and on the Form 605? _____

25. If an unlicensed applicant passes Elements 2, 3, and 4 at an ARRL VEC coordinated session, what new license class (earned) should be indicated on the CSCE and Form 605? _____

ARRL VEC , 225 Main St, Newington CT 06111 USA   EMAIL: VEC@arrl.org

26. May VEs read the exam questions to visually impaired candidates? YES NO

May a non-VE read exam questions (administer the exam) to their relative? YES NO

27. May VE Teams who are not officially field stocked by ARRL VEC retain test booklets or exam materials after

the conclusion of the test session? YES NO

28. Can a VE, who has recently upgraded, serve as a VE exercising the privileges of the new higher class license before

the newly upgraded license grant appears in the FCC's Amateur Service license database? YES NO

29. In the ARRL VEC program, after a test session is conducted, can the VE team submit all applications and all

examination documents (this includes any test documents passed or failed),

through a session documents uploads webpage for quicker service? YES NO

30. For in-person sessions, that have been uploaded via the session documents upload webpage,

must a note be included in the mailed package indicating the session was electronically filed? YES NO

31. May an applicant who is applying for an upgrade at a test session also request a vanity call using that

same upgrade application (NCVEC Form 605)? YES NO

32. When an applicant answers "yes" to the FCC basic qualification question (felony question), within how many days

must they submit (email) their exhibit/explanation to the FCC? _____

33. Under current FCC Rules/procedures, can an amateur license be renewed before 90 days? YES NO

34. Do FCC rules allow partial credit for expired General, Advanced, and Extra class licenses? YES NO

35. For how long is credit, as shown on a CSCE, valid? _____

36. May the VE Team deny an applicant the use of a calculator? If so, when? _____
_____

37. What must a Technician class amateur, who passed the technician exam before 3/21/1987, do to receive credit for

Element 3, towards a General class or higher upgrade? _____

38. Should elements that an applicant successfully completed at an earlier (different test date/location) test session also

be indicated on a CSCE issued at your session today (current day) or at the next test session (future date) where the

applicant successfully completes an additional element? YES NO

39. To whom are the three copies of the ARRL VEC CSCE to be distributed? _____
_____

40. According to ARRL VEC policy, how soon should a VE team submit exam session documents for successful candidates

to the coordinating VEC after the test session has been conducted? _____

**This concludes your review. Be sure to save a copy of your completed VE application
and open-book review before email, mailing, or faxing to ARRL VEC.**

ARRL VEC , 225 Main St, Newington CT 06111 USA   EMAIL: VEC@arrl.org

SECTION ONE: BEFORE THE EXAM

Chapter 3
The Volunteer Examiner Team

At Least Three Volunteer Examiners Needed

To examine a candidate, at least three Volunteer Examiners (VEs) are needed. VEs must be accredited by the ARRL/VEC to serve in ARRL/VEC sessions; VEs who are accredited by the ARRL/VEC may work with any ARRL/VEC VE Teams where needed.

It is strongly suggested that VE Teams have more than three examiners signed up to participate for each session. If only three VEs are slated to work the session and one does not show up, the session cannot be conducted. If a team is short of VEs, feel free to contact the VEC office for assistance in locating additional ARRL accredited volunteers.

Real Life Experience Box

Our experience has shown that three VEs are not enough to handle even a small session efficiently and expeditiously. With our VE Team, we try to have at least five VEs on hand for a group of seven or eight candidates. On February 24, 2007, the date after the Morse code requirement was eliminated, we held a session for 14 candidates. Seven VEs were barely adequate to run an efficient session then. The more VEs you have at the session, the smoother your session will run. – K1CE, FPCARC VE TEAM LIAISON

Testing Relatives

VEs cannot administer exams to candidates to whom they are related. FCC Rule 97.509(d) states: No VE may administer an examination to his or her spouse, children, grandchildren, stepchildren, parents, grandparents, stepparents, brothers, sisters, stepbrothers, stepsisters, aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, and in-laws. Members of a VEs' family may test at a session where that examiner is scheduled to serve, however, as long as that VE does not administer any exams or sign any 605 forms or CSCEs for a relative.

Under the ARRL/VECs program, a VE Team member's family may not test at sessions when that VE serves as Team Liaison. In fact, it is better for VEs not to conduct sessions at which relatives may be testing to offset even the perception of impropriety.

Although administering VEs cannot be related to their candidates, they may serve on the same team with family members who are accredited examiners. Husbands and wives, for example, may serve together as VEs; although they may not administer exams to any of their relatives.

If a VE Team Liaison who is field-stocked has a relative who plans to be examined at an upcoming ARRL test session, please inform the ARRL/VEC so that they may provide that VE Team Liaison with special examination materials that are different from those that are in normal field-stock Liaison's supplies. In this way, not only the fact, but the perception of absolute examination integrity is maintained.

VE Team Liaison

Once the VE Team has lined up examiners for its next session, the team designates one of its VEs to serve as VE Team Liaison. This position is important. The Team Liaison is the one VE to whom the ARRL/VEC will send the confidential test materials for a particular exam session, and the VE responsible for the security of the test materials during the

time that they are in his or her possession. In most cases, the Team Liaison is typically the only VE the VEC communicates with, before and after the session.

Whomever your team appoints as Liaison must be currently accredited as a VE by the ARRL/VEC. If your team will be administering only Element 2, the Team Liaison must be a General or higher class licensed accredited VE; for Elements 2 and 3 the Team Liaison must be an Advanced or higher class licensed accredited VE. And if your team will be administering Elements 2, 3 and 4, the VE Team Liaison must hold an Extra Class license.

The appointment as Team Liaison does not have to be a permanent one if the team decides to switch assignments. If your team has several VEs qualified to serve as the Liaison, the assignment may be rotated among them. Rotation of the duties gives more VEs the opportunity to gain experience in running sessions.

The position of VE Team Liaison is one of a team representative to the VEC; not specifically a team leader or captain. Because each of the three, or more, VEs on a VE Team are equally responsible for the certifications they make to the FCC, the team's authority cannot be delegated to one individual for matters that involve FCC Rules or procedural requirements, or VEC procedural requirements. Any substantive decisions made by the VE Team must be the result of a group consensus.

Indecision amongst a team should be resolved through a team vote. Because a team is a minimum of three equally qualified individuals, and if team members offer their opinions on a matter, a majority decision will be reached if two of the three VEs are of the same opinion. If a team has more than three VEs, other VEs could participate in the decision process as well. All VEs, however, should be willing to accept the final decision.

Real Life Experience Box

I came on as a VE Team Liaison one year ago, joining a very experienced well-run VE Team. The team's standing schedule offers test sessions on the first Saturday of the month throughout the year. In addition to the monthly sessions, some special sessions are also arranged.

In February 2007, when the FCC eliminated the Morse code as a licensing requirement, our VE Team wanted to be one of the VE Teams that held a special midnight test session to commemorate the historical event. We had a great turnout of both VEs and candidates that night. Some candidates came from as far as 2 hours away, just to be among the first amateurs eligible for an upgrade without having to take the Morse code test. We enjoyed pizza and home baked pastry and special certificates were awarded to candidates who licensed or upgraded at the First-of-the-New-Rules session to make the event memorable.

In June 2007, we were invited by a residential school for the blind and visually impaired to do a test session at their site. They are located one hour away from our regular test location and could not make travel arrangements to attend. We had a very limited window to schedule this special session; classes were ending for the semester and the students would soon be departing for an extended break. In a matter of days, we were able to meet their needs. It was rewarding for us to see the enthusiasm of the students and to be able to participate in the accommodated session right at their school.

This past winter we had a severe winter storm on the day of a publicized exam session. There were closed roads and hazardous driving conditions. The VE Team had a meeting on the radio to determine if some of us could get there safely and go ahead with the session. With some planning and teamwork and a lot of shoveling, we made it possible for the session to take place. Several candidates also braved the bad weather and were very pleased to earn their upgrades.

All this made for a very exciting first year for me. I hope my second year of being a VE Team Liaison is just as much fun! – NQ9A, Four Lakes ARC VE TEAM LIAISON

FCC Session Manager

In April 1997, FCC announced new rules providing for a "Session Manager" in the VEC system. The rules state (FCC Rule 97.513) that a VE session manager may be selected by the VE Team for each examination session; that the VE session manager must be accredited as a VE by the same VEC that coordinates the examination session; that the VE session manager may serve concurrently as an administering VE; that the VE session manager may carry on liaison between the VE Team and the coordinating VEC; and that the VE session manager may organize activities at an examination session.

The ARRL/VEC program has since its earliest days had an equivalent to the session manager, called the VE Team Liaison. A VE Team can choose to designate their representative to the VEC as a session manager or Team Liaison, which the ARRL/VEC feels are interchangeable titles with the same responsibilities.

VE Team Contact Person

The person who fills this high-profile position is the VE program's local contact with the general public, ham, and non-ham. He or she is responsible for handling the myriad of questions that candidates will raise before the test session. Most questions tend to be routine, such as "How do I get to the test site?" or "When is your next session?" The Contact Person also would typically accept NCVEC Form 605 applications and test fees from those candidates who pre-register.

Anyone, accredited or not, or even licensed or not, is eligible to serve as the Contact Person for your team. Although not legally required to do so, many teams prefer to assign the task to a licensed radio amateur who is familiar with licensing requirements, testing procedures, and the Amateur Radio service in general. Your team's choice is important--the Contact Person is your team's and Amateur Radio's *face* to the general public. Choose your Contact Person with care. Many teams choose to have their Contact Person also be their Team Liaison with the ARRL/VEC.

Real Life Experience Box

Our experience has been that it is best to have the VE Team Contact Person also serve as the VE Team Liaison for efficiency and expedience. There can be no communication problems when they are the same person! – K1CE, FPCARC VE TEAM LIAISON

When you register your session with the ARRL/VEC, the staff immediately enters the information into our computer database so that candidates who check the exam session search page on the ARRL website www.arrl.org/find-an-amateur-radio-license-exam-session or who call our office will get the most current test session information available. Your Contact Person's name and phone number will be given in response to inquiries from candidates in your area.

Exam Materials

After a VE Team registers a session www.arrl.org/register-an-amateur-radio-license-exam-session (and about 15 days before the day of the examination) the VEC office will send the package of materials that the team will need. The materials include NCVEC 605 forms, candidate rosters, the written test booklets, candidate answer sheets, test answer keys, postage-paid mailers, and other items (explained in detail in the coming chapters). Although the quantities of the materials included in the package are limited, they are usually sufficient to get the team and its session started. When you receive the package from the VEC, open it immediately and inspect the contents to confirm that you have received everything you require for the session.

The team may instead choose to use the exam generating system to print their own exams or to conduct online examinations. Information and updated instructions about the exam software is explained in the coming chapters and in the VE Manual Supplemental Information. Additional information is also located on the ARRL VEC VE Resources page.

'Team' Is the Operative Word

Your VE Team is truly a team, in its work and spirit, and the camaraderie it engenders. You will find that you will all become closer as work peers, and friendships and kinship will grow. Your team is often the first time a candidate will come into contact with Amateur Radio operators on a face-to-face basis. For many, they will get their first impression of what hams are like in person.

If you are excited and enthusiastic about your work as VEs, and as hams, that enthusiasm will rub off on your examinees. Present a good face for Amateur Radio!

Real Life Experience Box

Our team was formed at the very beginning of the VE program and we're still going strong. I don't know if there's anything that makes our team special except our longevity. My husband and I are the only regular participants left out of the original five, but we have picked up very loyal team members along the way. Most have been with us for years and celebrate their anniversaries with the team. A number of candidates have complimented us on the speed and efficiency with which the team works. We've streamlined the process over the years, and it makes a good exam experience for our candidates. Plus, we've worked together so long we almost read each other's minds! I am very proud to serve as the Liaison for our team. – KA0CDN, Mile Hi VE TEAM LIAISON

SECTION ONE: BEFORE THE EXAM

Chapter 4
Preparing for the Test Session

Scheduling the Test Session

When and where should you hold a session? How often are sessions needed in your area? These decisions are entirely up to you and your team. The ARRL/VEC refers inquiries from candidates in your area to your team, but that is as far as the ARRL VEC office can go. You and the other radio amateurs in your community--instructors, clubs and other VEs--have a much better idea of what your community needs.

The goal is convenience to the candidate. Consider all time and site options. Sessions should be held on weeknights and weekends when candidates will not have to take time off from work. And they should be held at a variety of easily accessed sites where candidates will not have to travel long distances.

If your team plans to conduct more than one session and has a good idea when the sessions will be held, let the ARRL/VEC know in advance what schedule you anticipate, even if the first session will not be held for several weeks or months. With this information in hand, the ARRL/VEC can distribute the schedule to a wide audience and prospective applicants can also arrange their study plans better. We have observed that most candidates refer to the ARRL/VEC for help with finding exam opportunities in their local community. The information we post on our ARRL Exam Session Search webpage at www.arrl.org/find-an-amateur-radio-license-exam-session helps candidates find you!

View updated instructions in the **Supplemental Information**, which extends and supports the published VE Manual. Additional 605 form information is also located on the ARRL VEC VE Resources page.

Real Life Experience Box

Our VE Team here in Palm Coast, Florida, a community of 35,000, holds three sessions per year—one every four months. We have an average of five candidates per session. That is a schedule that works well for us and seems to meet the convenience and necessity of the candidate community here. We always review the schedule and will modify it as needs change. We are flexible, and only want to ensure that candidates from our community are well served with convenient times and locations for testing. – K1CE, FPCARC VE TEAM LIAISON

Regular Schedules: Monthly, bi-Monthly or Quarterly

Setting up a routine schedule can make your job easier. Many clubs will publish your schedule in their club newsletters, providing you with regular, widespread publicity.

With a regular schedule, though, comes added responsibility. Developing a routine, results in a commitment on your part to be there and to administer exams on the dates indicated. You may, of course, have to alter your schedule from time to time for valid, unavoidable reasons. But if you choose this route, be faithful to your commitment. Schedule more VEs for each session than you think you will need--at some session in the future, you will need them. Regularity means consistency and reliability.

A word of caution: Making testing opportunities available to area hams on a set schedule is great, but please do not establish an overly ambitious schedule if you expect only a couple of candidates (or no candidates at all!) to show up. After all, you and your fellow VEs are volunteers--you do not want to commit a half-day for no reason. Moreover, frustrated VEs may not be as willing to serve the next time when they may really be needed.

ARRL/VEC National Exam Day Weekends

Schedule your test session during the ARRL/VEC sponsored spring and fall national exam day weekends. This event is held annually on the last full weekends (Saturday and Sunday) of April and September. Knowing these dates well in advance allows prospective hams and upgrade examinees to have a target to shoot for when preparing for their test(s). ARRL/VEC appreciates your support of these events by offering exams in your local communities.

Upgrade Classes

Most upgrade classes run for eight to 12 weeks and are conducted during the winter. Technician classes are large sources of test candidates. Because many of these classes end in late winter, the period between January and April is a good time to schedule exams.

Real Life Experience Box

Our VE Team is very isolated here in the mountains of SE Idaho. We determined early on that we could best serve the larger community by setting up a bi-monthly schedule. We have done this now for a several years and have established a reputation in the local tri-state area (Idaho, Wyoming, and Utah) for our regular session schedule. Many of our examinees have commented that they appreciate having sessions available in the winter, which is when most people in our community have time to study. – AE7RS, Bear-Lake Emergency ARS VE TEAM LIAISON

Hamfests and Conventions

Hamfests and Amateur Radio conventions are popular places to hold exam sessions. They are usually well publicized far in advance and specify "talk-in" frequencies for directing candidates who are unfamiliar with the area.

Most clubs or groups that sponsor hamfests will welcome the chance to feature VE exams at their sites. This is especially true if the club knows that you and your VE Team will take care of the details concerning the test session, and that they will not have to worry about them in their hamfest planning.

Exam sessions typically attract more people to hamfests. Candidates may bring their families, who may spend the time inside the hamfest while the candidates take the test. Also, a candidate who has just upgraded is more likely to celebrate his new privileges by spending money on a new radio. The candidate is happy, the hamfest committee is happy, and the dealers are happy.

Note that under ARRL/VEC policy, exam candidates cannot be charged a hamfest admission fee if he/she is coming just for the exam. Candidates will be liable for their own parking fees, tolls and any other charges involved with getting to and from the test site. If a candidate decides to visit the event before or after the exam, however, they can be charged the same entrance fee as any other attendee, of course.

Year Round Team Listing

An ARRL VE Team's information can be listed year round on our Exam Session Search webpage at www.arrl.org/find-an-amateur-radio-license-exam-session. This helpful feature is ideal for teams that are in remote areas and for teams that get few test applicants or that have many no-show applicants. Your team's contact email and phone number can be listed without these details being associated with a specific test date or time (see example of listing below).

31-Dec-2030
Sponsor: HARTFORD COUNTY ARC
Time: CALL (No walk-ins)
Contact: MARIA SOMMA
(860)594-0300
Email: AB1FM@ARRL.ORG
VEC: ARRL/VEC
Location: CALL OR EMAIL TO SCHEDULE A TEST DATE
BY APPOINTMENT ONLY
NEWINGTON, CT 06111

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ARRL VEC

A bogus future test date is used and then the following information is stated: "CALL OR EMAIL TO SCHEDULE A TEST DATE" and "BY APPOINTMENT ONLY". Teams that have already submitted their future test session dates and active teams that have registered test sessions would not want to use this resource. Registered test sessions are always easier to locate, track and process on the system. Teams can email a request to vetest@arrl.org and we will post your contact information on the website. We hope this will help generate some test candidates for your team!

Travel to Remote Test Sites

With more than 35,000 VEs accredited in the ARRL/VEC program, most areas throughout the country have examining teams. VEs are not expected to travel extensively to conduct test sessions.

The ARRL/VEC can usually locate an additional VE, frequently close to the test site, for a VE Team that needs a third member. If a VE is requested to travel an extended distance, VE Teams can provide expense relief to that VE in the form of mileage reimbursement and/or expense reimbursement.

Real Life Experience Box

Our VE Team is very busy, conducting an average of 15 to 20 exam sessions each year. Why so many you ask? Our VEs are always ready to help; we have driven 60 miles to a church group, we have helped the Civil Air Patrol youth from the local high school, teachers from various school districts, many rangers at the state parks and those with special needs. We've provided test sessions at our local convention and have given classes and exams at the Braille institute.

