

How to Get a New Amateur Radio License

Getting a new amateur radio license involves 4 basic steps:

1. Create an account in the FCC Common Registration System (CORES).
2. Log into CORES and obtain an FCC Registration Number (FRN).
3. Attend an examination session and pass one or more multiple-choice written tests.
4. Pay a \$35 application to the FCC.

Anyone who is not a representative of a foreign government may apply for a US amateur radio license.

Currently, the FCC grants three classes of amateur radio licenses:

- Technician – Entry-level license that primarily grants privileges on VHF and UHF frequencies.
- General – Mid-level license which adds extensive privileges on MF and HF frequencies.
- Amateur Extra – Highest-level license which grants all amateur radio privileges.

Taking the Examination

To earn a license, you must pass the one or more examinations according to the following schedule:

License Class	Element 2 (35-Question Test)	Element 3 (35-Question Test)	Element 4 (50-Question Test)
Technician	X		
General	X	X	
Amateur Extra	X	X	X

Exams can be taken in any order during the same exam session or over several exam sessions.

If you can provide proof of previously holding an amateur radio license that has been expired more than 2 years, you can get credit for certain elements according to the following schedule:

Previous License Class	Element 3	Element 4
Technician Granted Before March 19, 1987	X	
General	X	
Advanced	X	
Amateur Extra	X	X

You must pass Element 2 in order to apply any of the above credits.

When you qualify for a new license, you will receive a *Certificate of Successful Completion of Examination* (CSCE). A CSCE is valid for 365 days from the date it was issued. The CSCE will indicate:

- The location and date of the exam session.
- The exam element(s) passed, if applicable.
- The class of license for which the applicant is qualified.
- The name, mailing address, and signature of the applicant.
- The signature and call sign of the three VEs certifying the results indicated on the CSCE.

After the test session, the VE Team will forward the session data and paperwork to the VEC for processing. The amount of time required for the VEC to process the session and submit the results to the FCC will vary. For the Laurel VEC, sessions are normally submitted to the FCC the next business day following the test session.

After the Test Session

When your application is received by the FCC and assigned a file number, the FCC will notify you by e-mail. The e-mail will include the file number and a link that will allow you to begin the process of paying the application fee. See the [Application Fees Info](#) page for instructions on how to pay your application fee. You will also receive an e-mail from the Laurel VEC with your file number and instructions for paying the fee.

After Your License is Granted

When your application is granted, the FCC will notify you by e-mail. The e-mail will include a link that will allow you to view, download, and print an official copy of your license.

Testing Fees

Depending on which VEC is coordinating a team's exam sessions, a VE team may charge a fee to take an exam or to provide other licensing services. The exam fees vary between the VECs and are typically \$10-\$15. **Laurel VEC VE teams do not charge a fee for any of the licensing services they provide.**

Basic Qualification Question

If you have ever been convicted of a felony in any federal, state, or local court, you will also have to provide the FCC with an explanation of the conviction before they will act on your application. The FCC must receive your explanation within 14 days after the file number is assigned or your application will be dismissed. See the [Felony Question Info](#) page for further information on providing your explanation.

When your application is received by the FCC and assigned a file number, the Laurel VEC will send you an e-mail with your file number and instructions on how to send your explanation to the FCC.