



The Feedline

FCC to Drop Morse Testing for All Amateur License Classes

ARRL ARLB030

In an historic move, the FCC has acted to drop the Morse code requirement for all Amateur Radio license classes. The Commission today adopted a Report and Order (R&O) in WT Docket 05-235. In a break from typical practice, the FCC only issued a public notice at or about the close of business and not the actual Report and Order, so some details -- including the effective date of the R&O -- remain uncertain. The public notice is located at, http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DOC-269012A1.pdf.

Also today, the FCC also adopted an Order on Reconsideration, in WT Docket 04-140 -- the "omnibus" proceeding -- agreeing to modify the Amateur Radio rules in response to an ARRL request to accommodate automatically controlled narrowband digital stations on 80 meters in the wake of rule changes that became effective today at 12:01 AM Eastern Time. The Commission said it will carve out the 3585 to 3600 kHz frequency segment for such operations. Prior to the long-awaited action on the Morse code issue, Amateur Radio applicants for General and higher class licenses had to pass a 5 WPM Morse code test to operate on HF. The Commission said today's R&O eliminates that requirement for General and Amateur Extra applicants.

"This change eliminates an unnecessary regulatory burden that may discourage current Amateur Radio operators from advancing their skills and participating more fully in the benefits of Amateur Radio," the FCC said. The ARRL had asked the FCC to retain the 5 WPM for Amateur Extra class applicants only. The FCC proposed earlier to drop the requirement across the board, however, and it held to that decision in today's R&O. Perhaps more important, the FCC's action in WT Docket 05-235 appears to put all Technician licensees on an equal footing: Once the R&O goes into effect, holders of Technician class licenses will have equivalent HF privileges, whether or not they've passed the 5 WPM Element 1 Morse examination. The FCC said the R&O in the Morse code docket would eliminate a disparity in the operating privileges for the Technician and Technician Plus class licensees. Technician licensees without Element 1 credit (ie, Tech Plus licensees)

currently have operating privileges on all amateur frequencies above 30 MHz.

"With today's elimination of the Morse code exam requirements, the FCC concluded that the disparity between the operating privileges of Technician Class licensees and Technician Plus Class licensees should not be retained," the FCC said in its public notice. "Therefore, the FCC, in today's action, afforded Technician and Technician Plus licensees identical operating privileges."

The wholesale elimination of a Morse code requirement for all license classes ends a long-standing national and international regulatory tradition in the requirements to gain access to Amateur Radio frequencies below 30 MHz. The first no-code license in the US was the Technician ticket, instituted in 1991. The question of whether or not to drop the Morse requirement altogether has been the subject of often-heated debate over the past several years, but the handwriting has been on the wall. A number of countries, including Canada, no longer require applicants for an Amateur Radio license to pass a Morse code test to gain HF operating privileges. The list has been increasing regularly.

The FCC said today's R&O in WT Docket 05-235 comports with revisions to the international Radio Regulations resulting from the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) World Radiocommunication Conference 2003 (WRC-03). At that gathering, delegates agreed to authorize each country to determine whether or not to require that applicants demonstrate Morse code proficiency in order to qualify for an Amateur Radio license with privileges on frequencies below 30 MHz.

Typically, the effective date of an FCC Order is 30 days after it appears in the Federal Register. That would mean the Morse requirement and the revised 80-meter segment for automatically controlled digital stations would likely not go into effect until late January 2007. (Editor's Note - As of 1/6/07 the R&O had not been published, so it will not be in effect until at least February 2007.)

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Nets

N. KY. Amateur Club Net: Tuesdays, 7:30 PM on the 147.255+

—WEB Site—

WWW.K4CO.ORG

Membership meetings on the 2nd Monday at 7:30 PM, Turkeyfoot Middle School, 3230 Turkeyfoot Rd
in Edgewood

Board meetings: TBA

The Feedline is published monthly by and for the members of the

Northern Kentucky Amateur Radio Club.

Permission is hereby granted to any non-profit amateur radio group to quote or
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Submissions to The Feedline must be received no later than the last Monday of the month prior to publica-
tion. Submissions should be of 500 words or less, and **in electronic format**. Submissions, address or call
changes and circulation problems may be sent to The Feedline Editor: Brian Clark W4SOU:
385 Green Acres Rd, Owenton, KY 40359 — Email: w4sou@bellsouth.net

November Meeting Minutes

Meeting called to order at 7:32 by President Tony White, AI4IP.

Pledge of allegiance led by Harold Blocher, W4YWH.

Treasurer report presented by Dann Fox, KI4AVO and approved by membership. The treasurer report indicates the club dues are at the proper level.

Discussion of proposed revision to NKARC By-laws. Motion to continue to govern club with current officers until revised By-Laws are instituted, not to exceed 90 days or the February 2007 club meeting approved.

Membership applications for 2007 to be e-mailed to current club members. All are encouraged to fill out membership form fully.