We have a wonderful group of VEs, ready to go at the drop of a hat, willing to go almost any place, any time and help in any way they can. We always have extra supplies on hand, and can take care of any size group, and have for the past 15 years. – K6BSC, Coachella Valley ARC VE TEAM LIAISON

Registering the Test Session

Most VE Teams register each session with the ARRL/VEC well in advance, some often a year in advance, and the ARRL/VEC office provides all test materials to them session by session. Such teams can: (1) register several sessions at the same time and submit individual requests for test materials for each session as the respective test dates approach; or (2) when registering the sessions, tell the ARRL/VEC what materials they will need for each session.

The ARRL/VEC needs to know what test materials are needed **at least 20 days before the test date** so that its staff can use the least expensive reliable courier service available to deliver the materials to the Liaison. If you give less lead time, the ARRL/VEC is forced to use more expensive courier services. This not only increases an already large postage bill, but it also decreases the chances of correcting any problems during the packaging of the shipment.

The ARRL/VEC will always supply its VE Teams with whatever materials they need--even if overnight service (the most expensive) is required to get the package there--but we will not do it routinely.

To register your upcoming test dates and locations, fill out the ARRL/VEC Session Registration / Request for Test Materials Form and mail, email vetest@arrl.org or FAX to ARRL/VEC or use the interactive Registration Form found on our website at www.arrl.org/register-an-amateur-radio-license-exam-session.

After registering, the team may instead choose to use the exam generating system to print their own exams or to conduct online examinations. Information and updated instructions about the exam software is explained in the coming chapters and in the VE Manual Supplemental Information. Additional information is also located on the ARRL VEC VE Resources page.

Field-Stock Program

Many teams have worked with ARRL/VEC over several test sessions. Teams who have conducted at least four ARRL/VEC test sessions, and who have registered four future test dates, may request to receive, and retain quantities of test materials so that they can continue their regularly scheduled sessions without the usual back-and-forth correspondence with the VEC office. They also have the flexibility to conduct any "on-the-spot" testing that may be called for with short notice.

ARRL/VEC Officially Field-Stocked VE Team Liaison Requirements.

1. To be formally field-stocked with a bulk quantity of our test materials, the Team Liaison must have conducted at least four ARRL/VEC test sessions, must register four future test dates, and must continue to regularly schedule sessions.

2. The VE Team Liaison must understand AND acknowledge that he/she is responsible for the security of the test materials while they are in the team's possession. This is to ensure that absolute examination integrity is maintained.

3. The VE Team Liaison and VE Team may have an affiliation with a club, organization or group or may work independently. Again, the Team Liaison is solely responsible for the test materials not any organization.

4. All correspondence between the VEC and VE Team is handled directly with the Team Liaison; the Team Liaison is to maintain an up-to-date address and phone number on record at the ARRL, the Team Liaison is responsible for the exam session preparation and shipment of the exam session results in a timely manner, the Team Liaison should periodically check field-stocked supplies to make sure they are current and that quantities are sufficient.

5. Field-stocked Team Liaisons should be especially vigilant about keeping us informed of who has possession of the exam supplies. Notify us immediately when the teams' field-stock changes hands to ensure that any exam updates will be mailed to and received by the proper person.

When teams are officially enrolled in the ARRL/VEC field-stock program by ARRL/VEC, they are supplied with a standard test material package that consists of: 125 Exam Booklets -- five different designs of each written test element (includes 10 copies of each of the five versions of Elements 2 and 3 and 5 copies of each of the five versions of 4); three Answer keys for all test elements/versions; nine hole-punched, blue-transparent, overlay grading templates (three sets of each); 100 written element test answer sheets; 50 CSCEs; 100 NCVEC Form 605 applications; 10 Candidate Rosters; 10 Test Session Reports; 10 registration/request for test materials forms; 10 USPS Priority Mail envelopes and address labels for returning the completed test session package using postage-paid service. Re-stock your supplies at www.arrl.org/field-stocked-ve-teams.

Field-stocked teams should annually, or more often, provide the ARRL/VEC office with lists of scheduled--firm or tentative --test dates so that the information is up-to-date in our system and can be distributed as widely as possibly. A simple list of dates will suffice. Under normal situations, the team should try to request supplies 3 to 4 weeks in advance of the session. This way we can make certain the materials requested reach the team in a timely and cost effective manner.

If your team has worked with the ARRL/VEC through several sessions, conducts (or has registered) at least four (4) sessions a year and is interested in signing up for the field-stock program, contact the ARRL/VEC office.

Exam Administration Software

ARRL/VEC VE Exam Maker software has been discontinued and replaced by the web based ExamTools online examinations system.

The ExamTools system can be used to administer online examinations or generate printed exams. Online exams can be used at in-person or remote video supervised sessions. Our blue overlay grading template designs are loaded into the program and can be used with the ExamTools printed exams for manual grading of the tests.

ExamTools printed exams also have the option to use the GradeCam program for grading tests or our grading templates. GradeCam will automatically grade exams in seconds using the camera on a phone or computer, which eliminates the need to manually score the tests.

The system includes registering and tracking candidates throughout the session, on screen exams and grading, online signing of CSCE and 605 forms by the candidate and examiners, logging and compiling session stats and VE participation list (test report summary), and output files for upload to the coordinating VEC. The program manages almost everything needed to conduct a test session.

View updated exam software instructions in the Supplemental Information, which extends and supports the published VE Manual. Additional information is also located on the ARRL VEC VE Resources page.

Public Notice No Longer Required, But . . .

While public notice is no longer required by the FCC, the ARRL/VEC policy is that every test session is to receive the proper local exposure through the various forms of Amateur Radio media in the intended coverage area of the test session, in addition to your registration of the session with the VEC. Examples of such media to make your announcements can include the following:

- Verbal announcements at club meetings and training classes;
- Radio club newsletter announcements;
- On-the-air announcements, especially during nets and informal roundtables that are held on repeaters;
- Hand-posted announcements (fliers) that, with permission, may be displayed on bulletin boards in local schools, supermarkets, electronics stores, churches, Boys' and Girls' Clubs, shopping malls, fraternal organizations, and YMCA/YWCAs;
- News releases sent to local radio or TV stations (especially cable companies' local town access channels) and to newspapers.

The ARRL/VEC distributes test session schedules to a wide audience via our Exam Session Search webpage www.arrl.org/find-an-amateur-radio-license-exam-session.

Form: Session Registration/Request for Test Materials

The ARRL/VEC uses one form to register an upcoming session and to allow VEs to specify what test materials they need to conduct the session. An interactive session registration form is found on our website at www.arrl.org/register-an-amateur-radio-license-exam-session.

Here is a quick walk-through:

Item 1 -- Test date and start-up time: List the session date(s), and the local time that the session is scheduled to start. Most sessions have only one sitting per test date, but the team may decide that two or more are needed. Multiple-sitting sessions are most often held in conjunction with hamfests and conventions. Remember to list the time of each sitting.

Item 2 -- Whether walk-in candidates will be accepted at the session is entirely up to the VE Team. Some teams require all applicants to pre-register; some take pre-registrations and walk-ins, and other teams prefer to handle all candidates as walk-ins.

Item 3 -- (Optional) Indicate the name of the sponsor (or sponsoring group or club) of the session. If there is no sponsor, enter "unsponsored."

Item 4 – Enter the actual location of the session. Although this is not essential for the registration, including the information helps when applicants request referrals to upcoming sessions. With an incomplete address, the VE Team Contact person (see Item 5) may receive more requests than necessary for test site information.

Item 5 -- Indicate who will be the primary information source for the VE Team. Inquiries directed to the VE Team Contact Person are usually for test dates, times, walk-in info, talk-in frequencies, and other public information. The Contact Person does not have to be an accredited VE, nor even a radio amateur. A telephone number must be specified for contact information that will best meet the needs of candidates--most often an evening-accessible number.

Item 6 -- The VE Team Liaison must be a VE accredited with the ARRL/VEC. The Liaison is the only person who will receive test materials on behalf of the VE Team from the ARRL/VEC. If the VE Team will administer Elements 2, 3 and 4, the accredited VE Team Liaison must hold the Extra Class license. Do not appoint or elect someone as Liaison for a session if any of his or her relatives will test at that session. For Elements 2 and 3, the Team Liaison need only be an accredited Advanced class licensee. For Element 2 only, the Team Liaison must be at least a General class accredited licensee.

Item 7 -- If the VE Team already participates in the ARRL/VEC's field-stock program, check the "yes" box. If the VE Team is using the online examinations program, please check the appropriate box.

Item 8 -- If the VE Team will use examination software exclusively, check the "yes" box. Information and updated instructions about the exam software is explained in the coming chapters and in the VE Manual Supplemental Information.

Item 9 -- If you are not already field stocked, specify what test materials your VE Team will need for the session. The number entered in each element's box will be the number of copies of the test that will be sent. Many sessions accommodate very few applicants, and it is not unusual for only one or two exams of any given element to be administered. Carefully assess your needs when ordering materials so that supplementary shipments will not have to be made just before the session date. If you are field stocked and require additional materials to supplement your stock, please indicate your needs here or on a Re-Stock Materials Request form (obtained upon request from the VEC).

If you'd like to receive a second version of any elements you've requested, indicate the quantity in the appropriate box(es).

Item 10 -- If you would like to receive three sets (one for each VE) of our blue-transparent hole-punched overlay grading templates, check the appropriate box.

Item 11 -- Indicate the postal/courier/shipping service you want to use when returning your examination packages to the VEC. USPS Priority Mail is the default service.

Item 12 -- Similar to Item 11 above, specify your need for additional NCVEC Form 605 applications, Candidate Rosters, Test Session Registration/Request for Test Materials forms, CSCEs, or any other item(s).

Item 13 -- Tell us the call signs and names of those persons who are expected to work the session as VEs.

The Session Registration/Request For Materials Form (download, print, interactive) is located on the VE Resources page.

Request for Test Materials

Let the ARRL/VEC office know what test materials and quantities you will need **at least 20 days before the session**. The Session Registration / Request for Test Materials form can be used to order additional NCVEC Form 605s and any other items you think you will need.

If you have registered your session with ARRL/VEC and requested test materials, our office may delay sending the materials immediately if the session is not to be held for a few to several months. For teams that register well in advance, ARRL/VEC will target this mailing to arrive at the Liaison's listed mailing address 15 days before the session.

If your team plans to hold sessions on a regular schedule, field stocking your team leader may be an option. The materials will be mailed to the designated VE Team Liaison, who can turn over the materials to future Liaisons when they assume these duties for the team. This way, the number of mailings can be reduced. Contact the VEC to see if your team qualifies.

For your convenience, the ARRL/VEC has two ways to request materials. For periodic test sessions, the **Session Registration/Request For Test Materials** form is used to request examination materials on a session-by-session basis. For officially field-stocked teams, a special **Re-Stock Materials Request** form is distributed to stocked teams with their initial stock and requests, or with subsequent stocked-team mailings. Whether you are field-stocked or not, if you need additional materials, simply send in your request on the form with your next session registration. Otherwise, just send a note with your request to the ARRL/VEC or email your request to vetests@arrl.org.

Although the request can be submitted by any team member, it is recommended that the Team Liaison be responsible for sending it in. The two reasons for this are (1) it will reduce chances that a second request would mistakenly be submitted by another team member (it has happened many times); and (2) the Team Liaison will receive test material shipments from the VEC office, and he/she will need to know what materials and quantities to look for. The team may instead choose to use the exam generating system to print their own exams or to conduct online examinations. Information and updated instructions about the exam software is explained in the coming chapters and in the VE Manual Supplemental Information.

What Information Is Needed?

When completing a registration form, please list as many test session dates on the form as you like. If the sessions will be held at the same location each time, entering in all scheduled test dates on a single form is easiest. If the location or sponsor information differs with certain sessions, ARRL/VEC would like those dates listed separately in conjunction with their associated information.

Using prepared forms to register sessions is helpful, but not mandatory. The essential information the ARRL/VEC needs is:

- Date and time (local) of the session;
- If additional sittings will be held with this session;
- If walk-ins will be accepted;
- Name of the sponsoring group, if applicable;
- Test site address, including building and room number;
- VE Team Contact Person's name, call sign (if any), mailing address and contact phone number and/or email address. The contact person's information will be given out over the telephone and will appear on computer generated printouts of test session referrals and will be displayed on the ARRL website;
- VE Team Liaison's name, call sign, mailing address and day and night telephone numbers and email if available. Team Liaison will be sent the test materials and should have a (street) mailing address--if at all possible (not a PO Box since courier delivery is limited to PO Boxes)--for reliable UPS, mail, or courier delivery;
- If the team has been bulk stocked;
- If the team will be using exam software;
- Number of exam booklets, answer sheets and other materials required for the session; more than one exam version wanted?;
- Which postage-paid mailing service will you be using to return your completed examination materials? (USPS Priority Mail, USPS Express Mail);
- Need for other supplies for the examination? (605s, CSCEs, etc.);

PRO TIP: Register your exam session and order test materials quickly and easily on the website via our interactive online form at www.arrl.org/register-an-amateur-radio-license-exam-session.

ARRL VEC

Canceling a Session

The earlier you tell the ARRL/VEC that your session is canceled, the earlier the staff can remove the registration from the website and computerized listings. No formal cancellation is needed. This reduces the number of telephone calls the team will get and saves the expense of shipping test materials. If you are canceling a session, but plan to hold one in the future, let the ARRL/VEC know this as well.

Where to Hold the Session

Once your team has decided that there is sufficient need to hold a test session, a test site has to be selected and secured. The key to obtaining a location to hold your test session is to make the arrangements in advance. Several locations in most towns are generally available at no charge to the team.

An important question when scheduling a test site is how long to reserve it. The size of the session your team will be running will usually give you the answer. The average ARRL/VEC session tests ten people and lasts about 3-1/2 hours. There have been less-than-typical-size sessions where the candidates whipped through the exams, and everyone was gone within a couple of hours. Then there are the big ones--usually at larger hamfests or at conventions--that span two or three days.

If your team plans to administer exams to a larger number of candidates (such as 25 to 30), it may be advisable to split the session into two (or even three) sittings. You are not required to separate larger sessions into two or more sittings, as long as the VEs present can handle the overload. The improved ratio of candidates to examiners is offset somewhat by having to staff each sitting with a minimum complement of three VEs, though the decision of how many sittings to run is left to the VE Team.

Most teams that schedule two-sitting sessions stagger the sittings so that one is held in the morning and one in the afternoon. Popular times are 9 AM and 1 PM. This way, the same VEs are generally available for both sessions, which is particularly useful when your VE Team is small.

Suitable Test Sites

Most towns have at least one location where exams can be held without the VE Team having to pay rent. Examples include local schools (in classrooms or gymnasiums), churches, community centers, fire stations, corporate and hospital meeting rooms, municipal offices, office building cafeterias, and sometimes banks, mall meeting rooms, utility company lounges and libraries. Many towns have other public buildings available for use at no cost. Contact the local town or city government for opportunities. Try the local Red Cross building and find out when they hold weekend CPR courses. Frequently, Red Cross personnel will let you use another room on the same day(s), because their building will be open anyway. The same goes for the YMCA or YWCA.

Try fraternal organizations, such as the Elks, Lions, Masons, VFW, and American Legion. These groups often have excellent meeting halls they may allow you to use. Because organizations must pay for the upkeep of their buildings, they may ask a modest rental fee. Perhaps one of your club members is also a member of one of these organizations who may be able to arrange for the use of the facility at no charge--don't forget to tell them you are volunteers providing a public service to your community, and that the ARRL/VEC is a not-for-profit organization.

Problems with Securing a Test Site

Many VE Teams are not sponsored by amateur radio clubs. If your team is one, you may find an ideal location for holding a test session, but it is run by a group that will not allow you to use the site. The person with whom you discuss the arrangements may not be familiar with Amateur Radio.

If this happens, try to get the local radio club to act as sponsor even if none of the club's members will be participating with (or examining at) the session. It can't hurt--and frequently helps--to have some "official" name to lend credibility. Moreover, once the club finds itself involved indirectly, its officers and members may decide to get into the act, too.

Another problem you may encounter after locating a great site is that, though the person you talk to would like to give you permission to use the location, he/she simply does not have the authority to offer its use. Speak to the next higher person on the administrative ladder until you get permission or exhaust all possibilities.

Every so often, the owner of a building that may be suitable does not see any particular advantage to loaning out the site or otherwise hesitates to let your group use it. The easiest way to tackle this one is to find out what the owner's concerns are. Answer the owner's questions and satisfy his concerns if those concerns are reasonable.

If you still have problems locating a test site, contact the ARRL/VEC office; we may be able to come up with a few new suggestions or provide a letter of introduction for you. Lastly, sometimes a team just has to face the fact that a good room or hall isn't available for free. VE Teams may have to decide to rent a facility if it's the only viable option. Room rental is reimbursable as an out-of-pocket expense.

Instead of searching for a location and conducting in-person sessions, a team may choose to conduct **remotely proctored video-supervised online exams sessions**. The ExamTools system can be used to administer online exams at remote sessions. View the instructions and procedures for remote sessions in the Supplemental Information, which extends and supports the published VE Manual. Additional information is also located on the ARRL VEC VE Resources page.

Real Life Experience Box

Our VE Team has used a medium size meeting room at the Public Library at no charge. The Library is centrally located, easily found off of I-95. The room holds about 30 people with ample elbow room. We fill out a form at the end of the year and reserve the room for our three test sessions for the coming year. The library meeting room has served our needs very well for over seven years. – K1CE, FPCARC VE TEAM LIAISON

Liability Insurance

Most churches, colleges, senior centers, the American Red Cross, and other places usually have blanket liability coverage for group activities not related to their company or organization.

If the location you choose does not have coverage for outside activities, then perhaps a local club could cover your team via their ARRL Club Liability insurance program. This is a wonderful way for a club to be able to sponsor a VE session with low-impact on their part! Check with your sponsoring club for details.

Give Good Directions

Wherever your team holds its test session, be sure both the examiners and candidates will be able to find the location easily. They have enough on their minds on test day without having to worry about how to find the test site.

Rather than giving directions off the top of your head, put yourself in the candidate's place. Give directions that are complete, yet easy to follow, just as you would want when you're visiting an unfamiliar area. The ARRL/VEC will post as much information as possible to the website. Some VE Teams prepare and distribute simple maps or offer GPS coordinates when sending out information on their sessions.

