

Subpart F -- Qualifying Examination Systems

S 97.501 Qualifying for an amateur operator license.

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

- (a) Amateur Extra Class operator: Elements 1(C), 2, 3(A), 3(B), 4(A), and 4(B);
- (b) Advanced Class operator: Elements 1(B) or 1(C), 2, 3(A), 3(B), and 4(A);
- (c) General Class operator: Elements 1(B) or 1(C), 2, 3(A), and 3(B);
- (d) Technician Class operator: Elements 1(A) or 1(B) or 1(C), 2, and 3(A);
- (e) Novice Class operator: Elements 1(A) or 1(B) or 1(C), and 2.

S 97.503 Element standards.

(a) A telegraphy examination must be sufficient to prove that the examinee has the ability to send correctly by hand and to receive correctly by ear texts in the international Morse code at not less than the prescribed speed, using all the letters of the alphabet, numerals 0-9, period, comma, question mark, slant mark and prosigns ar, bt and sk.

- (1) Element 1(A): 5 words per minute;
- (2) Element 1(B): 13 words per minute;
- (3) Element 1(C): 20 words per minute.

(b) 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:

- (1) Element 2: 30 questions concerning the privileges of a Novice Class operator license. The minimum passing score is 22 questions answered correctly.
- (2) Element 3(A): 25 questions concerning the additional privileges of a Technician Class operator license. The minimum passing score is 19 questions answered correctly.

(3) Element 3(B): 25 questions concerning the additional privileges of a General Class operator license. The minimum passing score is 19 questions answered correctly.

(4) Element 4(A): 50 questions concerning the additional privileges of an Advanced Class operator license. The minimum passing score is 37 questions answered correctly.

(5) Element 4(B): 40 questions concerning the additional privileges of an Amateur Extra Class operator license. The minimum passing score is 30 questions answered correctly.

(c) The topics and number of questions required in each question set are listed below for the appropriate examination element:

| Topics | Element: | 2 | 3(A) | 3(B) | 4(A) | 4(B) |
|--------|----------|---|------|------|------|------|
|--------|----------|---|------|------|------|------|

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|--|--|--|----|---|---|-----|
| (1) FCC rules for the amateur radio services | | | 10 | 5 | 4 | 6 8 |
|--|--|--|----|---|---|-----|

| | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|--|
| (2) Amateur station operating procedures | 2 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 4 | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|--|

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|
| (3) Radio wave propagation characteristics of amateur service frequency bands | 1 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|

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|-----------------------------|---|--|--|---|---|-----|
| (4) Amateur radio practices | 4 | | | 4 | 5 | 4 4 |
|-----------------------------|---|--|--|---|---|-----|

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|---|---|-----|
| (5) Electrical principles as applied to amateur station equipment | 4 | | | 2 | 2 | 106 |
|---|---|--|--|---|---|-----|

| | | | | | | |
|--|---|--|---|---|---|---|
| (6) Amateur station equipment circuit components | 2 | | 2 | 1 | 6 | 4 |
|--|---|--|---|---|---|---|

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|--|---|--|--|---|---|-----|
| (7) Practical circuits employed in amateur station equipment | 2 | | | 1 | 1 | 104 |
|--|---|--|--|---|---|-----|

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|---|---|--|--|---|---|-----|
| (8) Signals and emissions transmitted by amateur stations | 2 | | | 2 | 2 | 6 4 |
|---|---|--|--|---|---|-----|

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|--|---|---|---|---|
| (9) Amateur station antennas and feed lines | 3 | | 3 | 4 | 5 | 4 |
|---|---|--|---|---|---|---|

S 97.505 Element credit.

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

(1) An unexpired (or within the grace period) FCC-issued amateur operator license: The least elements required for the license held. For a Technician Class operator license issued before March 21, 1987, credit must also be given for Element 3(B).

(2) A CSCE: Each element the CSCE indicates the examinee passed within the previous 365 days.

(3) A photocopy of a FCC Form 610 which was submitted to the FCC indicating the examinee qualified for a Novice Class operator license within the previous 365 days: Elements 1(A) and 2.

(4) An unexpired (or expired less than 5 years) FCC-issued commercial radiotelegraph operator license or permit: Element 1(C).

(b) No examination credit, except as herein provided, shall be allowed on the basis of holding or having held any other license.

S 97.508 Preparing an examination.

(a) Each telegraphy message and each written question set administered to an examinee must be prepared by a VE holding an FCC-issued Amateur Extra Class operator license. A telegraphy message or written question set, however, may also be prepared for the following elements by a VE holding an FCC-issued operator license of the Class indicated:

(1) Element 3(B): Advanced Class operator.

(2) Elements 1(A) and 3(A): Advanced or General Class operator.

(3) Element 2: Advanced, General or Technician Class operator.

(b) Each question set administered to an examinee must utilize questions taken from the applicable question pool.

(c) Each telegraphy message and each written question set administered to an examinee for a Technician, General, Advanced, or Amateur Extra Class operator license must be prepared, or obtained from a supplier, by the administering VEs according to instructions from the coordinating VEC.

(d) The preparation of each telegraphy message and each written question set administered to an examinee for a Novice Class operator license is the responsibility of the administering VEs. The telegraphy message and written question set may be obtained by the administering VEs from a supplier.

(e) A telegraphy examination must consist of a message sent in the international Morse code at no less than the prescribed speed for a minimum of 5 minutes. The message must contain each required telegraphy character at least once. No message known to the examinee may be administered in a telegraphy examination. Each 5 letters of the alphabet must be counted as 1 word. Each numeral, punctuation mark and prosign must be counted as 2 letters of the alphabet.

S 97.509 Administering an examination.