The membership indicated the desire to have a combined December NKARC club meeting and Christmas Dinner. It was decided to have the combined

meeting/Christmas dinner on December 11, 2006 at the Golden Coral on KY 17 and Orphanage Road.

Joe Stern, KI4QG requested a post card/personal phone call be placed to inform current and past members of the upcoming Christmas dinner and proposed club By-laws.

Members were encouraged to have any revisions to the proposed by-laws e-mailed to club president in time for discussions at December club meeting.

Discussions regarding NKARC club growth, field day, publicity in the Cincinnati Post and/or Enquirer and possible future programs were held as part of new business.

There being no old business the business meeting was adjourned.

Dann Fox, KI4AVO gave a presentation on military and mobile/portable radios. .

I'm glad to announce that Jim Brooks, KY4Z will be running for Kentucky Section Manager. Jim has been the Kentucky Section Public Information Coordinator for the past three years and has been a very big help to me in running the Kentucky Section. He is available 24/7 and can travel to club/association meeting and all hamfest. He would make an excellent replacement for me as Section Manager. Give him your time, consideration and vote at the appropriate time.

John Meyers, NB4K

December Net Report

DATE	NCS	CHECKINS	TIME	TRAFFIC
12/5/06	KI4QG	6	22	0
12/12/06	KB4VKS	9	27	1
12/19/06	KI4QG	7	20	0
12/26/06	KG4SBG	10	42	0
TOTALS		32	111	1

Weaver's Words

Jim Weaver, K8JE

Great Lakes Division Director, ARRL

MORSE CODE LICENSE REQUIREMENT ABOLISHED

By now, we all know FCC has ruled to abolish Morse code testing as part of any amateur license requirement. There isn't much further to be said. With this act, FCC has taken a few additional steps. You can read about these on the ARRL web site.

Please notice the only thing abolished by FCC was the testing requirements. The use of Morse is still allowed and no CW privileges were lost by this latest Report & Order. Similarly, ARRL will continue with code practice, bulletins and CW operating activities. CW is not dead and won't die for many years, if ever.

PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE ABOUT CODE TESTING

First, a question: What was the code test speed Hiram Percy Maxim (1AW, W1AW SK) passed to become a ham? Answer later.

As you may know, my prime operating mode on HF is CW. I enjoy it. It is a nice tool. For me, it helps keep my mind sharp.

Having said this, I do not feel that the FCC sold Amateur Radio down the river with its Report & Order to abolish code testing as a requirement for obtaining a ham license. As shocking as this may sound to some members . . . and nonmembers, as well . . . I've never thought Amateur Radio was all about Morse code testing or even Morse code.

Morse code has been -- and will remain for quite some time -- a valuable tool in radio, including Amateur Radio. And, contrary to an oft-stated popular belief, the US military has not totally abandoned Morse code. It is still found hiding in the nooks and crannies of military communication. It will continue to be a useful and well-used mode for many amateurs.

Some of you may view the demise of Morse code testing as a huge mistake and, moreover, a death blow to our great radio service. I respectfully disagree. As I mentioned in one of my newsletters a couple of years ago, discarding Morse testing is merely one more change in the history of Amateur Radio.

Just as automobile drivers no longer need to take driving exams in cars equipped with manual transmissions, incoming hams will simply not need to pass a code test. Drivers who have passed drivers license testing without touching the shift lever of a manual transmission are drivers just as much as

drivers who tested using manual transmissions. So, too, hams who have passed amateur license testing without touching a telegraph key or keyer are just as much radio amateurs as amateurs who passed 20 wpm exams.

Contrary to the belief that it is Morse code that gives us qualified operators, it is the operator who makes a qualified ham. An unethical, selfish individual who becomes a ham will be an unethical, selfish ham regardless of whether he or she has passed a code exam.

Don't believe me? Look around the bands and check over FCC enforcement records. You will see that some of the worst operators and most flagrant violators of FCC rules are Advanced and Extra Class licensees. Flip the coin to its other side and you'll see that some of the best and most law abiding operators are no code Techs . . . many who joined Amateur Radio after getting their introduction to radio through CB.



As one of my most outspoken critics, Jim Wade, K8SIW recently wrote on the QMN (CW traffic net) Reflector, "We will gain nothing by creating a 'cast system' based on telegraph proficiency or any other standard. Attempts on the part of operators to belittle, isolate, or otherwise single-out individuals as 'no-code' licensees or by otherwise implying they are not 'real hams' will likely be very counter-productive." Jim went on to observe, "Such an approach was taken by some misguided individuals after the implementation of the no-code Technician license and it did much harm to the Amateur Service and CW in particular."

Amen, Jim.