Test Materials

The VEC office sends test materials, in the quantities ordered, only to the VE Team Liaison (the security of exam materials is their responsibility). The office sends packages using the U.S. Postal Service or courier services, depending on how much lead time is given. The more lead time that is provided, the more routine--and therefore less expensive--service can be used. Please give plenty of advance notice to the ARRL/VEC accordingly.

Inventory the Materials First

The VE Team Liaison must understand and acknowledge that he/she is always responsible for the security of the test materials while they are in the team's possession. The Liaison should immediately go through the materials when they arrive from the VEC office to ensure that the team has received all the materials it needs in the correct quantities. Should additional materials be needed, contact the ARRL/VEC office at 800-927-7583 as soon as possible so that it can ship the extra materials in time for your session.

Some VEs believe that they would be compromising the system if they opened the package of test materials before Test Day. Actually, the opposite is true! Please do not wait until the last minute to go through the materials. Finding out only then that you have a problem with inadequate quantities or missing materials leaves the ARRL/VEC office no time to correct the problem. Check the supplies at least three days before the exam--then should an emergency arise the ARRL/VEC can hopefully still get correct supplies to you (overnight delivery if necessary) before test day.

How Much To Order

Experience will dictate how many of each item you need. The Technician class and General class exams are the most popular. If you require pre-registration and do not allow walk-ins, then you will know exactly how many candidates you will have, although you will still need to estimate the number to provide proper advance notice and request for supplies to the ARRL/VEC. If it turns out you need extra supplies, you can always order them giving ARRL/VEC as much notice as possible.

Real Life Experience Box

Our VE Team requires pre-registration, and we publicize that no walk-ins will be accepted, so we know how many candidates we will have, and can plan accordingly. As a practical matter, however, once our pre-registered examinees are served, we do accommodate walk-ins to the extent we can. We keep this in mind when ordering supplies. Our rule of thumb is to estimate how many candidates we will serve, and then pad the amount of supplies we think we will need. For example, if we expect 10 candidates, then we double that number and order 20 of each exam element, answer sheets, Form 605s, CSCEs et cetera. – K1CE, FPCARC VE TEAM LIAISON.

Photocopying Exams and 605 Forms When You've Run Out

Often, it is difficult for teams to estimate the quantities of exam elements that will be needed for an upcoming test session. When teams do run out of test materials, VE Teams may photocopy NCVEC Form 605, pre-printed exam booklets, answer sheets, etc., to meet the immediate needs of the test session. After the test session, unless the team is field stocked, all used and unused test materials are to be returned to the VEC, including all leftover photocopied test booklets.

Remember that only the CSCEs cannot be copied (because they are a three-part NCR carbon form). Therefore, make sure to order an ample quantity of CSCEs for your use. All session forms are located on the VE Resources page.

Making Your Own Exams

The ARRL/VEC permits its VEs to make their own examinations if they so choose. To make exam assembly easier, however, the ARRL/VEC provides VEs with computer software that automatically creates printed exams.

The ExamTools system can be used to administer online examinations or generate printed exams. Online exams can be used at in-person or remote video supervised sessions. Our blue overlay grading template designs are loaded in the program and can be used with the ExamTools printed exams for manual grading of the tests.

Additional information is located on the ARRL VEC VE Resources page and in the VE Manual supplemental information.

Real Life Experience Box

Our VE Team has prepared a computer application capable of doing multiple jobs to reduce errors and processing time. We have the Form 605, the Answer Sheet, the Session Roster, the Test Session Report and even the CSCEs (Spanish and English) in our computer. The program we use enables us to automate forms filling and data management and allows us to quickly turn paper forms into digital forms, or to create new digital forms from scratch. The results are excellent, zero errors and it cuts our session administration time in half! We also allow candidates to pre-register via the Internet. We have a pre-registration form on our webpage where candidates can reserve a seat at our next ARRL/VEC test session. When a seat is reserved, we prepare all the documents ahead of time and have them ready for the candidate upon arrival. We complete the forms on screen and instantly print them. This helps make our exam process simple and accurate! – KP4PQ, PRARL VE TEAM LIAISON

ExamTools printed exams also have the option to use the GradeCam program for grading tests or our grading templates. GradeCam will automatically grade exams in seconds using the camera on a phone or computer, which eliminates the need to manually score the tests.

The system includes registering and tracking candidates throughout the session, on screen exams and grading, online signing of CSCE and 605 forms by the candidate and examiners, logging and compiling session stats and VE participation list (test report summary), and output files for upload to the coordinating VEC. The program manages almost everything needed to conduct a test session.

View updated exam software instructions in the **Supplemental Information**, which extends and supports the published VE Manual. Additional information is also located on the ARRL VEC VE Resources page.

Exam Fees

The VEC program is authorized to recoup a portion of its expenses. Although VECs and their VEs are not required to charge any fee, if they do charge, all of their test candidates are to be charged the same amount at all sessions throughout the year.

The amount of the ARRL/VEC test fee is announced to its Volunteer Examiners in advance of the year it will be imposed. The ARRL/VEC's current test fee is posted on the website at www.arrl.org/arrl-vec-exam-fees. Candidates appearing for exams should write a personal check or money order, payable to the "ARRL/VEC" or to whomever your team specifies.

Candidates who pre-register for an examination, pay the test fee in advance, but do not appear at the session, will not be given a refund of their fee paid. Candidates who have pre-registered, who have paid their test fee in advance--and do show up but cannot be served for whatever reason(s), should be refunded their pre-registration test fee. This scenario should not occur, however: Teams must always strive to serve all pre-registered candidates.

Persons who are submitting documentation for a paperwork-only upgrade will also be charged an exam session fee for processing the paperwork.

It's Show Time

It should be obvious after reading this chapter that you have much to think about before the doors swing open and your candidates come tumbling in. But at least you will now have a realistic idea as to what goes on beforehand.

View updated instructions in the **Supplemental Information**, which extends and supports the published VE Manual. Additional information is also located on the ARRL VEC VE Resources page.

You're set, you're ready – let's go!

SECTION ONE: BEFORE THE EXAM

Chapter 5
Form 605

There are two types of Form 605: the **FCC Form 605** and the National Conference of VECs **NCVEC Form 605**.

View updated NCVEC Form 605 instructions in the **Supplemental Information**, which extends and supports the published VE Manual. The current 605 Form document as well as additional information about the form is also located on the ARRL VEC **VE Resources** page. Currently, there are no fees to file applications to the FCC. However, sometime in 2022, the FCC will begin charging an application fee per application.

The FCC Form 605, titled "Quick-Form Application for Authorization in the Ship, Aircraft, Amateur, Restricted and Commercial Operator, and General Mobile Radio Services" is used for license renewals, address, name, or call sign change requests, or vanity license requests or renewals. As of June 29, 2021, the FCC no longer accepts paper filings of this form. Applicants must login and file applications in the **License Manager system** on the FCC website. The FCC online filing instructions may be found here: http://www.arrl.org/fcc-online-filing

In 1997-98, while the FCC was beginning implementation of its Universal Licensing System (ULS), they merged more than 60 service-specific license application forms, reducing them to only a dozen. In making their reductions, the FCC recognized that some services needed limited additional documentation to accomplish their needs. To address these needs, the FCC created "Schedules." For the Amateur Service, it's "Schedule D" to the FCC Form 605. Schedule D, when introduced, covered the additional information necessary for systematic call sign changes and vanity call sign changes.

The FCC Form 605 is not suitable for use at test sessions or intended for license upgrades or new licenses grants. The NCVEC Quick-Form 605 application is designed to manage Amateur Operator/Primary Station License requests at exam sessions. This is not the FCC's official form and may not be submitted to FCC directly; it is for VEC/VE use only.

Origin of NCVEC Form 605

Unfortunately, the FCC Form 605 did not meet the needs of volunteer examiners; e.g., there is no space to indicate the license class held by an examinee, nor the class of license earned at a test session. There is no section for the date and location of the examination and for the three VE's certifications. When FCC adopted the ULS rules, the agency allowed "the VEs may collect all necessary information in any manner of their choosing, including creating their own forms." This set the stage for the NCVEC Form 605. The NCVEC form includes the items missing from the FCC form.

Use of NCVEC Form 605

The NCVEC Form 605 is for VEC and VE use only. This form is used at exam sessions when applicants are applying for a new or upgrade Amateur Radio license. The form can also be used to renew, update, or modify a license. This form cannot be sent to FCC. The NCVEC Form 605 may be copied. Various forms, including the NCVEC Form 605, can be found on the ARRL website at www.arrl.org/fcc-forms or on the ARRL VEC **VE Resources** page.

Two Parts. There are two primary parts to the NCVEC Form 605: Section 1 (applicant's information), and Section 2 (to be completed by the VEs). The back of the form contains information about other relevant amateur radio topics.

The candidate completes **Section 1** of the form, which is simple, clear, and self-explanatory. The VE Team must compare the license data entered on the application Form 605 by the candidate and his/her ID to be sure they agree. The VEs may choose not to examine an applicant because of the lack of appropriate documentation.

ARRL VEC

If an applicant has lost his/her license, a replacement document can be obtained online. On December 30, 2020, the FCC Wireless Services ceased the printing of paper licenses. The FCC will now only provide these documents electronically through email. There are a number of ways a license holder can obtain an official FCC copy of their license. The official license will display the FCC logo and the watermark "Official Copy" will be splayed across each page of an official authorization from FCC. Detailed instructions are located on the FCC website: How to obtain FCC license copy

Section 2 is to be completed by the certifying VE Team. See below for instructions on how to complete both sections.

Making Corrections to NCVEC Form 605

Errors or changes to information on a candidate's application must be corrected before the form is sent to the ARRL/VEC. Changes should be made by drawing a single line through the item, writing the new information above it, and initialing each change.

Most VE Teams review 605s for accuracy and completeness before the session begins. Ideally, the applicant should make any changes, but the responsibility falls on the VE Team and then to the VEC if the candidate doesn't make the changes.

Completing NCVEC Form 605 – Section 1 (Applicant)

The current 605 Form and additional information about the form is located on the ARRL VEC VE Resources page.

Section 1 contains the applicant information. It must be completed by the applicant.

Applicant Name -- Enter the applicant's full last name (and suffix, if any; e.g., Jr, Sr, II, III, etc.), followed by the first name and then middle initial. For double first names with no middle name, or for persons who use their full middle name, enter the entire name in the first name field.

Applicant Station Call Sign (if any) -- Enter the applicant's current FCC granted call sign.

Applicant Mailing Address -- Enter the applicant's current mailing address (street address, PO Box, or both). This address must be in the United States, with a U.S. ZIP code. International applicants must obtain or borrow a U.S. mailing address to hold a U.S. license.

Applicant's City/State/Zip -- Enter the applicant's mailing address City, State and Zip code.

Applicant FCC Federal Registration Number (FRN) – Social Security Numbers (SSN) are not accepted. Enter the applicant's FCC Registration Number (FRN). An FRN is assigned by the FCC registration system as soon as your SSN is registered. FCC will not act on any license request unless the FRN number is supplied (as required by the Debt Collection Improvement Act, enacted by the U.S. Congress in 1996). **The applicant must have an FRN before the session and this number must be used or the FCC will return the form unprocessed.**

Applicant's daytime telephone number (optional) -- Enter the applicant's daytime telephone number.

Applicant's email address (mandatory) -- Enter the applicant's email address. The FCC requires an email address.

Basic Qualification Question (mandatory) -- The applicant is required to answer this question. The FCC basic qualification section of the 605 Form includes a question regarding whether an applicant has been convicted of a felony in any state or federal court. Applicants answering "YES" must provide an explanation to the FCC (FCC instructions and procedures).

Action boxes -- This application is being made for the following purposes; check all that apply:
- ☐ Examination for a new license grant - do not check if this application is for a license upgrade.
- ☐ Examination for an upgrade of my license class - do not check if this application is for a new license.
- ☐ Change my name on my license to my new name. Enter the new/correct name in the name boxes at the top of the form and enter the old/incorrect name on the Former Name line adjacent to this box. FCC requires documentation for major changes; documents are not necessary for minor changes.
- ☐ Change my license mailing address to the current address listed at the top of this form.

☐ Change my name on my license to my new name. Enter the new/correct name in the name boxes at the top of the form and enter the old/incorrect name on the Former Name line adjacent to this box. FCC requires documentation for major changes; documents are not necessary for minor changes.

☐ Change my license mailing address to the current address listed at the top of this form.

☐ Change my station call sign systematically (be sure the Applicant's initials line adjacent to the box is initialed). Applicants with an existing (or pending upgrade) license can check this box to receive a new, systematically (sequentially) issued call sign from the appropriate call sign group. The applicant must initial the NCVEC Form 605 where indicated. The form must be both initialed and checked, or the change request will not be processed. (Note: The FCC no longer limits applicants to requesting a call sign change when changing call districts or upgrading to a call-sign change eligible license class. It is strictly the candidate's option; neither the VE Team nor the VEC has the right to alter this box without the candidate's expressed permission. Occasionally, candidates with second thoughts about retaining or changing their call signs ask the ARRL/VEC to check or uncheck the systematic call sign change request box on their applications. The ARRL/VEC will make such a change after the session only if the candidate gives it the authority in writing).

☐ Renew my station license --if my license will expire within the next 90 days, or if my license is expired but I am in my two year grace period for renewal. Fill in your license expire date.

Do you have another license application on file with the FCC? -- Enter the purpose of that application, its date, and Pending File Number.

Sign and date the form -- the applicant must sign and date the application (in-person or electronically is acceptable).

Completing NCVEC Form 605 – Section 2 (VE Team)

Section 2 must be completed by the Volunteer Examiners only.

Applicant is qualified for operator license class: -- Check the box corresponding to the new license class earned at your test session. If no new license class is earned, check that box or write "NONE" on the application.

Date of examination session -- Enter the test date in MM-DD-YY format or spell out the month.

Examination location -- Enter the full (spelled out) city name and the state abbreviation (e.g., Los Angeles, CA or New York, NY [LAX or NYC are not acceptable]).

VEC organization -- Enter "ARRL".

VEC Receipt Date -- This is for VEC use only. Leave blank.

Administering VE's Certification -- Each of the three VEs must include their printed name (first, MI, last, suffix), station call sign, signed name and date signed (in-person or electronically is acceptable). If the form fails to include any of the VE's signed names, the form must be returned to the VE(s) for completion (this will delay the applicant's license or upgrade).

The NCVEC Form 605 Application (download, print, interactive) is located on the VE Resources page.

Tracking Down a License Grant

The ARRL/VEC is occasionally contacted by a candidate who qualified for a new license or upgrade at one of its sessions, but the new license has not been issued by the FCC within a reasonable time. Licenses frequently start appearing about 1 to 2 business days after session documents are uploaded to the VEC department or about 7 to 15 days after the session package is mailed to the VEC department. Assuming that the candidate's application data went to the FCC without delays, the ARRL/VEC will check online FCC data and will notify the examinee or VE team if the license does not appear within a few days of its transmission to FCC. Session documents upload instructions are in the VE Manual Supplemental Information.

If you or a candidate want to determine if a license or upgrade has been granted by the FCC, check the various call sign servers (such as FCC at https://www.fcc.gov/wireless/universal-licensing-system or ARRL at www.arrl.org/fcc/search) or call ARRL/VEC at 860-594-0300 during business hours.

Lost Applications

Occasionally, a candidate's Form 605 data disappears after it has been transmitted to the FCC. Although that is not a fatal problem, the candidate's ticket will not be issued as soon as it should.

The FCC requires all VECs to retain all materials from a test session for at least 15 months. After 15 months, the VEC can legally purge from its files all the used exam booklets and papers. However, the ARRL/VEC retains records for longer than the required period. This ensures easy retrieval and verification of candidates' documents, and that the successful candidate will receive the license achieved.

Correcting License Data Errors

If a newly granted FCC license includes name or address errors, the FCC looks to the VEC to communicate the corrections to them. Contact ARRL/VEC with the correct information and the staff will convey it electronically to the FCC.

License Renewal and Modification Requests

Upgrade applications that include other requested changes (e.g., address, name) will be submitted with the upgrade as a part of the ARRL/VEC exam coordination process.

Requests presented/turned in to VEs, separate from the exam process, can be accepted by the team. ARRL/VEC will submit electronically to FCC these license renewals or modifications according to the following procedures:

ARRL Members: License modifications, changes, and renewal procedures are free to ARRL Members. Currently, there are no fees to file applications to the FCC. However, sometime in 2022, the FCC will begin charging an application fee per application. A license can be renewed no sooner than 90 days before the expiration of the license. License changes can be done anytime. Submit to the VEC office either a completed NCVEC Form 605 or FCC Form 605 application and payment if required (for non-members).

Non-ARRL-Members: License changes, modifications, or renewal procedures require an ARRL processing fee. Currently, there are no fees to file applications to the FCC. However, sometime in 2022, the FCC will begin charging an application fee per application. A license can be renewed no sooner than 90 days before the expiration of the license. License changes can be done anytime. Submit to the VEC office either a completed NCVEC Form 605 or FCC Form 605 application and applicable payment. The licensee can file for free, online at FCC website. Or, if the applicant sends in his/her membership dues with the Form 605 to ARRL, we will process the request like any other member request.

Club Station Licenses: License modifications, changes or non-vanity renewal procedures are free to club station licenses but must be done through an FCC appointed Club Station Call Sign Administrator (CSCSA) of which ARRL VEC is one. Currently, there are no fees to file applications to the FCC. However, sometime in 2022, the FCC will begin charging an application fee per application. A club license can be renewed no sooner than 90 days before the expiration of the license. License changes can be done anytime. Submit a completed ARRL VEC 605-C Club form. The trustee and another responsible club official must sign the form in the appropriate section. Club vanity license renewals only (no changes) may also be handled through the FCC's online filing system at https://www.fcc.gov/wireless/universal-licensing-system. Requests for a new vanity club call sign must be done directly with FCC.

> It is important to note, the ARRL processing fees are different from the VEC test fee. The processing fees cannot be waived or reduced, and VE Teams may NOT keep a portion of these non-session related charges. For these renewals and changes sent along with the session – a VE reimbursement fee may not be retained.

