

## Instructions for Amateur License Examinees - SSCA /LARC VEC

Whangarei, New Zealand - 2018

An amateur radio (“ham”) license is issued to an individual and not a vessel. An amateur operating from a vessel is called a “maritime mobile” amateur operator. The bands used by the amateur radio service are different than those used for marine communications so a marine radio license does not apply.

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) of the USA does not conduct amateur (ham) license tests directly but use “Volunteer Examiners” (VE’s). VE’s are managed by volunteer organizations called Volunteer Examiner Coordinators (VEC’s). The VEC group is the liaison to the US Federal Communications Commission (FCC), who actually issues the license.

The US is a member of the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) of the UN, so a US amateur radio license is recognized by the 193 ITU member states around the world. An individual does not have to be a US citizen to possess a US amateur license but cannot be a representative of a foreign government.

The Seven Seas Cruising Association has joined with the Laurel Amateur Radio Club VEC group to accredit "at large" volunteer examiners amongst the SSCA membership so testing can take place during SSCA events.

VEs for this session are: Patricia Dallas (K6AHS), Scott Gillen (N0HOK), and Steve Watford (AB4TN) (s/v Northstar). Questions about the testing or licensing should be directed to Patricia at [chameleonhouse@xtra.co.nz](mailto:chameleonhouse@xtra.co.nz) and Sherry McCampbell at [sherry@svsoggypaws.com](mailto:sherry@svsoggypaws.com)

Specifics:

In the US, amateur licenses are now issued at three levels or classes: Technician, General and Extra. Exams for each class are called “elements” and must be taken and passed in sequence. There is no longer any Morse code proficiency required.

All testing is multiple choice with questions from a publicly-available question pool. The tests are computer-generated. Questions are randomly selected, and the sequence of multiple-choice answers varies between each test version.

License Class and Proficiency Requirement:

Technician	Element 2 - 35 questions
General	Element 3 - 35 questions
Extra	Element 4 – 50 questions

A passing score is 70% or better (26 questions for the Tech and General, and 37 questions for the Extra)

In order to access world-wide cruiser support nets and free amateur radio email (Winlink), an individual aboard a yacht needs to pass two written exams (Elements 2 & 3) in order to receive a General Class license.

These two tests can be taken on the same day, and often are. Material is similar, but the question pool is different for each element.

## Studying for the Exams

The American Radio Relay League (ARRL), another VEC, publishes books of theory and exam pool questions. One book, the [Ham Radio License Manual](#), is available on Amazon.com as both a paper book and a downloadable e-book. The ARRL's exam practice page is here:

<http://www.arrl.org/exam-practice>

Another Ham (KB6NU) has published his entire One-Day Technician Course on YouTube. This would be an excellent place to start if you prefer video over book-reading.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCvMiYkXm3RDjj9UVvmE-HdA>

Once you've watched the videos, you may be able to get by with free versions of material offered on other sites, including these:

<http://hamstudy.org> is a highly-recommended site favored by recent examinees, if you have good internet access.

<http://www.kb6nu.com/study-guides/> is a site offering free downloadable PDF files (or very low cost Kindle format files)

If these two don't fit your needs, here are a few other links:

<http://www.qrz.com/hamtest/>

<http://aa9pw.com>

<http://www.eham.net/exams/>

<http://hamexam.org/>

<http://www.smrs.us/classes/he-tech-study.pdf>

<http://www.kb0mga.net/exams/>

## What to Bring to the Session

- Government-issued Photo ID (a passport or driver's license works well)
- FCC Registration Number (FRN) - To avoid having to use Social Security Numbers to uniquely identify licensees, the US FCC requires everyone in their system to register for a FREE FCC Registration Number. This then uniquely identifies you in their system, and is how you look up and manage your US Marine Radio and Ham License application. Please register for an FRN PRIOR to arriving at the exam site, here: <https://apps.fcc.gov/coresWeb/publicHome.do>
- #2 pencil with eraser\*
- Simple calculator\* (no telephones, smart or otherwise)

\*we may have a limited number of these available