(a) Each examination for an amateur operator license must be administered at a location and a time specified by the administering VEs. Each administering VE must be present and observe 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.

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

(c) No examination that has been compromised shall be administered to any examinee. Neither the same telegraphy message nor the same question set may be readministered to the same examinee.

(d) Passing a telegraphy receiving examination is adequate proof of an examinee's ability to both send and receive telegraphy. The administering VEs, however, may also include a sending segment in a telegraphy examination.

(e) 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.

(f) When the examinee is credited for all examination elements required for the operator license sought, the administering VEs must certify on the examinee's application form that the applicant is qualified for the license and report the basis for the qualification.

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

(h) 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.

(i) The FCC may:

(a) Administer any examination element itself;

(2) Readminister any examination element previously administered by VEs, either itself or under the supervision of VEs designated by the FCC; or

(3) Cancel the operator and station licenses of any licensee who fails to appear for readministration of an examination when directed by the FCC, or who does not successfully complete any required element which is readministered. In an instance of such cancellation, the person will be issued operator and station licenses consistent with completed examination elements that have not been invalidated by not appearing for, or by failing, the examination upon readministration.

S 97.511 Technician, General, Advanced and Amateur Extra Class operator license examination.

(a) Each session where an examination for a Technician, General, Advanced or Amateur Extra Class operator license is administered must be coordinated by a VEC. Each administering VE must be accredited by the coordinating VEC.

(b) Each examination for a Technician Class operator license must be administered by 3 administering VEs, each of whom must hold an FCC-issued Amateur Extra or Advanced Class operator license.

(c) Each examination for a General, Advanced or Amateur Extra Class operator license must be administered by 3 administering VEs, each of whom must hold an FCC-issued Amateur Extra Class operator license.

(d) The administering VEs must make a public announcement before administering an examination for Technician, General, Advanced or Amateur Extra Class operator license. The number of candidates at any examination may be limited.

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

(f) Within 10 days of the administration of a successful examination for the Technician, General, Advanced or Amateur Extra Class operator license, the administering VEs must submit the application to the coordinating VEC.

S 97.513 Novice Class operator license examination.

(a) Each examination for a Novice Class operator license must be administered by 2 VEs. The VEs do not have to be accredited by a VEC. Each administering VE must hold a current FCC-issued Amateur Extra, Advanced or General Class operator license.

(b) Within 10 days of the administration of a successful examination for a Novice Class operator license, the administering VEs must submit the application to: FCC, P.O. Box 1020, Gettysburg, PA 17326.

S 97.515 Volunteer examiner requirements.

(a) Each administering VE must be at least 18 years of age.

(b) Any person who owns a significant interest in, or is an employee of, any company or other entity that is engaged in the manufacture or distribution of equipment used in connection with amateur station transmissions, or in the preparation or distribution of any publication used in preparation for obtaining amateur licenses, is ineligible to be an administering VE. An employee who does not normally communicate with that part of an entity engaged in the manufacture or distribution of such equipment, or in the preparation or distribution of any publication used in preparation for obtaining amateur operator licenses, is eligible to be an administering VE.

(c) No person may be a VE if that person's amateur station license or amateur operator license has ever been revoked or suspended.

(d) No VE may administer an examination to that VE's spouse, children, grandchildren, stepchildren, parents, grandparents, stepparents, brothers, sisters, stepbrothers, stepsisters, aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, and in-laws.

S 97.517 Volunteer examiner conduct.

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 VE's amateur station license and the suspension of the VE's amateur operator license.

S 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 coordinated, the coordinating VEC must collect the applications and test results from the administering VEs. The coordinating VEC must screen and forward all applications for qualified examinees within 10 days of their receipt from the administering VEs to: FCC, P.O. Box 1020, Gettysburg, PA 17326.

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

S 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 Technician, General, Advanced, and Amateur Extra Class operator licenses;

(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;

(e) Not be engaged in the manufacture or distribution of equipment used in connection with amateur station transmissions, or in the preparation or distribution of any publication used in preparation for obtaining amateur licenses, unless a persuasive showing is made to the FCC that preventive measures have been taken to preclude any possible conflict of interest.

S 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 S97.507(a) of this Part.

S 97.525 Accrediting VEs.

(a) No VEC may accredit a person as a VE if:

(a) 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.

S 97.527 Reimbursement for expenses.

(a) VEs and VECs may be reimbursed by examinees for out-of-pocket expenses incurred in preparing, processing, administering, or coordinating an examination for a Technician, general, Advanced, or Amateur Extra operator license.

(b) The maximum amount of reimbursement from any one examinee for any one examination at a particular session regardless of the number of examination elements taken must not exceed that announced by the FCC in a Public Notice. (The basis for the maximum fee is \$4.00 for 1984, adjusted annually each January 1 thereafter for changes in the Department of Labor Consumer Price Index.)

(c) No reimbursement may be accepted by any VE for preparing, processing, or administering an examination for a Novice operator license.

(d) Each VE and each VEC accepting reimbursement must maintain records of out-of-pocket expenses and reimbursements for each examination session. Written certifications must be filed with the FCC each year that all expenses for the period from January 1 to December 31 of the preceding year for which reimbursement was obtained were necessarily and prudently incurred.

(e) The expense and reimbursement records must be retained by each VE and each VEC for 3 years and be made available to the FCC upon request.

(f) Each VE must forward the certification by January 15 of each year to the coordinating VEC for the examinations for which reimbursement was received. Each VEC must forward all such certifications and its own certification to the FCC on or before January 31 of each year.

(g) Each VEC must disaccredit any VE failing to provide the certification. The VEC must advise the FCC on January 31 of each year of any VE that it has disaccredited for this reason.

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, 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.