FCC Filing: Currently, there are no fees to file applications to the FCC. However, sometime in 2022, the FCC will begin charging an application fee per application. License changes and renewals can be done online for free by any amateur at https://www.fcc.gov/wireless/universal-licensing-system. If you are already registered in ULS and have obtained an FRN (FCC Registration Number), you can choose the "ONLINE FILING / LOG IN" link to perform your online transaction with the FCC. If you do not have an FRN, you must first register in the ULS by following the "New Users / Register" link and complete your registration information. You can then choose the "Online Filing / LOG IN" link. Direct any online filing or password questions to FCC Tech Support weekdays at 202-414-1250.

After the FCC processes an application, the license data should appear in the FCC database within a few hours (FCC search: https://wireless2.fcc.gov/UlsApp/UlsSearch/searchLicense.jsp) within a few hours. The official license authorization will arrive by email directly from the FCC in 24 to 48 hours. On December 30, 2020, the FCC Wireless Services ceased the printing of paper licenses. The FCC will now only provide these documents electronically through email. ARRL cannot process requests for new vanity call signs. They must be done directly with FCC.

There are a number of ways a license holder can obtain an official FCC copy of their license. The official license will display the FCC logo and the watermark "Official Copy" will be splayed across each page of an official authorization from FCC. Detailed instructions and resources are located on the FCC website: How to obtain FCC license copy

The ARRL/VEC's license renewal/modification webpages contain complete information on license-filing procedures, including step-by-step instructions on how to renew or update a license using the FCC's ULS site. ARRL members should visit the ARRL Member Renewal Notice page at http://www.arrl.org/expiration-notices, while the Instructions for License Renewals or Changes page at www.arrl.org/call-sign-renewals-or-changes covers general filing procedures for all amateurs. Clubs can find filing forms and instructions on our website at www.arrl.org/club-call-signs.

SECTION TWO: DURING THE EXAM

Chapter 6
Conducting the Test Session

The big day! All of your hard work is about to come to fruition at a real test session. If you are a new VE, try to join an experienced VE Team for a session or two. No matter how well you think you understand the material in this manual, you will benefit greatly from other, more experienced VEs.

View instructions for online examinations and remotely proctored video-supervised exam sessions in the **Supplemental Information**, which extends and supports the published VE Manual. Additional information is also located on the ARRL VEC VE Resources page.

The Candidates Arrive

Whether in-person or online, candidates who have pre-registered for your test session should be guaranteed a place at your session. Because some teams limit the number of applicants to whom they will administer exams (permitted by FCC Rule 97.509) they may not be able to accommodate all last minute or walk-in candidates. Because the pre-registered candidates who arrive on time for their exam(s) made prior arrangements, they should be set up for their tests before the team processes any last minute examinees.

For whatever reasons, if a pre-registered candidate who has paid the test fee up front cannot be served at your session, you must refund the test fee collected. Pre-registered applicants who do not show up for the examination, however, are not entitled to a refund because in preparing for their attendance, you and the ARRL/VEC have expended resources to serve their needs.

Collecting the Test Fee

Any person sitting for an exam, or having a new license or upgrade processed at your test sessions, must pay the exam session fee applicable for the calendar year. A charge also applies for paperwork-only upgrades (see "Instant Upgrade CSCEs" section below), even though no test is actually taken.

Each time an examinee *retakes* a test element level at your session, another exam fee is charged. For example, if a Technician licensee, takes the General test and fails it, in order to try the General test again (using a different version of the General test, assuming the VEs have another version available) the candidate will pay a second test fee. The candidate will be entered on the Candidate Roster a second time, just as if he/she were a new candidate who had just arrived.

Each time a candidate pays one test fee, he/she is entitled to take tests for Elements 2, 3 and 4 as needed, up to all three under the single test fee at that session.

The ARRL/VEC informs all VEs of the current test fee at the beginning of each year and publicizes the test fee information on the website at www.arrl.org/arrl-vec-exam-fees.

Identification

No one may take an amateur exam for another person. It is essential that the VE Team checks a candidate's identification (ID) before allowing the candidate to sit for an exam. The candidate must present a legal photo ID. This requirement is usually met with a driver's license, but it can be a passport or other legal identification card with the candidate's photo on it.

When no photo ID is available, the candidate must present any two of the following:

- Non-photo ID/driver's license (some states still have them);
- Social Security Card;
- Birth certificate (must have the appropriate seal);
- Minor's work permit, school report card, school ID card or library card;
- Utility bill, bank statement or other business correspondence that specifically names the person; or
- Postmarked envelope addressed to the person at his or her current mailing address as it appears on the Form 605.

Refer candidates to our helpful webpage for a detailed list describing the items exam applicants are required to bring to the exam session, how to register for an FRN, and more: http://www.arrl.org/what-to-bring-to-an-exam-session

Taxpayer ID Numbers (TINs)

As a U.S. Citizen, and as an individual (not company), our Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN) is most often our Social Security Number (SSN). Under the requirements of the Debt Collection Improvement Act of 1996 (DCIA), the FCC is required to collect a TIN/SSN from each person doing business with them. Applicants must register on the FCC website and receive an FCC Registration Number (FRN). The FRN is entered in the appropriate box (just below the call sign box) on NCVEC Form 605.

The FCC indicates that a licensee's SSN, telephone number, or email addresses will not be available to the public. The applicant must provide an email address. Supplying a telephone number is optional. Supplying this data to FCC is referred to as "ULS Registration." The system is called the COmmission REgistration System (CORES). Applicants must register in **CORES** (COmmission REgistration System) and receive an FRN before sitting for an exam.

For persons who submit an application for the first time for a new license grant or for an upgrade, address/call sign change or other changes, or for renewal, must include the FRN on the application.

Also acceptable as a TIN: IRS issued Employer Identification Number (EIN); FCC issued FCC Registration Number (FRN) after initial registration.

At a U.S. FCC license test session, when serving non-U.S. Citizen (international) examinees that have no TIN/SSN must apply for an FRN from the FCC under the provision "reason for exemption - the individual is a foreigner."

Taxpayer ID Numbers formats: SSNs will look like "123-45-6789" (nine digits); IRS EINs will look like "12-3456789" (nine digits); FCC-generated FRNs (created by FCC after ULS registration) will look like "0001234567" (10 digits beginning with a "0"). Only FRNs can be entered in the FRN box on NCVEC Form 605.

TINs for Foreigners: Some persons who are not U.S. citizens will have an SSN or IRS assigned TIN for employment purposes. Others who are not eligible for an SSN, can still obtain a FRN from the FCC under the provision "reason for exemption - the individual is a foreigner."

The VE Team asks the examinee: "Are you a United States citizen or national, or have you been lawfully admitted for permanent residence or for U.S. employment?" If the examinee answers "Yes," instruct the examinee that he/she must use his/her social security number (SSN) when applying for an FRN. If the examinee needs to obtain an SSN, he/she can apply for one separately. If the examinee answers "No" and is not eligible for a SSN, they will obtain an FRN using the provision stated above.

Amateur Radio license/upgrade applicants should be advised to use their FRN

All Amateur Radio license applicants must use their FCC Registration Number (FRN) when completing Form 605, not their Social Security number (SSN). The FCC requires applicants to register via the FCC's COmmission REgistration System (CORES) https://apps.fcc.gov/cores/userLogin.do, to obtain an FRN, and it requires applicants to use their FRNs when filing Form 605. The FRN uniquely identifies an applicant in all transactions with the FCC. ARRL/VEC staff reports that when license data is submitted to the FCC using a Social Security number, the FCC rejects the data file.

ARRL
VEC

Proof of License Grant

The FCC expects that VEs will identify all license applicants, and that they will determine each applicant's license and/or examination credit status. Expect each examinee to bring you proof of licensing (if you do not already do so, consider including such a statement in your public announcements).

If an applicant comes to your session claiming to hold a license but has no proof with him/her, and if you have access to call sign servers on the web, you can verify the license claim directly online (FCC-Universal-Licensing-System). If you don't have access to the Internet, but believe the claim to be valid, and you can clearly identify the applicant, test the person and issue two CSCEs for any successful exams (issue a credit-only CSCE to the applicant at the time of the test and send the VEC a complete credit-and-upgrade-earned CSCE--don't separate the carbons--which the ARRL/VEC will then hold until its staff can verify the applicant's license claims). Tell the candidate that he/she is responsible for sending a photocopy of the missing license or any other needed documentation to the ARRL/VEC office. When the ARRL/VEC receives it, its staff will compare the missing data with that on the candidate's Form 605 and CSCE and if everything is in order, the ARRL/VEC will send the upgrade data to FCC and release the white copy of the complete CSCE to the candidate.

The team should always carefully check the license, the identification, or CSCE presented with any photocopies supplied. The original license and/or original CSCE(s) is to be returned immediately to the licensee after inspection.

On December 30, 2020, the FCC Wireless Services ceased the printing of paper licenses. The FCC will now only provide these documents electronically through email or by downloading the license from the FCC website. There are a number of ways a license holder can obtain their official FCC issues Amateur Radio license. Detailed instructions and resources are located on the FCC website: How to obtain FCC license copy. The official license will display the FCC logo and the watermark "Official Copy" will be splayed across each page of an official authorization from FCC. The license form (FCC Form 660) includes two official licenses on an 8 1/2x11-inch document. The standard wallet-sized license, which measures approximately 2 1/4 inches tall by 6 3/4 inches wide is found at the bottom of the form. Also included is a 5x7-inch license suitable for framing and display. Both of these documents, each of which requires the licensee's signature, are legal license documents.

Alterations that have been made or attempted on either Form 660 document may not always be detected easily. It is possible that someone may attempt to sneak a neatly modified (forged/altered) license photocopy past the VE Team. If that happens, and if the VE Team or VEC notes that the document was purposely altered, collect a copy, and send it to the ARRL/VEC. The VEC will then refer the matter to the FCC for review.

Form: Candidate Roster

The Candidate Roster is a tremendous help in keeping track of a bustling exam session. It is a two-part, no-carbon-required form for VE Teams to use for specifying candidate name, current call sign, current license class, fee paid, element(s) taken by each candidate passed or failed, valid exam/element credit(s) presented, and license class (if any) were earned. One roster sheet will accommodate up to 10 candidates. The newer version accommodates 10 candidates. Both form versions are valid.

The top (white) copy is labeled "VEC's PERMANENT RECORD" and is the copy that the VE Team completes and returns to the VEC office with the completed test session results. All entries made before, during or after the session are written on this top page, with the second page aligned underneath so that the information will be imprinted onto it.

The second (yellow) copy is marked "VE TEAM's PERMANENT RECORD." This page is for the VE Team to retain in its records; the VE Team Liaison will file it for future/archive reference.

It is important that your VE Team complete the roster accurately. If your test materials and NCVEC Forms 605 are lost on the way back to the VEC office, it will be necessary to reconstruct the test session using your VE Team's carbon-copy records. If your team does not retain the carbon copy of this important roster, it could cost applicants a hard-earned upgrade. Please, do not send your yellow VE-Team carbon copies to the ARRL/VEC (keep these in your files).

Some teams use the roster to tell them how the session is going at any point, and how many candidates are still testing. Your team may create whatever system and/or forms you feel are necessary to make your job more manageable, so long as a completed Candidate Roster form is provided to the VEC. If your team has a computerized system that provides a report with the VEC required information that is acceptable. Please share a copy with us for review just to be sure. The ARRL/VEC can usually accept such lists in place of the standard form as long as it supplies the same data as required on the roster form.

At the top of the roster, enter the location (city and state or country) of the session (this must be the same location as entered on the CSCEs) and the test date of the session. Enter the name and call sign (if any) of each candidate who tests at your session; use more roster pages as needed. Be sure to indicate that every candidate paid a test fee or paid additional test fees for each retest of the same exam element (list each retest as a new roster line entry).

LICENSE CLASS BEFORE TEST -- Enter a single letter in the box to indicate the candidate's license class upon arrival at the session (e.g., "G" for General class). If none, leave the box blank.

A licensee who holds a CSCE that upgrades his/her license should be reflected on the roster by notating the current class of license held, and then the element credit (CSCE) by entering a "C" in the applicable box. To be given such credit, however, the applicant must show the VE Team license proof and original CSCE(s) that document the upgrade. (Credit must be evidenced by an original CSCE only; a photocopied document is not to be honored but it could be deferred to the ARRL/VEC for verification).

ELEMENTS TAKEN -- Indicate how the candidate fared on the element(s) by entering a "P" (passed), "F" (failed), "C" (CSCE credit), "CT" (Element 3 General exam credit for pre-3/21/87 Technician) under each box as appropriate. Boxes for elements not taken should be left blank.

LICENSE CLASS EARNED -- Enter a single letter in the box to indicate the highest class of license the candidate earned at the test session, based on (1) the element(s) passed during the session, and (2) the actual license and CSCE documents or other credits the applicant showed the VE Team at the beginning of the session (be sure to send the ARRL/VEC a copy of every credit document the VE Team reviewed and accepted as valid credit). Use the following identifier codes: "T" for Technician; "G" for General and "E" for Extra Class. Leave the box blank or put a dash in the box if the applicant did not upgrade or earn a new license at the session.

Lastly, separate the original roster white top sheet from the yellow carbon copy. Keep the yellow carbon for your VE Team records; please do not send the yellow copy to the VEC office.

For the VE Team's reference, a sample of a completed Candidate Roster form is located on the back of the yellow carbon copy. The Candidate Roster form (download, print, interactive) is located on the VE Resources page.

Seating the Candidates

A gesture that's always appreciated is to have the members of the VE Team introduce themselves to the candidates. The candidates are usually aware that the examiners are hams, but a little reassurance from them may have a calming effect.

Separate Rooms

Some VE Teams that have access to at least one other room may opt to separate candidates for noise reduction purposes. This is fine as long as each room in which there is one or more exams given has a minimum of three VEs on hand to administer and supervise exams, and that the VEs in each testing area only make certifications for the element(s) that they personally administer. The three or more VEs required to oversee the separate examination area must each hold the appropriate class of FCC license as well as ARRL VE accreditation.

Each administering VE must clearly identify the examinee (comparing the original license or credit document{s} against any photocopy presented to ensure that neither has been altered); administer all examinations to the examinee in accordance with FCC Rules and procedures; grade the examination--in conjunction with the grading being conducted by the other two VEs, or has agreed with the grade reached by the other VEs and has informed the examinee of the grade; and be present and observe the examinee throughout the entire examination process. If the three administering VEs can meet these requirements, proctoring the examinee throughout the entire examination process, then the testing areas can be separated.

Only one NCVEC Form 605 need be completed for separated testing areas: The VEs from the final testing area in which the applicant earned a new license would typically be the VEs to sign the Form 605.

Only one Candidate Roster needs to be completed; although it would be appropriate for all teams (all groups of three VEs) to maintain a working copy in their own testing area. Only one fee is charged at the beginning of the test session--unless the applicant fails a particular examination element, and a retest is offered using a different exam version.

Separate CSCEs should be issued in each testing area. Although more CSCEs are used in this example to ensure that VE administrative accountability is met, this is a workable solution for VE Teams as one way that they may separate their testing areas.

Check the NCVEC Form 605 Early

The NCVEC Form 605 is addressed thoroughly in Chapter 5; however, a few points should be re-emphasized:

The top half (on the front) of the NCVEC Form 605 should be checked early in the session--preferably before the candidates begin their exams--to allow candidates to make corrections or to provide missing information with minimum interruptions during the session. Even if you do not find any problems with the applications, it may help if you return the already completed Forms 605 to the candidates who submitted their forms prior to the day of the test session. In some cases, the candidates may have submitted their Forms 605 weeks or months before the session. During that time, events may have occurred that will require changes on the form to be made. Interactive forms should also be checked early in the session for incorrect or missing information.

The email address and an answer to the basic qualification question (felony conviction status question) are mandatory.

If an item on the front of the Form 605 has to be updated, have the candidate make the correction (if possible). The candidate should mark a single line through the changed item, make the correction above or beside the item, and then initial the correction. If the session has ended and the candidate is no longer available to make the appropriate change(s), one of the VEs can make the minor correction and initial it as described above as long as the correction does not cause a critical change to the application (such as a name change or call sign change request).

Element Credit

Expired License Credit and Exam Element Credit Rules and Instructions.
The FCC offers partial credit for expired General, Advanced, and Extra class licenses and Technician licenses granted before March 21, 1987. The FCC revised the Amateur Service Part 97 rules in July 2014 allowing expired license credit.

Element credit to be given applicants, as show in the Exam Element Credit Table below, is based on FCC Rule 97.505. At exam sessions it is the applicant (not the VEs or coordinating VEC) who is responsible for supplying the evidence of credit.

The FCC revised the Amateur Service Part 97 rules (in July 2014) to grant partial written examination element credit to holders of expired General, Advanced, and Extra Amateur Radio licenses. A license that has expired and gone beyond the two-year grace period will be canceled in the FCC system. The licensee will not automatically qualify for a new license and the FCC does not reinstate or renew the expired license. Previous license holders must take the current 35-question Technician level exam at a VE exam session to return to Amateur Radio. Depending on the previous license class, the FCC will give partial examination element credit for the higher-level exam elements(s). The FCC will issue a new call sign and a new license when the Technician exam is passed. The proof must be submitted to the VEC.

The FCC also offers partial credit for Technician licenses granted before March 21, 1987. If an applicant held a "Technician" prior to 3/21/1987, and has proof, the FCC will afford credit for the General (Element 3) written exam only. The FCC does not require the applicant to have been continuously licensed. If the applicant does not have a current Technician license, they must take the current 35-question Technician level exam at a VE exam session to return to Amateur Radio. The proof must be submitted to the VEC.

Current Technician licensees just presenting the expired license proof or the pre-1987 Technician proof must attend a VE session, and the paperwork would be handled as if they are taking an exam. The candidate must show a photo ID, present the proof, pay the $15 exam session processing fee, and fill out all forms to receive the upgrade. The current Technician license combined with the old Technician license or an expired General, Advanced, or Extra license, would allow the candidate to upgrade at the session without taking any exams. The proof must be submitted to the VEC.

Expired Novice and Tech Plus licenses, and Technician licenses issued after March 21, 1987, do not receive any credit.

FCC rules, in-depth candidate information and acceptable forms of proof, and VE instructions related to Expired License Credit and Exam Element Credit can be found on the ARRL website: http://www.arrl.org/exam-element-credit. Additional information is also located on the ARRL VEC VE Resources page and in the VE Manual Supplemental Information.

