

Anchorage Amateur Radio Club VEC Program

Exam sessions, and where to find books and study materials for the theory exam

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What will you need to bring to an exam session:

You need to bring:

1. A photo ID. An Alaska drivers license is probably best, but other forms of identification that have your photograph will often serve just as well. If you don't have a photo ID, perhaps because you are a young person who has not applied for a drivers license, or for any one of a number of reasons, alternate ID can be used. A student ID card, an Alaska hunting or fishing license, even a public library card that has your name will do. **For children accompanied by a parent, the parent can vouch for the child's ID.**

2. If you already have an unexpired amateur radio license, and are at the exam session to try for an upgrade to that license, please bring the original license AND a photocopy for our records. We must see the original license to give credit for the elements it represents. We will retain the photocopy for our records.

If your license has been expired for a period of more than 2 years and one day from its printed expiration date, it cannot be renewed. You must use the relicensing procedure to again become a licensed amateur radio operator. If, however, your license is still within the 2 years and one day "window" following expiration, you may simply renew that license and continue. You do not need to take any exams.

3. If you are at the exam session to become re-licensed after a long absence from amateur radio, please bring proof of having been previously licensed.

Acceptable forms of proof:

A. An original FCC issued amateur radio license showing your name, address, call sign, and license class

B. A copy of a page from an older amateur radio call book showing your name, address, call sign, and license class (see note, below)

C. A letter from the FCC verifying that you were previously licensed, showing your name, address, call sign, and license class

D. A letter from a VEC certifying that you had passed the exams for a license of a particular class, also showing your name and address

If you do not have one of the "proofs" listed above, we will try to assist you in finding acceptable proof. **Note : Success is not guaranteed.**

Note: Not all call book publications list the license class. In some cases we can determine this by the call sign, but this is not always true. In such cases, we may be unable to give credit for all claimed elements, but we may be able to give credit for some. Each case will be different, so please check with our VEC Chairman for more information.

Finally, note that all applicants for relicensing will need to take (and pass) the Technician exam before proceeding with any upgrades. Applicants will receive a new license, and a new call sign.

See the relicensing page for additional information. [click here](#) to go to the relicensing page.

4. You may bring a calculator to work numeric problems. You must be able to show the examiners that all of the calculator's memories have been cleared (erased) prior to using it during the exam. Slide rules are also acceptable as long as they do not have printed electronic formulas on them.

5. All reference books, study guides, etc., must be closed and must remain closed during the exam session.

We will have any necessary pens, pencils, scratch paper, blank forms, and other items that may be needed.

Studying for the exam

The Question pools:

The written "theory" questions found on all tests come from a common "question pool". **Only those questions that are found in the pool are permitted to be used on exams.** The question pools are publicly available, and you can access them directly on the web. (See link to NCVEC in the next paragraph). The questions are prepared and approved for use by a national committee made up of representatives from all the **VECs, or Volunteer Examiner Coordinators**, nationwide. **The Anchorage Amateur Radio Club is officially recognized by the FCC as a VEC.**

One place you can find the question pools is the National Conference of Volunteer Examiner Coordinators (NCVEC) web site. You can visit the NCVEC web site to find the question pools. [click here](#)

You will need to have "Acrobat Reader" on your system to view the graphics (wiring drawings and charts) that are part of some questions. If you do not already have this plug-in on your system, it is available for free via download. You can, of course, print the questions via your local printer for later use.

License Manuals:

Most people preparing to take the test for a new license, or to upgrade an existing license, prefer to use a "license manual". License manuals are typically arranged so that each book covers one of the "elements" that make up the complete series of exams. The most popular study materials are published by 2 sources. They are:

ARRL (American Radio Relay League): The ARRL offers several different publications. The ARRL book series are very well written, offering substantial amounts of additional information with each group of questions. This additional material is designed to help the student gain a more complete understanding of the "why" behind the questions. You can telephone them (toll free) at **1-888-277-5289** to order books, or you can go directly to the license manual section on their web site. [click here](#) for ARRL study guides. In addition to the license manuals, they also offer tapes (and CD's) to assist in learning and improving Morse code skills.