Just as some world cultures relegate "undesirable" people into inferior classes (e.g. the unclean); many amateurs mistakenly cast other hams into hamdom's supposed inferior classes. To some amateurs, the real sinners in the world are no code Techs and 5 wpm Generals, Advanced and Extra Class operators and such. How many times have you heard someone say, "I'm a 'real' Extra." I passed 20 wpm. Or, what about an old time Extra who might say he is a "truly real" Extra because he had to draw wiring diagrams for his written exam as well as pass 20 wpm. You've doubtlessly heard of hams who have been cast into other versions of Amateur Radio's leper colony.

Many decades ago, the argument was over spark gap. Today, many hams don't know what spark gap is and couldn't care less. Back then, to be a "real" amateur, one had to use spark gap, not the new-fangled continuous wave (CW) stuff.

Please See "Weaver", pg 6

WEAVER (from pg 4)

Then we "moved on" to the "you aren't a 'real' amateur if you 'talk' over the air" debate. Using code was "the only way to go." After this it became "you aren't a 'real' amateur if you use this noise-polluting, Donald Duck-sounding SSB garbage."

There have been changes in Amateur Radio ever since it first came into existence. Change is what Amateur Radio is about. There will continue to be change for as long as it exists. Technology and science move on, even though we would be more comfortable if we could stay where things don't change. Humans don't like change. We like to stay in the comfort zone of known territory. This is where we can stay warm and fuzzy.

My message is that we all are Amateur Radio operators. This applies whether our license is a no code Tech or a 20 wpm Extra. We all are hams. Moreover, we don't have such huge numbers of people in Amateur Radio and we haven't captivated the public imagination sufficiently with our miraculous deeds that we can afford to be snobbish over how long we each have been licensed . . . or over differences in the requirements that were in place when we took our exams . . . or over how we like to spend our time on the air. We can't afford to divide one ham from another.

We need to work together to develop a great new Amateur Radio that recaptures and surpasses its gloried past. We will never be able to accomplish this task if we don't respect each other and work together.

What do you think about all this? Let me know.

Answer to question: Hiram Percy Maxim, a principal founder of ARRL and Amateur Radio, never took a code test to obtain a ham license. In spite of this, he was a great user of Morse and a great ham.

COLLATERAL CHANGE

When the R&O that drops code test requirements becomes effective, current Tech licenses will receive the same CW privileges as current Novice licensees.

AUTOMATICALLY CONTROLLED NARROW BAND DATA

The new automatically controlled, narrow band digital segment on 80 M will be from 3585 kHz to 3600 kHz. This seg-

ment becomes official 30 days after the Order for Reconsideration is published in the Federal Register.

FCC apparently had its method for correcting its error of outlawing automatically controlled, narrow band data from 80 M worked out even before ARRL submitted its request to restore these operations at 3600-3635 kHz. This error had occurred in the R&O it published in mid-November and that became effective December 15. No sooner had ARRL requested restoration of this form of operating to 80 M, but the FCC published its version of a fix. The fix was simply announced much too quickly for it to have been stimulated by our petition.

FCC's fix, of course, was far from satisfactory in my opinion.

TENTATIVE TRAVEL SCHEDULE FOR K8JE

Jan. 9: 20/9 Meeting, Canfield, OH.
Jan. 13: SW OH Digital Symposium, Middletown, OH.
Jan. 18: A&F Meeting, Newington, CT.
Jan. 19-20: Board of Directors Meeting, Newington, CT.
Feb. 11: Mid-Winter Hamfest, Mansfield, OH.
Mar. 12: West Chester ARA, West Chester, OH.
Mar. 15: Bellbrook ARC Dinner Meeting, Waynesville, OH.
Mar. 18: Toledo Hamfest, Toledo.
Apr. 14: QCWA Meeting, Cleveland, OH.
Apr. 20: KY Colonel ARC, Bowling Green, KY.
Apr. 26: SUMCO ARES, Stow, OH.
May 18-20: Dayton Hamvention, Dayton, OH.
Jun. 17: Monroe Hamfest, Monroe, MI.
Jul. 20-21: Board of Directors Meeting, Newington, CT.
Aug. 18-19: ARRL National Convention, Huntsville, AL.
Sep. 8: GRAHamfest, Grand Rapids, MI.
Sep. 9: Findlay Hamfest, Findlay, OH.
Sep. 22: Great Lakes Division Convention, Cleveland, OH.
Sep. 23: Cleveland Hamfest, Cleveland, OH.

GB to 2006. It was a very eventful year. I wish you and your family all the best in 2007.

During this coming year, please think globally when thinking of Amateur Radio. I don't mean globally in terms of the world, but globally in terms of how we and our individual operating preferences fit together with so many thousands of other individuals and their operating preferences in a jigsaw puzzle. This puzzle, when put together in its total form, discloses the beautiful picture that is Amateur Radio.

The January NKARC meeting will be on Monday, January 8, at the Turkeyfoot Middle School.

The meeting starts at 7:30pm.

As always, VE testing will be at 6:00pm.

Return to:
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NKARC Feedline January 2007
Volume 2007 Issue 1