Each applicant who holds an amateur license and/or a valid CSCE is to receive credit for the elements conveyed by the license and/or CSCE issued. To receive the credit, the applicant must present proof of his or her current license and the original of any valid CSCE, or proof of any other element credit being claimed, to the administering VE Team for its inspection. Each applicant must provide the original and a copy of all necessary documents for the credit being sought. The VEs are to return the original copy of any license and/or any original CSCE(s) to the applicant after they are satisfied with the document's authenticity. The copies must be retained by the VE Team for forwarding to the VEC with the session results.

Element Credit Table

Operator Class	Unexpired or within the renewal grace period	Expired and beyond the renewal grace period
(1) Amateur Extra	Not applicable	Elements 3 and 4 credit. Must pass element 2 to receive credit for higher elements.
(2) Advanced; or General; or Technician granted before March 21, 1987	Elements 2 and 3	Element 3 credit. Must pass element 2 to receive credit for higher element.
(3) Technician Plus; or Technician granted on or after March 21, 1987	Element 2	No credit.

Valid Forms of Examination Element Credit

At a test session, the VEs will review all documents presented by applicants. FCC does not require the applicant to have been continuously licensed. The following resources are available to verify if an individual is presenting eligible credit.

FCC rules, in-depth candidate information and acceptable forms of proof, and VE instructions related to Expired License Credit and Exam Element Credit can be found on the ARRL website: http://www.arrl.org/exam-element-credit. Additional information is also located on the ARRL VEC VE Resources page and in the VE Manual Supplemental Information.

Credit from CSCEs

FCC Rule 97.505 provides for a candidate to be given credit for elements passed at earlier VEC-coordinated sessions. A Certificate of Successful Completion of Examination (CSCE) is valid for 365 days beginning on the date it is issued. A CSCE conveys credit only for elements and the upgrade indicated. (Not all CSCEs validate an upgrade.) The team must collect a copy of every CSCE reviewed and include the copy with the test session package being sent to the ARRL/VEC.

Day one of 365 is the day the CSCE is issued (in other words, if you test on a Saturday morning and get a CSCE, you can take that same CSCE to a noon, afternoon, or evening test that same day. In a non-leap-year, a CSCE issued on July 1 (for example), expires at midnight June 30 of the following year.

To be given CSCE credit for any element(s) claimed at your test session, the candidate must present your team with the actual original valid CSCE document issued within the previous 365 days. A candidate may hold more than one valid CSCE at test time. Also, the CSCE(s) may have been issued by any one of the current 14 VECs--all of which must be accepted in the ARRL/VEC Program.

Inform the ARRL/VEC in the comments section of the ARRL/VEC Test Session Report form or by attaching a brief note to the applicant's Form 605 if you question a particular certificate's validity; the VEC staff will check their records, or those of the VEC that coordinated the session where the CSCE was issued and verify the status.

Once you have satisfied yourself that the credit conveyed by the CSCE is legitimate, keep a copy of the CSCE for forwarding to the ARRL/VEC and then, always, return the original certificate to the candidate.

If, at the test session, you doubt the validity of a candidate's CSCE, always allow the candidate to take the elements for which he or she applied but issue a CSCE to the candidate marked as element credit only for the elements he or she actually passes at your session; don't indicate that an upgrade is earned on the CSCE you give to the candidate. Then, complete a second CSCE that indicates both element and upgrade credit, and send the white and pink copies of that second CSCE to the VEC office with the information about the candidate's CSCE that you are questioning. No doubt you will be questioned by the candidate as to why you're taking this action. When responding, try to be as informative as possible with the candidate, advising the candidate why the action is being taken--and indicating that you must ensure that all documents or certifications are valid (and if all else fails, indicate that the ARRL VE Manual instructs you to handle it in this manner for any CSCE that is in question).

Questioning a CSCEs Authenticity

 If you are presented with an original CSCE (or a photocopy) you believe has been altered, collect a copy of the CSCE from the applicant and send the copy to the ARRL/VEC so that its staff can determine its authenticity. If the CSCE has been altered, the VEC staff will present that document to the FCC for any appropriate follow-up action. Even if the CSCE presented is questionable, your VE Team must still administer any requested examination elements to the examinee. If the examinee passes, issue an element credit only CSCE to that examinee. If any upgrade is earned, complete a second CSCE indicating both element and upgrade credit was earned, and forward that second CSCE to the VEC with the test session. If the candidate's claim for element credit is validated, the ARRL/VEC will mail the white copy of the CSCE (that indicates both element and upgrade credit) directly to the candidate at that time.

Whether your team is challenging a candidate's CSCE or not, be sure to collect a copy of every CSCE you review and include the copy with the test session package being sent to the ARRL/VEC.

It cannot be stressed enough, however, that your team must see the original CSCE, not just a photocopy, for review and acceptance toward element credit for the upgrade being sought; the candidate must provide you with the actual CSCE issued at the earlier session to receive such credit. (This will be the top [white] copy of a CSCE issued at an ARRL/VEC-coordinated session.) Also, the candidate's call sign indicated on the original CSCE issued by the VE Team must be currently valid or must have been valid when the CSCE was completed.

Order of Exam Elements

An applicant may take a series of exams in any order to qualify for a license. As far as the FCC is concerned, as long as all of the necessary elements are earned toward a class of license or upgrade, no particular order must be followed in earning those elements.

The ARRL/VEC recommends, however, that examiners strive to administer the examination elements in ascending order. If examiners have a special situation where an examinee has prepared for an element that does not comply with the ARRL/VEC ascending order recommendation, its office will honor the VE Team's decision.

As an example of when a VE Team may choose to permit examinations to be administered out of ascending order might involve a currently-unlicensed former General class licensee who comes to your examination prepared to take the General written test (Element 3) but is unaware that he will still have to take the Technician written test (Element 2). In this scenario, the VE Team will usually allow Element 3 to be taken before Element 2 since the examinee is prepared to take Element 3, but is probably not prepared to take Element 2, and should not be forced to take Element 2. If this order is permitted, be sure that candidates clearly understand that each CSCE conveying element credit is individually valid for 365 days from the date it was issued. No subsequently-issued CSCE will renew another CSCE's validation period.

If an examinee fails an examination element, it is still recommended that the examinee first retake the failed element and pass it before proceeding to take a higher examination element.

Late Arrivals

Start the session on time, if possible. The decision to accept latecomers is strictly up to the VE Team; candidates who arrive after the appointed starting time may be refused entry if that is what the VEs decide.

Too Many Show Up

Occasionally you may have more candidates show up for an exam than the room will hold. The VEs have to decide whether to schedule an impromptu sitting of that session at a later hour (with versions different from those used at the first session) or to turn away candidates, even if adequate test materials are on hand.

At any VEC-coordinated session, the number of candidates may be limited (FCC Rule 97.509). If you have run short of NCVEC Form 605s or other session paperwork, photocopied forms are acceptable. Because ARRL/VEC CSCEs cannot be photocopied however, plan to have extra CSCEs on hand.

When May VEs Refuse Service to an Applicant?

VEs may not refuse service to anyone who is seeking an amateur license or upgrade, with the following exceptions:
- The applicant does not provide adequate identification document(s) to the VE Team;
- The applicant is disruptive during the examination;
- The applicant requires special assistance from the VE Team, such as accommodations for the disability that the team is not prepared to make available at that time. In such cases, the VE Team must suggest a convenient alternative date/time/location at which they will provide the requested assistance or accommodation (as required under FCC Rule 97.509). The VE Team should indicate in its public announcements that special testing assistance or needs must be arranged in advance.
- Service can be limited to a person when the VE Team has limited time available to it (such as where the test site must be vacated by a particular time). A VE Team might not be able or prepared to offer retests (where the VE Team has only come prepared to offer one test design per examination element).

Instructions to the Candidates

Now that the candidates have been checked in and the initial paperwork completed, you are almost ready to get the session underway. If you have not already introduced yourself and your fellow VE Team members, do so at this time. Next, give the candidates your important instructions.

Determine if any Applicant Requires Special Assistance

View additional instructions in the **Supplemental Information**, which extends and supports the published VE Manual.

No person who requires a special examination procedural accommodation or who requires assistance may be refused service by a VE Team (FCC Rule 97.509). If your VE Team is unclear whether a person has a disability that requires such an accommodation or assistance, the VE Team may require that person obtain a written statement from his or her Physician that indicates the nature of the handicap or disability (FCC Rule 97.509). The VE Team determines which accommodative procedure(s), if any, must be used. Any person who does not appear to have difficulty reading, writing, or speaking may be an example of when the VE Team should require that a Physician's statement be provided.

For sight-impaired persons, seat them in an area where the lighting is best. Do not be afraid to ask the examinees if anyone has difficulty reading or seeing their test booklets. For mobility impaired persons, seat them nearest to the VEs or the entrance. Offer to drop off and pick up any test booklet(s), Form 605, or CSCE for these persons.

At check-in, determine if any mobility limited persons are standing/waiting in line and make every effort to help them get checked in and seated early. Be sure to ask regularly, at the beginning of and during each session check-in.

If accommodations are permitted, the VE Team should indicate this on the back of the Test Session Report form. Including the names of non-VEs who will read or copy the candidate's answers is recommended. The Doctor's Statement should be submitted to the VEC with the candidate's test booklets and papers, which will be retained in session records.

The accommodations may include administering the examination at a place and time convenient and comfortable to the examinee, even at bedside. Other procedures can include reading or writing for candidates who cannot do so themselves. Even illiteracy is considered a reading disability. Other reading disabilities can be experienced by those who are incredibly young (and may not yet be old enough to read or understand certain words or sentence structure) or the elderly whose eyesight may be failing. Enlarging documentation two or three times their normal size will sometimes be effective. Writing disabilities may also affect the young or elderly.

If the candidate does not have a readily identifiable handicap/disability and if the candidate does not provide a Doctor's Statement describing the handicap/disability he/she suffers from, you can decline to offer the more flexible accommodations.

Other Procedures for Testing the Disabled

View additional instructions in the **Supplemental Information**, which extends and supports the published VE Manual.

In addition to the accommodative procedures discussed above and in the supplemental information, the following information is provided by the Courage HANDI-HAM System to assist you in providing examinations to people with disabilities. The main thing to remember is to adapt the test procedure to the methods the candidate uses for normal day to day activity. The more independent the candidate can be in the testing process, the more valid the test results. Many people with disabilities have their own methods of dealing with day to day activities such as writing letters and checks. Asking the candidate how he or she normally deals with these activities will help you provide a more professional exam session.

Please call the ARRL/VEC if you have any question about testing the physically disabled and if they are not answered here. If we do not have the answer when you call, we will discuss your question with the staff of the Courage HANDI-HAM System and get an answer as soon as possible. If you'd like more information about the Courage HANDI-HAM System, contact them at 3915 Golden Valley Rd, Golden Valley, MN 55422; Telephone: 763-520-0520; Email: handiham@courage.org; Website: www.handiham.org.

Visually Impaired. The major modification usually needed for testing the visually impaired is that the tests are given orally. Read the exam questions and multiple-choice selections to the candidate and then record the candidate's response on the answer sheet. Try to allow the candidate the same opportunity sighted people enjoy: process of elimination; reading the questions and remaining answers again; narrowing down the possibilities, skipping a question and returning later; and guessing. This will require a much longer time than most exams so plan accordingly. If you use someone other than a VE or trusted ham to be the reader, be sure the reader is familiar with the correct pronunciation of amateur radio terms.

It is HANDI-HAMS experience that it is more efficient and effective to read the test to an applicant, rather than to arrange for the Braille materials, unless there are special circumstances that require it.

Cerebral Palsy. Cerebral palsy is a disability with extreme variations ranging from quadriplegia (paralysis of all limbs) and no speech communication to a slight limp. Persons who are unable to speak or have a slowed speech often need to find other means by which to dictate information to the VEs. The use of devices, such as word boards, large cards with the individual multiple-choice letters printed on them so they can be pointed at by the candidate and a keyboard that can be activated by head wand or mouth stick are common alternatives to oral communication.

Multiple Sclerosis (MS). Like cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis has many variations depending on which part of the body is affected. The ability to read or write varies, depending on the extent of disability. Blurred or double vision is often present. The primary difficulty for most MS candidates is fatigue. Because of medication and fatigue, the time of the day when the person is most alert is the best time for him or her to be tested. For this reason, home testing or special arrangements are sometimes appropriate for people with MS.

Muscular Dystrophy. People with muscular dystrophy experience muscle weakness and fatigue. They are generally able to read and write their own exams. People with muscular dystrophy may find home testing or special arrangements by VE Teams necessary, depending on the level of muscular weakness.

Arthritis. Arthritis can make it difficult for people to sit in one position for extended periods so VEs need to keep in mind that they need to allow breaks so that the candidate may stretch or move around. This should be done at a convenient time between exam elements.

Heart and Lung Conditions. People with serious heart or lung conditions may find travel to exam sites too strenuous. Although they probably will not have other specific requirements, arranging to hold the exam session in the home is often necessary.

Spinal Cord Injury. People who have spinal cord injuries usually experience some degree of paralysis. For the candidate able to use his or her hands effectively enough to write, no modification is necessary, other than the site being accessible to wheelchair applicants. For a quadriplegic candidate (with no use of hands or feet) unable to write, it is necessary for him or her to read the exam (it does not need to be read to them) and let him or her dictate the answers.

Stroke. People who have suffered one or more strokes may require someone to write the test answers for them because they may suffer from partial paralysis. If aphasia (loss or impairment of the ability to use words) is a problem, VEs may need to have the candidate physically point at the answer for a particular question.

Epilepsy. Some epileptic seizure activity can be triggered through anxiety and nervousness. Therefore, keeping a relaxed and calm environment during the test session, without undue waiting to take the exams, is important. If candidates adjust their medication, through consultation with their physician, they can control anxiety and/or nervousness. Testing epileptic candidates in their homes to keep down stress is sometimes necessary.

Each candidate's situation is different, and these are only general guidelines. This is not a complete list and there are many other conditions that may call for adaptive testing. In all cases, keeping the test session as non-stressful as possible will result in the best performance by the candidate and will make the examination process easier for everyone.

Real Life Experience Box

For more than 55 years, a chap in our town had been an avid SWL listener. As time progressed, his vision failed. Several of his "Ham" friends gently persuaded him until he agreed to try the 'Handy-Hams' resources, with the assistance of members from our newly-formed amateur radio club. As his confidence grew, our determination grew also, until one day our SWL friend declared he was ready. He now signs with his Tech call sign and inspires all of us in the Aerospace Radio Club (W1NSN). It's NEVER too late to be a Ham! – N1SS, Aerospace RC VE TEAM LIAISON

Quiet Please

VE Teams should strive to keep the test session conducive to a classroom setting for the candidates. The examinees should already be in a quiet posture to concentrate on taking their exams. The team should use good judgment when talking at the session to not disturb the candidates. Do your best to keep noise levels of examiner administrative discussions to a minimum.

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Collect All Materials

This information would only apply to in-person exam sessions. Instruct the candidates that they are not to leave the test site with any materials, other than what they brought with them. No candidate may be permitted to retain answer sheets, test booklets, scratch paper or any other related exam materials. When a candidate completes any element, he or she is to return all materials pertaining to that test to the administering VEs.

Check to see if the candidate skipped over any section of answers, or perhaps missed the last page, for example. Be sure each answer sheet includes the applicant's name and test element/design number.

Once the candidate turns in the materials, and assuming the exam is completed, the test may not be returned to the candidate for any reason, including for review or to find out which questions the candidate answered right or wrong. If a candidate does not score a passing grade on any examination element, however, the VEs must advise the candidate of his or her grade. If no upgrade is earned, according to the FCC's guidelines, VEs shall return the Form 605 to the candidate. (However, you need not force a candidate to take back the Form 605; in fact, if the candidate does not request that the form be returned, please instead return it to the VEC with the used test materials.)

The three administering VEs must sign all NCVEC 605 Forms where examinees earn a new license or upgrade license at your test session.

Cheating

Any candidate found cheating on any exam will have his or her examination terminated immediately and must be issued a failing grade regardless of how well that person is doing on the test. At the team's discretion, a candidate found cheating may or may not receive credit for any other element(s) successfully completed before being discovered. Always ensure that all three (or more) VEs participate in the review and decision--with at least two VEs being involved in the discussion with the applicant. The candidate must then be dismissed from the test session.

If you or your fellow VEs observe cheating or observe other questionable action on the part of any examinee, handle the situation with all the self-control and diplomacy that can be mustered. A candidate may become belligerent when confronted by an accusing VE. Do not tolerate any verbal abuse from the candidate and, by all means, do not reciprocate with your own abusive comments.

If a candidate attempts to pass an altered license or CSCE document, collect a copy of the document, and forward it along with a brief statement to the VEC with your test session package. Do not confiscate the original of any altered or questionable document.

Remember that a person is considered innocent until proven guilty. It is up to the FCC to make any determination of guilt (VEs or VECs are not in a position to make this determination).

Candidates' Possessions

The candidates must put away any headsets, books, paper, or earphones. Watches that give any kind of alarm or hourly chimes should be disabled so that other candidates will not be distracted during their exams. Candidates who must use hearing aids should be allowed to wear them. Cell phones and pagers should be turned off.

Instruct the candidates that no crib notes or other assistance is permitted once the exams are begun. Using any kind of aid on the test, other than a calculator (see below), is not allowed. Slide rules and logarithmic tables are acceptable, as long as they are free of notes. Candidates found using unauthorized aids will have their exams terminated and will be assigned failing grades. They will then be dismissed from the test session.

Calculators

Most applicants will bring some type of scientific calculator to use on their exams. Most of these, including some programmable calculators, are acceptable. The candidate must, at the VE's request, demonstrate that all of the calculator's memories have been cleared. The VE Team has the right to refuse a candidate the use of a calculator if the team is not

convinced that this has been accomplished. Most calculators clear their memories automatically when they are shut off, but some have an internal backup battery or power source that powers the memories continuously even when the main battery is dead or removed. Many of today's calculators support programming features, such as built-in formulas.

ARRL/VEC guidelines are that the candidate can use a calculator at the test session, provided they can prove to the VE Team that the memory has been cleared. Many of today's calculators support programming features, such as built-in formulas which cannot be **cleared** from memory. If a calculator has hardwired formula capabilities (that is, formulas which can neither be added nor removed by the user) then the calculator cannot be used during a test. If the VE Team feels a calculator may contain formulas that could be used on the exam, the VE Team has the right to refuse the use of the calculator by the candidate. Slide rules and logarithmic tables (math tables) are acceptable, as long as they are free of notes and formulas.