Gordon West Publications: Gordon West, WB6NOA, has earned substantial respect among the ham community for his clearly written and "to the point" study guides. The Gordon West series of books are preferred by some students because they have a sharper "focus" on the questions (and their answers), with less of the added fine detail found in the ARRL books. Descriptions of some of the Gordon West materials can be found at the W5YI group web site. [click here](#)

Another source for license manuals is Amazon.com. Look in their "books" section for amateur radio books / licensing manuals by ARRL and Gordon West publications: Here is a link to their web site: [click here](#)

Ham Radio classes:

Formal classes are offered from time to time. Typically, these classes meet 2 days per week, usually in the evening, and run for 4 to 6 weeks. Check with your local radio club for classes in your area. **When we are aware of an upcoming class, we will list it under "sources". below.**

No classes nearby? While many people feel comfortable with the structured learning environment of the classroom, it is definitely not a requirement that you attend classes to gain new or upgraded Amateur Radio license privileges. It is entirely possible to study alone or in a small group, using nothing but one or more of the license study guides offered by the various publishers, and successfully pass your exam, usually on the first try.

On-Line education: There are a few vendors that offer on-line and CD-ROM based instruction for all classes of amateur radio licenses. Here are some links that may be useful: (a listing here does not necessarily imply an endorsement of the vendor)

<http://www.hamtestonline.com>

<http://hamuniversity.com/>

On-Line Practice Exams:

There are a few web sites that offer on-line practice exams. One of the best is offered by a fellow in Wisconsin, amateur radio station AA9PW. He operates this free service as AA9PW.COM. Here is a link to his web site:

<http://aa9pw.com/>

On line practice exams use the same questions as the "real" exams. Each practice exam offers a random selection of questions, and scores each attempt as you proceed. The questions are drawn from the same master pool of questions. The exam you receive for your actual exam will use a sub-set of questions drawn at random from the master question pool. 35 questions for the Technician and General exams, or 50 questions for the Amateur Extra Class license. As soon as you can regularly score 80 percent or above on the practice exams, you are ready for the real thing. Look at the bottom of this page for exam session locations and times.

Sources of study materials:

Study materials are generally not available locally, and must be mail-ordered. Occasionally one of the local bookstores will have some publications, but they do not stock them with any reliability. **In any case, be absolutely certain that the study materials you are using are for the current question pool!** The question pools are updated every 4 years, and there are generally enough changes that using an obsolete pool (and obsolete study guides) will probably result in your failing the exam. If you have any question about which pool is in effect, you may visit the NCVEC web site at www.nevec.org to verify the effective dates of any pool.

A good source of study guides is Amazon.com [click here](#)

Another source is the W5YI group [click here](#)

Study materials can also be ordered directly from the ARRL [click here](#)

Classes:

Anchorage area: Depending on demand, from time to time Technician and or General classes are sometimes available. Such classes are usually held in the Spring or Fall. Also occasionally offered are accelerated "2-day" or "2 weekend" cram classes. These classes are intended for beginners (Technician class license applicants), but occasionally are held for higher license classes as well. The exact days of the class are not known at this time. Check the [AARC main web](#) site for class information and updates.

Fairbanks area: No classes are scheduled at this time

Kenai-Soldotna area: No classes are scheduled at this time

Palmer-Wasilla area: No classes are scheduled at this time

Juneau area: No classes are scheduled at this time

If you have other questions about Amateur Radio in general, or specific questions about the testing program, you may send an e-mail to us.

To send us an e-mail, [Click here](#)

Use the links below to learn more:

[List of Volunteer Examiners by name](#)

[List of Volunteer Examiners by location](#)

[When and where can I find a testing session?](#)

[What about the Remote Testing Program?](#)

[What do I need to bring to the exam session?](#)

[My license expired more than 2 years ago, what do I do now?](#)

[What happens after I pass my exam?](#)

[Learning the Morse Code - tools and techniques.](#)

[How can I become a Volunteer Examiner?](#)

[Volunteer Examiners Instruction Manual](#)

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