No other electronic appliances are to be used with exams. Cell phone must be silenced or turned off during the exam session. A cell phone, smartphone (a mobile phone with advanced functionality), or other device that has a calculator function or feature may not be used. Answers to exam questions could easily be accessed on the web, via text, or in memory locations on the phone. There is no practical way for the VE Team to monitor these devices. Allowing a candidate to use the calculator function on their phone creates the potential for abuse.

Bottom line, if it contains a formula, it must be disallowed, and phones may not be used at the test session. Please also refer to information included in the previous section "Candidates' Possessions."

Rest Breaks Between Exam Elements

Once a candidate completes an exam element and is then waiting to take the next element, he or she may leave the room if the VE Team allows it. This is entirely up to the VE Team, not the candidate. If permitted, this is the best time for candidates to 'run down the hall' without having to be escorted.

Rest Room Breaks

Inform the candidates that once they begin their exams, they will not be permitted to leave the room until they turn in their tests. If a candidate has a genuine emergency, a VE Team helper or a VE who is not one of the three VEs directly involved with administering exams must escort the candidate to the restroom to ensure that the candidate does not have access to any notes or books outside the examination room. If this is not acceptable to the candidate in need, he or she will have to turn in the test papers and the exam will be graded, regardless of how much the candidate has left to do on the exam. To ensure the integrity of each test, there can be no exceptions to this requirement.

Commencing the Exam

Each certifying VE must oversee each applicant throughout each test that they administer and certify this fact on the Form 605 and/or CSCE. See elsewhere in this manual the discussion on separating testing areas, if applicable.

One at a Time

A candidate may be administered only one element at a time, even if he or she intends to take the entire battery of amateur exams from scratch. As each element is completed, the candidate must turn in the papers for grading. An exam must be graded immediately after the applicant completes it (FCC Rule 97.509). If there will be a delay in grading, you may wish to allow a candidate to start the next requested exam element at the VE's and candidate's discretion.

Form: Written Element Answer Sheet

The candidates will mark their test answers on the Written Element Answer Sheet Form. They should not write in the exam booklets. Candidates must provide all requested information in the "**Candidate Information**" section. The test element should be circled, and the test design number or serial number must be entered on the provided line. VEs should review candidate information for accuracy and completeness.

The VEs must grade the answer sheet and log the score in the VE grading box. Indicate the number of correct answers and check the appropriate box indicating whether the candidate passed or failed. Always clearly mark the candidate's incorrect answers and make certain the test design number, test serial number or template number is provided.

All answer sheets, regardless of whether they were passed or failed, must be returned to VEC. A sample written element answer sheet with an overlay-grading template (properly aligned for grading) is shown in the "Grading Exams" section of this chapter. The Written Element Answer Sheet form (download, print, interactive) is located on the VE Resources page.

Exam Booklets

The ARRL/VEC provides its VE Teams with all three written elements. Each element exam is in booklet form, and each element's booklet is color-coded so that it is easily distinguished from the other elements. Also, the element, test version number and class of license normally associated with the exam are printed on the cover page; the element and the test version number are at the top of each page of text in the booklet. Each booklet has a corresponding answer key.

The elements are designed in booklet form, answer keys are a single sheet as follows:

Element 2: 4-page exam on Goldenrod stock

Element 3: 4-page exam on Yellow stock

Element 4: 5/6-page exam on Pink stock

Answer Keys: all answer keys are on Blue stock, be sure to keep them in a secure place

There may be some variation in the page count of the test booklets from time to time. Also, due to computerization at the ARRL/VEC, limited variations in test booklet layout may occur.

Grading Exams

Immediate grading is required: The exam is to be graded after the applicant turns it in to the VE Team (FCC Rule 97.509).

Each VE must grade, or agree to the grade given, each examinee on each element taken.

Agreeing to the grade given would be indicated where an automatic grading device is used--all three VEs need not insert the answer sheet to get the same automatically graded score, or where an overlay grading template is used and empty holes are marked by less than three VEs--but all three VEs must agree to the number of correct answers shown (which in the end is the score announced to the examinee).

The VEs must inform the examinee of their grade (pass or fail, and offer his or her score {e.g., 26 out of 35}) upon completion of the grading.

Three blue-colored printed answer sheets are provided to the VE Team for each examination.

Blue-transparent hole-punched overlay grading templates are available for use by your team. They are supplied as groups of three of each template so that one is available for each VE to grade tests (FCC requires each VE to grade, or agree to the grade given on each exam).

A sample written element answer sheet with an overlay-grading template (properly aligned for grading) is shown to the right. The Written Element Answer Sheet form (download, print, interactive) is located on the VE Resources page.

A special template key is provided which correlates the correct ARRL/VEC supplied examination document with its respective overlay template. Place the template over the answer sheet (be sure to verify that you are using the correct template, and that the template alignment holes are matched up in all four corners--each overlay has four positions and is two sided).

If the exam you are grading seems to have a rather high number of wrong answers marked, recheck to make sure you are using the correct answer key or template/template position. If you are not using the right one, do not make an issue of it; simply locate the correct key/template and re-grade the exam. If you are using the correct key/template and the candidate has more than the allowable number of incorrect answers, continue grading the answer sheet until you've completed it, and then (this is mandatory) diplomatically advise the candidate of his or her grade. You can also mention that additional studying may be needed before he or she comes back for retesting. Again, you must always inform the examinee of his or her grade--each and every time.

> **IMPORTANT**: No candidate may review the test booklet or answer sheet after it has been turned in, nor may the VE team give advice to the candidate as to which topic(s) to study for a better (passing) grade.

Although the FCC Rules require that you return Form 605 applications to candidates who did not earn an upgrade at the session (FCC Rule 97.509), unless the applicant asks for it, ARRL/VEC encourages you to return these Form 605s to the VEC. This includes candidates who fail or candidates who pass elements without earning an upgrade (this would only apply to candidates who take the exams out of sequence).

If you attempt to return the Form 605, do not be surprised if a candidate who has just failed leaves immediately before you can return his or her form. Most candidates do not know that they can have their applications back; more often, they do not care to get them back. In either case, if a candidate who does not upgrade leaves before you can return the Form 605, send it to the ARRL/VEC office with the rest of the used test materials; the VEC will hold on to it.

> **IMPORTANT**: Do not toss out Overlay Grading Templates, ever!
> The blue plastic overlay grading templates used to grade the exams at test sessions, should never be thrown away or destroyed when new exam versions are introduced. We specifically designed the plastic templates so that they will always be useful, no matter what exams are created. They will never become obsolete.
> The "Key for Templates" is what will be replaced (paper instructions - explaining how to line up the template and which template corresponds with which exam version for proper grading). This KEY will be changed or updated to let you know how to match up the templates with any new exams that are issued.

Passing Grades

The FCC requires that the candidate correctly answer the required number of questions for each written element exam to achieve a passing grade (FCC Rule 97.503).

Element	Class	Questions on Test	Minimum Right	Maximum Wrong
2	Technician	35	26	9
3	General	35	26	9
4	Extra	50	37	13

Candidates who pass their tests may then be given the next exam element if they applied for one. If a candidate did not apply for additional elements, use your discretion whether to offer the candidate the opportunity to continue testing. Base your decision on what materials you have available, the lateness of the exam session and whether you and your team members are willing to continue. Your team makes the decision; the candidate does not.

Disagreements

Debate About a Test Question. Although the FCC recognizes that VEs are responsible for determining the correctness of the answers, the ARRL/VEC's policy is such that the examiners are to grade all exams using the answer keys provided with the test materials. This way, VEs are not directly held responsible for providing the decision.

Usually, a candidate who fails an element will not make an issue of it. A rare exception, for example, would be if someone who fails by only one question on a 50-question test. If a candidate fails, but sincerely believes that he or she really passed, the VE Team or the candidate may request that the VEC office review the failed exam element. Keep in mind that if a seemingly knowledgeable examinee fails a test with a score of only 25-33% of the answers answered correctly, and if overlay grading templates were used for grading, this may suggest that the incorrect template was used to grade the test-or that the template was incorrectly positioned.

If ARRL/VEC determines that the candidate failed an exam element because of a clerical error, such as a grading error or an error on the answer key, the VEC will contact the administering VE Team with clear facts about the error. The VEC will request that the team review the matter, and if the team concurs with the VEC findings, the VEC will ask the team to issue the candidate the appropriate CSCE, and complete and return the candidate's Form 605 to ARRL/VEC for forwarding to the FCC if a new license or upgrade was earned.

Failing Grades

The VE Team should use good judgment when notifying an examinee of a failing grade. The results should be given quietly, as it may be embarrassing to him or her. The helpful VE may even suggest a re-test if the examinee was close to passing and the VE Team has a different test design.

Important: Applicants' personal information may not be openly or publicly discussed or publicly posted by the VE Team. This is explained in detail in Chapter 7 under the section titled "Discussion of Applicant Personal Information".

Retesting

FCC Rule 97.509(f) states that no examination that has been compromised shall be administered to any examinee and that the same question set may not be re-administered to the same examinee.

An applicant who fails an element at an ARRL/VEC-coordinated session may retake that element at the same session, if (1) the administering VE Team has a <u>different</u> version of that element, which the applicant has not taken; (2) the VE Team has the time and resources and is willing to administer the additional version; and (3) the applicant pays an additional test fee. Again, a retest test fee charge is only required if an element is retaken, after being failed at your session.

Issuing CSCEs

The ARRL/VEC's CSCE is designed so that a single certificate can convey credit to the holder for successfully completed elements, and where applicable for validation of a new license-class earned. When completing the CSCE, use a ball-point pen. Press hard enough for the information to transfer through the three-sheet carbon copy form. When separating the carbon copies of the CSCE, the top sheet is given to the candidate, the pink copy must be sent to the ARRL VEC, and the yellow copy is to be retained by the VE Team. The VE Team must retain the yellow copy for its records.

Applicants who pass one or more exam elements shall be issued a CSCE for the element(s) passed (FCC Rule 97.509). This applies even if the applicant does not complete all elements necessary for an upgrade at the session or if the applicant does not have the original documentation needed to support a claimed license class.

The candidate is responsible for providing the administering VEs with necessary evidence of having passed the elements he or she claims. Such evidence must be in the form of the original amateur license and any still-valid original CSCE(s) indicating credit for elements passed that are not otherwise documented by the license.

Another CSCE that can be considered for element-credit proof is an Element 3 CSCE dated before 3/21/87. This is valid proof of grandfather Element 3 credit, so long as the applicant qualified for a license grant by passing that test. See the section below on "CSCEs for Instant Upgrade."

Completing the CSCE

The following information should be filled in on the CSCE: (1) test site (city and state), (2) test date, (3) candidate's signature, (4) candidate's name, call sign (if any; if none, enter "none") and complete address, and (5) the signatures and call signs of the three VEs who administered the exams (all three are mandatory).

Any exam element(s) the candidate does not successfully complete at the session, even if they were not taken, must be lined out entirely. Elements passed should be circled. Similarly, if the candidate earns an upgrade at the session, the license class earned should be circled and the other three classes are to be lined out completely (see the sample CSCE in this section).

Upgrade (new license class earned) CSCEs

If an examinee qualifies for a new higher-class license, earned by passing examination element(s) at the test session, the CSCE issued shall indicate the new license class earned.

For example, an applicant who passes Element 2 will have earned a Technician license. The "Technician" earned line shall be circled on the CSCE (with all others lined out). Regardless of whether a current FCC license is held by the applicant, the new license class earned at the test session must be shown on each CSCE.

An applicant who upgrades should be issued a CSCE that indicates the element(s) passed at the session and the new license class he/she has earned. Because a candidate can upgrade to only one license class at any given session, only one license class should be indicated on the upgrade CSCE, regardless of how many license classes he/she oversteps; such as progress from Novice to Extra class. All elements that were not taken or passed at the session should be lined out completely.

Instant Upgrade CSCEs

For General written test (Element 3) credit, persons who took a 50-question Technician/General written test before March 21, 1987, receive "grandfather" Technician license credit under Section 97.505 of FCC Rules.

The paperwork-only upgrade forms may not be sent directly to the FCC or the VEC office by the amateur (the upgrade must occur at a test session and follow FCC guidelines). The candidate must hold a current Technician license and present themselves to a VE exam session with vali proof. Although no test will be taken, the candidate will pay the test session fee, fill out a 605 form and receive a new CSCE from the examiners before their license may be upgraded to General.

An applicant who has proof of "grandfather" Technician license credit, but does not hold a current Technician license, must pass the Technician written exam before they can apply the "grandfather" credit towards a license. The candidate will pay the test session fee, fill out a 605 form and receive a new CSCE from the examiners showing a new General license earned.

It is the applicant (not the VEs or coordinating VEC) who is responsible for supplying the evidence of holding valid grandfather credit. For detailed information on valid forms of credit see the "Element Credit" Section of Chapter 6.

Candidates with Expired Licenses

The FCC does not allow expired license holders to automatically qualify for a license. Once the license is expired in the FCC system, the licensee must retest to get back into amateur radio. At a minimum, the applicant must take the current 35-question Technician exam at a VE test session. After the test is passed, FCC will issue a new call sign.

Session Completed, Job Almost Done!

Congratulations! You have concluded your test session and are enjoying the reward of knowing that you have helped a person become a radio amateur or upgraded an existing licensee!

Your job is almost done. See the next chapter on how to prepare the test session summary report, then package and send back the paperwork to the VEC.

SECTION THREE: AFTER THE EXAM

Chapter 7
Session Report and Returning Documents

Form: Test Session Report

The Test Session Report form is a summary of your exam session, serving as a tally sheet for elements passed compared to elements administered, and the NCVEC Form 605s submitted for processing. This information is also transmitted to the FCC for its use.

Completing the Test Session Report

Test Site and Test Date. Complete the top portion of the report sheet indicating the test site city and state and test date.

Exam Elements. Passed vs. Failed. For each element, tally the number of exams passed and enter the numbers in the appropriate boxes in the "passed" row. Then tally the number of exams failed for each element and enter those numbers in the appropriate boxes in the "failed" row. Finally, in each element column, add the number passed and the number failed, and enter this total in the appropriate box of the "total" row. Do not include any CSCE or other credits presented in the passed or failed totals.

At the right side on the summary is another column "TOTAL." In this column, the sum of the exams passed (adding left to right) is indicated on the first line, the sum of the exams failed is entered on the second line and finally, the sum of all column totals is entered on the third line.

A straightforward way to verify that all exams, regardless of whether they were passed or failed, are accounted for properly is to compare the sum of the column totals with the sum of the two rows for passed and failed exams. If the two sums are not the same, recheck your actual test results.

New License Class Earned. In the first column marked "Technician" enter the number of Forms 605 showing a Technician license was earned that your VE Team is forwarding to the VEC. Then follow the same steps for the 605s for General and Extra Class upgrades earned. Finally, add the three numbers to arrive at the total number of upgrades earned from the session; indicate this number in the "TOTAL" column.

As a final check before mailing the test results to the VEC, the number of Forms 605 indicated in the "TOTAL" column must match the number of applications for new or upgraded licenses that the team forwards to the VEC in the test session package.

Candidates Who Did Not Earn a New License or an Upgrade. This is the number of applicants who did not earn a new license or upgrade at the session.

Total Candidates Served. Indicate in this box the total number of candidates seeking a new or upgraded license, regardless of what license classes are applied for, who attended the session (this should be the total of upgrades plus candidates who did not earn a new license or upgrade).

Test Fee Summary. Multiply the number of people listed on the roster by the applicable ARRL/VEC test fee (the current test fee can be found on the website at www.arrl.org/arrl-vec-exam-fees). If your team is retaining a portion of the fee to directly offset out-of-pocket expenses that were necessarily and prudently incurred in the examination process, enter the amount retained from the test fees you collect in the applicable column (up to $7 per applicant). Keep only the amount needed to offset your expenses (e.g., if you serve 10 people, and if you have $20 in expenses, then the amount to be retained by the VE Team is $2 per person). Then, multiply the number of applicants times the amount of test fee per applicant being retained to determine the amount of fees being retained by your VE Team. Lastly, subtract the amount retained by your team from the total test fees collected to determine the amount to be forwarded to the ARRL/VEC. This will be the total amount

of test fees enclosed with the test session results. (The total must also include any test fees submitted before the test that were enclosed with pre-registrations.) An example of a completed test fee summary is shown on the back of this form.

Most applicants pay by check or money order. Please, do not send cash with the session results (a package with cash and change in it is a test session package just begging to be intercepted in route to the ARRL/VEC). If your team collects any cash at the session, send a team/personal check for the amount being forwarded to the VEC.

Other Fees Collected. Fees collected by the team that are not related to the test session (e.g., license renewals, address changes, ARRL memberships) should be recorded in this section. A portion of these fees may NOT be retained for reimbursement.

Participating VE's List. At the bottom of the summary form, (legibly) print the names, call signs and license class of the VEs who worked the session (if more than 8 VEs worked the test session, list the additional VE's names/calls/class on the back of the form). Include those VEs who assisted, but who may not have actually signed 605 Forms or CSCEs.

The Test Session Report form (download, print, interactive) is located on the VE Resources page.

Back of the Test Session Report

Notifying the VE Team After Test Processing is Complete. If you would like ARRL/VEC to notify you when your session has been processed and forwarded to FCC, indicate in this box, on the appropriate line, the method you would like. If the box is blank, no notification will be sent.

Test Fee Summary Example. This example indicates how the test summary on the front would appear once completed.

Listing Additional Participating VEs. List any additional VEs present at the session, even if they did not sign any Forms 605 or CSCEs.

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List Any Non-VE Helpers. List in this section the names of any non-VE helpers, even if they are not licensed Radio Amateurs.

Session Evaluation. Provide comments or suggestions you think may help the ARRL/VEC process the session to the FCC or improve the program overall. If any irregularities or problems were experienced in the administration of the test session, note them on this form. Indicate any testing accommodations offered, to whom and why (blind, hard of hearing, physically impaired, etc.). If something significantly out-of-the-ordinary took place at your session that may result in follow-up communications to other VEs or candidates, explain it here or on a separate sheet of paper (and if desired contact the VEC staff at 800-927-7583 to discuss the matter).

Lastly, separate the green original from the carbon copy. Keep the yellow carbon for your VE Team records; do not forward the yellow form to the VEC.

Retaining A Portion of the Fees

In setting up and conducting tests sessions, VEs usually have out-of-pocket expenses for such items as phone calls, postage, photocopying, stationery (pens, pencils, erasers, paper, staples/stapler, etc.), room/site rental and publicity/advertising. All of these expenses--as long as they were necessary and prudent to the test session--may be directly reimbursed to the VE Team. There can be other expenses that may qualify for reimbursement, such as materials to accommodate handicapped/disabled individuals, travel expenses (e.g., traveling to the residence of a disabled person) at the actual fuel cost or at a mileage rate determined by ARRL/VEC, and tolls; and basic refreshments for the attendees of the session (not simply refreshments for the VEs only).

The ARRL/VEC recognizes that some may not agree that all of the above are necessary and/or prudent; however, the judgment as to what is (or is not) acceptable is your call to make. When VEs contact the VEC to inquire about what expenses are considered reimbursable, the ARRL/VEC's opinion will indicate that all of the above items are acceptable.

Retaining the fee and determining how much to withhold, up to a limit announced by the ARRL/VEC, (reimbursement limit is found on the website at www.arrl.org/arrl-vec-exam-fees) is decided by the VE Team. To do so, the team must document the expenses incurred in conducting their test session(s). Although no longer required by the FCC, the ARRL/VEC requires that expense and reimbursement records be retained by each VE Team for two (2) years and must be made available to the ARRL/VEC upon request. So, if you retain a portion of the test fee, documentation of your income and expenses is necessary. Another option is for the team to send all test fees and receipts to the VEC, and we will issue the team a reimbursement check. Then the VEC office would be responsible for retaining the receipts.

The VE Team may retain a minimal amount of the test fee above the session expenses if some more-costly future expenses are expected. Those goals, however, should be well documented in your team files--and once the item(s) have been expended out of the account, the balance should be reduced to the minimal amount necessary to meet the team's ongoing publicity or session set-up needs.

Leftover funds must always be returned to the VEC if no future goals or ongoing costs exist. If a team needs to disburse a fund that exceeds its needs, any leftover funds must be returned to the ARRL/VEC.

How to Deposit the Money

VE Teams may open their own bank accounts to hold funds for expenses incurred. The account should be free of monthly checking or maintenance charges--the cash flow through the account should be the minimum necessary to meet the team's needs.

If a team chooses, the team funds may be retained in a checking account established for other purposes, as long as all parties involved (and those with account signature privileges) have a clear understanding that the funds earmarked for VEC Test Session activities must remain untouched.

VE Teams may endorse, and deposit checks written out to the ARRL/VEC if they wish. When depositing checks, the endorsement should include the city and state of the test site. For example, the endorsement can read: For Deposit Only, ARRL/VEC VE Team, Anytown, Anystate. This way, if a candidate should contact the VEC indicating that the check was deposited, we can determine from the check endorsement where it was deposited--if not done so in Newington, CT.

What to Return to the ARRL/VEC After Each Test Session

Upload the completed session documents for quicker service. New and upgraded licenses are processed to the FCC within 1 to 2 business days (for weekend sessions) and are usually issued on the same day for weekday sessions. View updated instructions on the session documents upload webpage in the **Supplemental Information**, which extends and supports the published VE Manual. Additional information is also located on the ARRL VEC VE Resources page.

For non-stocked ARRL VE Teams, you must return ALL used and unused materials after each test session. This includes anything the applicant has written on; Form 605, applicant's written element answer sheet(s) and any scrap paper used by the applicant during the exam for calculations or notes, etc. Send back every test document, including all passed AND failed tests and send us a copy of EVERY credit document the applicant presents to you seeking exam credit. Each applicant's exam materials should be grouped together.

For Field-stocked ARRL VE Teams, do not return unused test supplies--keep them with your field-stock. But do send back anything the applicant has written on, including any Form 605, the applicant's written element answer sheet(s) and any scrap paper used by the applicant during the exam for calculations or notes, etc. Send back every test document, including all passed AND failed tests. Also send us a copy of EVERY credit document the applicant presents to you seeking exam credit. Each applicant's exam materials should be grouped together.

Organizing the Package

Organize the materials so that all used material comes before the unused stock.
Before mailing the package, upload the completed session documents for quicker service. See instructions below.

Organize the used materials (both passed and failed) as follows:

1) On top, place the Test Session Report (original green sheet only), then any correspondence and checks and/or fees, and follow it with the Candidate Roster (original white sheet only).

2) Next, place each applicant's paperwork in Candidate Roster order with the CSCE carbon at the top, followed by Form 605, then any license or CSCE copy(ies), then the exam papers in ascending element order. Please do not use staples on any documents. Paper clips may be used.

3) Last, place all unused exam materials (if not an officially field-stocked VE Team) below the candidate's information.

If the test is being mailed after the 10-day limit, you must include a note explaining why the package was sent late. Always try, especially if mailing on the tenth day, to get a postmark from the post office when you mail your package.

Sending the Package To the ARRL/VEC

Using United States Postal Service (USPS) Priority Mail

Important: Before mailing the package, upload the completed session documents for quicker service. See instructions below. For shipping your test session results to ARRL/VEC office, use the USPS Priority Mail envelopes and ARRL/VEC self-adhesive first class Business Reply Mail (BRM) labels. Peel off the backing from the address labels and affix them to the front of the priority mail envelopes. Please do not use other envelopes, such as plain brown or plain white. Some post offices assume these are third class mailers and will inadvertently delay delivery significantly. The USPS Priority Mail envelopes are available free of charge from either us or your local post office.

A handful of VE Teams have found that presenting the Priority Mail envelope with the ARRL/VEC first-class BRM label at a post office window meets with some resistance by postal-service staff. If this should happen to you, politely state that this method is acceptable since the postal charges are the same for either Priority or First Class mail. If you still have difficulty, ask to speak with the window supervisor or supervisor/postmaster and refer them to the BRM notice below. The ARRL/VEC has confirmed with various USPS staff supervisors/postmasters, in each instance where this procedure is questioned, that we are doing it right.

Include the team's or the Liaison's return address on the envelope. USPS stipulates that this information must be displayed on the envelope. Any post office can refuse a package that does not have a return name and address label attached.

The package can now be sent to the ARRL/VEC. When using the USPS Priority Mail envelope to return completed examinations, please obtain a postmark by having the package postage hand-canceled (postmark hand affixed) at the post office.

BRM Notice Information: There is a chapter and verse permitting use of the BRM for Priority Mail and First Class Mail in the "Mailing Standards of the United States Postal Service Domestic Mail Manual". Check the "Quick service guides" Section 505 on the USPS website http://pe.usps.com/text/qsg300/Q505.htm#1022485. A Printer-Friendly PDF version is available at http://pe.usps.com/cpim/ftp/manuals/qsg300/Q505.pdf.

Session Documents Upload Webpage
Upload in-person or remote session documents via the ARRL VEC's secure session upload webpage. Sessions are processed to the FCC within 1 to 2 business days instead of relying on the postal service to deliver the test package. Uploading completed sessions as a PDF file (scanned documents) via the web allows for quicker processing to the FCC.
Please contact the VEC department (VEC@arrl.org) for the information on e-filing exam session documents through our secure upload page. Authorized VEs will be sent the upload page URL which is hidden from the public.

Other Postage-Paid Services Available

The ARRL/VEC has taken steps to ensure that your completed test sessions are delivered to the ARRL/VEC without failure. This is done through the use of the session documents upload webpage and postage-paid services. In making the most effective use of them, we recommend that you upload and process your sessions at your earliest convenience. Of the postage-paid services the ARRL/VEC has provided for you, **USPS Priority Mail is recommended as the most cost effective.**

For **US Postal Service Express Mail**, service is similar to Priority Mail but at a substantially greater cost. The package can be sent through the post office and billed to the ARRL/VEC Corporate Account. Call ARRL VEC for account number.

UPS and FedEx are no longer available.

Occasionally, materials from a test session have taken an unusually long time to get to the ARRL/VEC office. If the VEC does not know that the package was held up in the mail, it will decide that the materials were mailed late, and an explanation would be required. By having the package hand stamped or by using a 2-day or overnight delivery service, the postmark (receipt date) on the package could be used as proof that the session materials were mailed on time.

Reporting Your Test Session; What if Materials, Signatures, Etc. Are Missing?

ARRL/VEC requires teams to report your test sessions by the tenth day (10 days) after the test session date.

If you are missing a CSCE copy, license verification, ID, or signatures of any kind, do not hold up reporting the session while obtaining them. If you need to verify existence of an FCC license, feel free to check with ARRL/VEC after the session. If CSCE credit verification is needed, and the credit was issued by ARRL, the VEC can quickly verify it at HQ. Verification of credit issued by other VEC organizations will typically take longer to confirm.

If you are missing a signature on one or a few documents, do not hold up the remaining session results (and eager newly qualified examinees); just send the session to ARRL/VEC with a note to cover the outstanding issues.

Record Retention and Lost Sessions

The FCC requires all VECs to retain all materials from a test session for at least 15 months. After 15 months, the VEC can legally purge from its files all the used exam booklets and papers. ARRL/VEC VE Teams should keep copies of the examination results in your team files for at least fifteen months after your test session. It is imperative that you retain the VE Team's YELLOW carbon copies of the Candidate Roster, Test Session Report and CSCE(s). Although not required, other forms may be photocopied for your records. Before mailing the package, upload the completed session documents to the VEC department to avoid this potential issue.

On rare occasions, a VE Team mails a completed test session package, and it does not reach the ARRL/VEC office. Complete, accurate team records become especially important if we have to reconstruct the lost test session results. As a VE Team, you must be prepared to produce paperwork and answer any questions that might arise concerning your test session.

Dissolving a VE Team and Dispersing Team Equipment

If your team acquires a large collection of team-owned equipment and materials and the team dissolves, it is the team's decision as to what will be done with the equipment.

Worthwhile causes to which team-owned equipment could be disbursed to include other VE Teams; a club or other sponsoring organization; classes/instructors or other similar groups; schools; libraries; benevolent associations, etc. The team should determine how to disburse the group's assets and to whom. As mentioned above, any monetary assets must be returned to ARRL/VEC.

Publicizing Your Examination Activity Statistics

Your team's test session activities will gradually mount up to some impressive numbers. Many examinees will be grateful for the service your team has provided. Yet, the ARRL/VEC has been asked what parts of this information can be shared?

You and your team can share any numerical statistics that relate to your past test sessions. You should not, however, publicize the names of any persons who were examined by your team--unless these persons have given you their expressed written consent.

Although information from the FCC's records is public information, unless the FCC receives, processes, and publicizes applicant data, an examinee's information is not considered public.

If you are concerned with sharing information about one of your past test sessions that includes session information other than numerical statistics, do not share it. It is nobody else's business other than yours, the ARRL/VEC's and the FCC's.

Discussion of Applicant Personal Information

Applicant personal information, such as handicaps or disabilities, date of birth, or any other personal information shared with VEs under the context of seeking a license or upgrade should not be openly discussed by any ARRL VE. Any such discussion by a VE is to be limited to that necessary to determine how to serve an applicant at the test session. ARRL VEs must not engage in any open/public discussion of such personal information. Doing so may be cause for the VE to lose his/her ARRL VE accreditation.

Candidates should be made aware that, as an applicant for an FCC Amateur Radio License, some information about them will be made publicly available via the FCC's Universal Licensing System (ULS), specifically some information they submit on the NCVEC 605 form will be published. Refer candidates to the FCC Privacy information on the website: http://www.arrl.org/fcc-licensee-privacy

Electronic Mail/News/Web

You are welcome to conduct your ARRL/VEC business via email. The ARRL/VEC direct email address is vec@arrl.org. ARRL VE Teams can register their upcoming test dates and locations using email address vetests@arrl.org.

VE Newsletter Via Email: Periodic VE news items are available to ARRL VEs via email. If you want to receive these periodic news items via email, you can do so by subscribing to the ARRL-VE-List. This is a one-way list. To subscribe, unsubscribe, or change your address for email delivery visit our VE-List Updates webpage at www.arrl.org/ve-enewsletter.

Visit the ARRL website at www.arrl.org and of course, the ARRL VEC VE Resources page for a large repository of information. View updated information in the Supplemental Information, which extends and supports the published VE Manual.

When Will the Test Results be Sent to FCC?

Important: Before mailing the package, upload the completed session documents for quicker service. See instructions below. The VE Team must prepare and upload or mail all session paperwork to the coordinating VEC. The ARRL/VEC cannot send your test session data to the FCC until it has fully 'coordinated' your test session, which includes formal review of your uploaded or original test session results, including 605forms and all related test documents and signatures.

Upon receipt at the VEC office, staff begins processing session results (in order of receipt at the ARRL/VEC). In accordance with FCC rules, the VEC staff must verify all session documentation; all 605 Forms and CSCEs must have the candidate's signature and 3 VE signatures, CSCEs used for written exam element credit must be validated as being passed within the previous 365 days and the test documents must be confirmed as being passed. Finally, the session data and information from the 605 Forms can then be submitted to the FCC.

Normally it only takes a few minutes to enter the data and transmit each successful Form 605. The license record should appear in the FCC database at https://www.fcc.gov/wireless/universal-licensing-system within a few hours and the official license authorization will arrive by email directly from the FCC in 24 to 48 hours.

Applicants answering "YES" to the basic qualification question (felony conviction status question) must provide an explanation to the FCC (FCC instructions and procedures). These applications will have a waiting period and may possibly remain in a pending status (not granted) for weeks or months as the FCC evaluates their documentation and makes a determination about the license issuance.

Session Documents Upload Webpage
Upload in-person or remote session documents via the ARRL VEC's secure session upload webpage. Sessions are processed to the FCC within 1 to 2 business days instead of relying on the postal service to deliver the test package. Uploading completed sessions as a PDF file (scanned documents) via the web allows for quicker processing to the FCC.
Please contact the VEC department (VEC@arrl.org) for the information on e-filing exam session documents through our secure upload page. Authorized VEs will be sent the upload page URL which is hidden from the public.

Up-To-Date FCC Call Sign Information

> **Try connecting to the following call sign servers:**
>
> **FCC:** FCC-Universal-Licensing-System (search licenses)
>
> **ARRL:** http://www.arrl.org/fcc/search
>
> **QRZ:** www.qrz.com

The examinee's license data should appear in the FCC database at https://www.fcc.gov/wireless/universal-licensing-system within a few hours and the official license authorization will arrive by email directly from the FCC in 24 to 48 hours.

You've Done It!

Congratulations! You have served your candidates well, and you have served Amateur Radio well by maintaining its longstanding tradition of integrity in licensing examination and administration. Now, it is time to start planning your next session!

Visit the VE Resources webpage for current forms, additional information, and helpful tips for conducting exam sessions, including the VE Manual Supplemental Information.

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SECTION FOUR: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Chapter 8
FCC Part 97 Rules

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A selection of FCC Part 97 Amateur Radio Service Rules and Regulations pertaining to the VE Program

Subpart A--General Provisions

§97.1 Basis and purpose.

The rules and regulations in this Part are designed to provide an amateur radio service having a fundamental purpose as expressed in the following principles:
(a) Recognition and enhancement of the value of the amateur service to the public as a voluntary noncommercial communication service, particularly with respect to providing emergency communications.
(b) Continuation and extension of the amateur's proven ability to contribute to the advancement of the radio art.
(c) Encouragement and improvement of the amateur service through rules which provide for advancing skills in both the communications and technical phases of the art.
(d) Expansion of the existing reservoir within the amateur radio service of trained operators, technicians, and electronics experts.
(e) Continuation and extension of the amateur's unique ability to enhance international goodwill.

§97.5 Station license grant required.

 (a) The station apparatus must be under the physical control of a person named in an amateur station license grant on the ULS consolidated license database or a person authorized for alien reciprocal operation by §97.107 of this part, before the station may transmit on any amateur service frequency from any place that is:
   (1) Within 50 km of the Earth's surface and at a place where the amateur service is regulated by the FCC;
   (2) Within 50 km of the Earth's surface and aboard any vessel or craft that is documented or registered in the United States; or
   (3) More than 50 km above the Earth's surface aboard any craft that is documented or registered in the United States.
(b) The types of station license grants are:
   (1) An operator/primary station license grant. One, but only one, operator/primary station license grant may be held by any one person. The primary station license is granted together with the amateur operator license. Except for a representative of a foreign government, any person who qualifies by examination is eligible to apply for an operator/primary station license grant.
   (2) A club station license grant. A club station license grant may be held only by the person who is the license trustee designated by an officer of the club. The trustee must be a person who holds an Amateur Extra, Advanced, General, or Technician operator license grant. The club must be composed of at least four persons and must have a name, a document of organization, management, and a primary purpose devoted to amateur service activities consistent with this part.
   (3) A military recreation station license grant. A military recreation station license grant may be held only by the person who is the license custodian designated by the official in charge of the United States military recreational premises where the station is situated. The person must not be a representative of a foreign government. The person need not hold an amateur operator license grant.
   (4) A RACES station license grant. A RACES station license grant may be held only by the person who is the license custodian designated by the official responsible for the governmental agency served by that civil defense organization. The custodian must be the civil defense official responsible for coordination of all civil defense activities in the area concerned. The custodian must not be a representative of a foreign government. The custodian need not hold an amateur operator license grant.

(c) The person named in the station license grant or who is authorized for alien reciprocal operation by §97.107 of this Part may use, in accordance with the applicable rules of this Part, the transmitting apparatus under the physical control of the person at places where the amateur service is regulated by the FCC.

(d) A CEPT radio-amateur license is issued to the person by the country of which the person is a citizen. The person must not:

    (1) Be a resident alien or citizen of the United States, regardless of any other citizenship also held;

    (2) Hold an FCC-issued amateur operator license nor reciprocal permit for alien amateur licensee;

    (3) Be a prior amateur service licensee whose FCC-issued license was revoked, suspended for less than the balance of the license term and the suspension is still in effect, suspended for the balance of the license term and relicensing has not taken place, or surrendered for cancellation following notice of revocation, suspension or monetary forfeiture proceedings; or

    (4) Be the subject of a cease and desist order that relates to amateur service operation, and which is still in effect.

(e) An IARP is issued to the person by the country of which the person is a citizen. The person must not:

    (1) Be a resident alien or citizen of the United States, regardless of any other citizenship also held;

    (2) Hold an FCC-issued amateur operator license nor reciprocal permit for alien amateur licensee;

    (3) Be a prior amateur service licensee whose FCC-issued license was revoked, suspended for less than the balance of the license term and the suspension is still in effect, suspended for the balance of the license term and relicensing has not taken place, or surrendered for cancellation following notice of revocation, suspension or monetary forfeiture proceedings; or

    (4) Be the subject of a cease and desist order that relates to amateur service operation, and which is still in effect.

§97.9 Operator license grant.

(a) The classes of amateur operator license grants are: Novice, Technician, Technician Plus (until such licenses expire, a Technical Class license granted before February 14, 1991, is considered a Technician Plus Class license), General, Advanced, and Amateur Extra. The person named in the operator license grant is authorized to be the control operator of an amateur station with the privileges authorized to the operator class specified on the license grant.

(b) The person named in an operator license grant of Novice, Technician, Technician Plus, General or Advanced Class, who has properly submitted to the administering VEs, a FCC Form 605 document requesting examination for an operator license grant of a higher class, and who holds a CSCE indicating that the person has completed the necessary examinations within the previous 365 days, is authorized to exercise the rights and privileges of the higher operator class until a final disposition of the application or until 365 days following the passing of the examination, whichever comes first.

§97.17 Application for new license grant.

(a) Any qualified person is eligible to apply for a new operator/primary station, club station or military recreation station license grant. No new license grant will be issued for a Novice, Technician Plus, or Advanced Class operator/primary station or a RACES station.

(b) Each application for a new amateur service license grant must be filed with the FCC as follows:

    (1) Each candidate for an amateur radio operator license which requires the applicant to pass one or more examination elements must present the administering VEs with all information required by the rules prior to the examination. The VEs may collect all necessary information in any manner of their choosing, including creating their own forms.

    (2) For a new club or military recreation station license grant, each applicant must present all information required by the rules to an amateur radio organization having tax-exempt status under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 that provides voluntary, uncompensated and unreimbursed services in providing club and military recreation station call signs ("Club Station Call Sign Administrator") who must submit the information to the FCC in an electronic batch file. The Club Station Call Sign Administrator may collect the information required by these rules in any manner of their choosing, including creating their own forms. The Club Station Call Sign Administrator must retain the applicants' information for at least 15 months and make it available to the FCC upon request. The FCC will issue public announcements listing the qualified organizations that have completed a pilot autogrant batch filing project and are authorized to serve as a Club Station Call Sign Administrator.

(c) No person shall obtain or attempt to obtain, or assist another person to obtain or attempt to obtain, an amateur service license grant by fraudulent means.

(d) One unique call sign will be shown on the license grant of each new primary, club and military recreation station. The call sign will be selected by the sequential call sign system.

§97.19 Application for a vanity call sign.

(a) The person named in an operator/primary station license grant or in a club station license grant is eligible to make application for modification of the license grant, or the renewal thereof, to show a call sign selected by the vanity call sign system. RACES and military recreation stations are not eligible for a vanity call sign.

(b) Each application for a modification of an operator/primary or club station license grant, or the renewal thereof, to show a call sign selected by the vanity call sign system must be filed in accordance with §1.913 of this chapter.

(c) Unassigned call signs are available to the vanity call sign system with the following exceptions:

(1) A call sign shown on an expired license grant is not available to the vanity call sign system for 2 years following the expiration of the license.

(2) A call sign shown on a surrendered, revoked, set aside, canceled, or voided license grant is not available to the vanity call sign system for 2 years following the date such action is taken.

(3) Except for an applicant who is the spouse, child, grandchild, stepchild, parent, grandparent, step-parent, brother, sister, stepbrother, stepsister, aunt, uncle, niece, nephew, or in-law, and except for an applicant who is a club station license trustee acting with a written statement of consent signed by either the licensee ante mortem but who is now deceased or by at least one relative, as listed above, of the person now deceased, the call sign shown on the license of the person now deceased is not available to the vanity call sign system for 2 years following the person's death, or for 2 years following the expiration of the license grant, whichever is sooner.

(d) The vanity call sign requested by an applicant must be selected from the group of call signs corresponding to the same or lower class of operator license held by the applicant as designated in the sequential call sign system.

(1) The applicant must request that the call sign shown on the license grant be vacated and provide a list of up to 25 call signs in order of preference. In the event that the Commission receives more than one application requesting a vanity call sign from an applicant on the same receipt day, the Commission will process only the first such application entered into the Universal Licensing System. Subsequent vanity call sign applications from that applicant with the same receipt date will not be accepted.

(2) The first assignable call sign from the applicant's list will be shown on the license grant. When none of those call signs are assignable, the call sign vacated by the applicant will be shown on the license grant.

(3) Vanity call signs will be selected from those call signs assignable at the time the application is processed by the FCC.

(4) A call sign designated under the sequential call sign system for Alaska, Hawaii, Caribbean Insular Areas, and Pacific Insular areas will be assigned only to a primary or club station whose licensee's mailing address is in the corresponding state, commonwealth, or island. This limitation does not apply to an applicant for the call sign as the spouse, child, grandchild, stepchild, parent, grandparent, stepparent, brother, sister, stepbrother, stepsister, aunt, uncle, niece, nephew, or in-law, of the former holder now deceased.

§97.21 Application for a modified or renewed license grant.

(a) A person holding a valid amateur station license grant:

(1) Must apply to the FCC for a modification of the license grant as necessary to show the correct mailing address, licensee name, club name, license trustee name or license custodian name in accordance with §1.913 of this chapter. For a club, military recreation or RACES station license grant, it must be presented in document form to a Club Station Call Sign Administrator who must submit the information thereon to the FCC in an electronic batch file. The Club Station Call Sign Administrator must retain the collected information for at least 15 months and make it available to the FCC upon request.

(2) May apply to the FCC for a modification of the operator/primary station license grant to show a higher operator class. Applicants must present the administering VEs with all information required by the rules prior to the examination. The VEs may collect all necessary information in any manner of their choosing, including creating their own forms.

(3) May apply to the FCC for renewal of the license grant for another term in accordance with §1.913 of this chapter. Application for renewal of a Technician Plus class operator/primary station license will be processed as an application for renewal of a Technician operator/primary station license.

(i) For a station license grant showing a call sign obtained through the vanity call sign system, the application must be filed in accordance with §97.19 of this Part in order to have the vanity call sign reassigned to the station.

(ii) For a primary station license grant showing a call sign obtained through the sequential call sign system, and for a primary station license grant showing a call sign obtained through the vanity call sign system but whose grantee does not want to have the vanity call sign reassigned to the station, the application must be filed with the FCC in accordance with §1.913 of this chapter. When the application has been received by the FCC on or before the license expiration date, the license operating authority is continued until the final disposition of the application.

(iii) For a club station or military recreation station license grant showing a call sign obtained through the sequential call sign system, and for a club or military recreation station license grant showing a call sign obtained through the vanity call sign system but whose grantee does not want to have the vanity call sign reassigned to the station, the application must be presented in document form to a Club Station Call Sign Administrator who must submit the information thereon to the FCC in an electronic batch file. The Club Station Call Sign Administrator must retain the collected information for at least 15 months and make it available to the FCC upon request. RACES station license grants will not be renewed.

(b) A person whose amateur station license grant has expired may apply to the FCC for renewal of the license grant for another term during a 2 year filing grace period. The application must be received at the address specified above prior to the end of the grace period. Unless and until the license grant is renewed, no privileges in this Part are conferred.

(c) A call sign obtained under the sequential or vanity call sign system will be reassigned to the station upon renewal or modification of a station license.

§97.23 Mailing address.

Each license grant must show the grantee's correct name and mailing address. The mailing address must be in an area where the amateur service is regulated by the FCC and where the grantee can receive mail delivery by the United States Postal Service. Revocation of the station license or suspension of the operator license may result when correspondence from the FCC is returned as undeliverable because the grantee failed to provide the correct mailing address.

§97.25 License term.

An amateur service license is normally granted for a 10-year term.

§97.27 FCC modification of station license grant.

(a) The FCC may modify a station license grant, either for a limited time or for the duration of the term thereof, if it determines:

(1) That such action will promote the public interest, convenience, and necessity; or

(2) That such action will promote fuller compliance with the provisions of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended, or of any treaty ratified by the United States.

(b) When the FCC makes such a determination, it will issue an order of modification. The order will not become final until the licensee is notified in writing of the proposed action and the grounds and reasons therefore. The licensee will be given reasonable opportunity of no less than 30 days to protest the modification; except that, where safety of life or property is involved, a shorter period of notice may be provided. Any protest by a licensee of an FCC order of modification will be handled in accordance with the provisions of 47 U.S.C. §316.

§97.29 Replacement license grant document.

Each grantee whose amateur station license grant document is lost, mutilated or destroyed may apply to the FCC for a replacement in accordance with §1.913 of this chapter.

Subpart F--Qualifying Examinations Systems

§97.501 Qualifying for an amateur operator license.

Each applicant must pass an examination for a new amateur operator license grant and for each change in operator class. Each applicant for the class of operator license grant specified below must pass, or otherwise receive examination credit for, the following examination elements:

(a) Amateur Extra Class operator: Elements 2, 3, and 4;

(b) General Class operator: Elements 2 and 3;

(c) Technician Class operator: Element 2.

§97.503 Element standards.

A written examination must be such as to prove that the examinee possesses the operational and technical qualifications required to perform properly the duties of an amateur service licensee. Each written examination must be comprised of a question set as follows:

(a) Element 2: 35 questions concerning the privileges of a Technician Class operator license. The minimum passing score is 26 questions answered correctly.

(b) Element 3: 35 questions concerning the privileges of a General Class operator license. The minimum passing score is 26 questions answered correctly.
(c) Element 4: 50 questions concerning the privileges of an Amateur Extra Class operator license. The minimum passing score is 37 questions answered correctly.

§97.505 Element credit.

(a) The administering VEs must give credit as specified below to an examinee holding any of the following license grants:

Operator Class	Unexpired or within the renewal grace period	Expired and beyond the renewal grace period
(1) Amateur Extra	Not applicable	Elements 3 and 4 credit.
(2) Advanced; or General; or Technician granted before March 21, 1987	Elements 2 and 3	Element 3 credit.
(3) Technician Plus; or Technician granted on or after March 21, 1987	Element 2	No credit.

(b) The administering VEs must give credit to an examinee holding a CSCE for each element the CSCE indicates the examinee passed within the previous 365 days.

§97.507 Preparing an examination.

(a) Each written question set administered to an examinee must be prepared by a VE holding an Amateur Extra Class operator license. A written question set may also be prepared for the following elements by a VE holding an operator license of the class indicated:
      (1) Element 3: Advanced Class operator.
      (2) Element 2: Advanced or General.
(b) Each question set administered to an examinee must utilize questions taken from the applicable question pool.
(c) Each written question set administered to an examinee for an amateur operator license must be prepared, or obtained from a supplier, by the administering VEs according to instructions from the coordinating VEC.

§97.509 Administering VE requirements.

(a) Each examination for an amateur operator license must be administered by a team of at least 3 VEs at an examination session coordinated by a VEC. The number of examinees at the session may be limited.
(b) Each administering VE must:
      (1) Be accredited by the coordinating VEC;
      (2) Be at least 18 years of age;
      (3) Be a person who holds an amateur operator license of the class specified below:
            (i) Amateur Extra, Advanced or General Class in order to administer a Technician Class operator license examination;
            (ii) Amateur Extra or Advanced Class in order to administer a General Class operator license examination;
            (iii) Amateur Extra Class in order to administer an Amateur Extra Class operator license examination.
      (4) Not be a person whose grant of an amateur station license or amateur operator license has ever been revoked or suspended.
(c) Each administering VE must be present and observing the examinee throughout the entire examination. The administering VEs are responsible for the proper conduct and necessary supervision of each examination. The administering VEs must immediately terminate the examination upon failure of the examinee to comply with their instructions.
(d) No VE may administer an examination to his or her spouse, children, grandchildren, stepchildren, parents, grandparents, stepparents, brothers, sisters, stepbrothers, stepsisters, aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, and in-laws.
(e) No VE may administer or certify any examination by fraudulent means or for monetary or other consideration including reimbursement in any amount in excess of that permitted. Violation of this provision may result in the revocation of the grant of the VE's amateur station license and the suspension of the grant of the VE's amateur operator license.
(f) No examination that has been compromised shall be administered to any examinee. The same question set may not be re-administered to the same examinee.
(g) Upon completion of each examination element, the administering VEs must immediately grade the examinee's answers. The administering VEs are responsible for determining the correctness of the examinee's answers.
(h) When the examinee is credited for all examination elements required for the operator license sought, 3 VEs must certify that the examinee is qualified for the license grant and that the VEs have complied with these administering VE requirements.

The certifying VEs are jointly and individually accountable for the proper administration of each examination element reported. The certifying VEs may delegate to other qualified VEs their authority, but not their accountability, to administer individual elements of an examination.

(i) When the examinee does not score a passing grade on an examination element, the administering VEs must return the application document to the examinee and inform the examinee of the grade.

(j) The administering VEs must accommodate an examinee whose physical disabilities require a special examination procedure. The administering VEs may require a physician's certification indicating the nature of the disability before determining which, if any, special procedures must be used.

(k) The administering VEs must issue a CSCE to an examinee who scores a passing grade on an examination element.

(l) After the administration of a successful examination for an amateur operator license, the administering VEs must submit the application document to the coordinating VEC according to the coordinating VEC's instructions.

§97.511 Examinee conduct.

Each examinee must comply with the instructions given by the administering VEs.

§97.513 VE session manager requirements.

(a) A VE session manager may be selected by the VE team for each examination session. The VE session manager must be accredited as a VE by the same VEC that coordinates the examination session. The VE session manager may serve concurrently as an administering VE.

(b) The VE session manager may carry on liaison between the VE team and the coordinating VEC.

(c) The VE session manager may organize activities at an examination session.

§97.515 [Reserved]

§97.517 [Reserved]

§97.519 Coordinating examination sessions.

(a) A VEC must coordinate the efforts of VEs in preparing and administering examinations.

(b) At the completion of each examination session, the coordinating VEC must collect applicant information and test results from the administering VEs. The coordinating VEC must:

> (1) Screen collected information;
> (2) Resolve all discrepancies and verify that the VE's certifications are properly completed; and
> (3) For qualified examinees, forward electronically all required data to the FCC. All data forwarded must be retained for at least 15 months and must be made available to the FCC upon request.

(c) Each VEC must make any examination records available to the FCC, upon request.

(d) The FCC may:

> (1) Administer any examination element itself;
> (2) Re-administer any examination element previously administered by VEs, either itself or under the supervision of a VEC or VEs designated by the FCC; or
> (3) Cancel the operator/primary station license of any licensee who fails to appear for re-administration of an examination when directed by the FCC, or who does not successfully complete any required element that is re-administered. In an instance of such cancellation, the person will be granted an operator/primary station license consistent with completed examination elements that have not been invalidated by not appearing for, or by failing, the examination upon re-administration.

§97.521 VEC qualifications.

No organization may serve as a VEC unless it has entered into a written agreement with the FCC. The VEC must abide by the terms of the agreement. In order to be eligible to be a VEC, the entity must:

(a) Be an organization that exists for the purpose of furthering the amateur service;

(b) Be capable of serving as a VEC in at least the VEC region (see Appendix 2) proposed;

(c) Agree to coordinate examinations for any class of amateur operator license;

(d) Agree to assure that, for any examination, every examinee qualified under these rules is registered without regard to race, sex, religion, national origin or membership (or lack thereof) in any amateur service organization.

§97.523 Question pools.

All VECs must cooperate in maintaining one question pool for each written examination element. Each question pool must contain at least 10 times the number of questions required for a single examination. Each question pool must be published and made available to the public prior to its use for making a question set. Each question on each VEC question pool must be prepared by a VE holding the required FCC-issued operator license. See §97.507(a) of this Part.

§97.525 Accrediting VEs.

(a) No VEC may accredit a person as a VE if:
>(1) The person does not meet minimum VE statutory qualifications or minimum qualifications as prescribed by this Part;
>(2) The FCC does not accept the voluntary and uncompensated services of the person;
>(3) The VEC determines that the person is not competent to perform the VE functions; or
>(4) The VEC determines that questions of the person's integrity or honesty could compromise the examinations.

(b) Each VEC must seek a broad representation of amateur operators to be VEs. No VEC may discriminate in accrediting VEs on the basis of race, sex, religion or national origin; nor on the basis of membership (or lack thereof) in an amateur service organization; nor on the basis of the person accepting or declining to accept reimbursement.

§97.527 Reimbursement for expenses.

VEs and VECs may be reimbursed by examinees for out-of-pocket expenses incurred in preparing, processing, administering, or coordinating an examination for an amateur operator license.

Appendix 1-- Places Where the Amateur Service is Regulated by the FCC

In ITU Region 2, the amateur service is regulated by the FCC within the territorial limits of the 50 United States, District of Columbia, Caribbean Insular areas [Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, United States Virgin Islands (50 islets and cays) and Navassa Island], and Johnston Island (Islets East, Johnston, North and Sand) and Midway Island (Islets Eastern and Sand) in the Pacific Insular areas.

In ITU Region 3, the amateur service is regulated by the FCC within the Pacific Insular territorial limits of American Samoa (seven islands), Baker Island, Commonwealth of Northern Mariannas Islands, Guam Island, Howland Island, Jarvis Island, Kingman Reef, Kure Island, Palmyra Island (more than 50 islets) and Wake Island (Islets Peale, Wake and Wilkes).

Appendix 2--VEC Regions

1. Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont.
2. New Jersey and New York.
3. Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania.
4. Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia.
5. Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas.
6. California.
7. Arizona, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.
8. Michigan, Ohio, and West Virginia.
9. Illinois, Indiana, and Wisconsin.
10. Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota.
11. Alaska.
12. Caribbean Insular areas.
13. Hawaii and Pacific Insular areas.

SECTION FOUR: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Chapter 9
Samples of ARRL/VEC Forms

PDF files of all exam session documents are available to print or download except for The CSCE (Certificate of Successful Completion of Examination) form.

Visit the ARRL VE Resources webpage for current forms and additional information and links for conducting exam sessions, including the VE Manual supplemental information. Please contact the ARRL VEC for a supply of CSCEs.

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