**The Amateur Radio (Ham) License**

Options for obtaining this license in NZ

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The simplest way is to study and get a NZ general license as only one exam is involved. This is only an option for NZ residents and citizens.

For non NZ residents and maritime visitors the other option is to obtain the USA license. Their system is a little different in that there are three different levels of license. Technical, general and extra. They must be taken in the order. The technical is more of an introductory license and does not allow use of the popular 20m, 14MHz, band so it is necessary to at least do both the technical and general license. These can be done on the same day.

**The NZ License**

Licensing in NZ is managed by NZART (NZ Association of Amateur Transmitters) for Spectrum Management. Everything you need is on their web site. <http://nzart.org.nz/>

Click on ‘exam’ along the banner near the top of the home page.

Click on ‘Exam Files”

This page has all the information you need including how to download all the questions in the pool, with or without answers. There is also a study book and a call sign application form.

If you have had a bit of physics – especially Ohms Law, you will be able to self study without any problem. You could also contact the local radio club – the details are in this web site. The study book is good. Keep testing yourself until you feel you are ready to be tested. Then find an examiner by going to <http://nzart.org.nz/exam/> and click on [Exam Supervisor and Venue List](http://nzart.org.nz/exam/supervisors/). This gives all the people who are able to test you. They are all over the country. They are all volunteers and there is no charge but I am sure they would appreciate a nice thank you.

Any questions, please contact Patricia Ghradio@xtra.co.nz

**The USA License**

The Seven Seas Cruising Association (ssca.org) has joined with the Laurel Amateur Radio Club to offer those in various parts of the world, including NZ, the opportunity to take the required tests. Three approved examiners are required. Contact Sherry McCampbell to find out where and when there is a testing available. sherry@svsoggypaws.com. The University of Auckland also run a test at least once a year for their non resident students and are happy to include anyone who wants to join them on test day, usually in April. Contact Peter Driesson at peterdri@gmail.com

Exams for each class are called “elements” and must be taken and passed in sequence – Technician, General, and Extra.  There is no longer any Morse code proficiency required.    All testing is multiple choice with questions from a publicly-available question pool.   A pass rate of 70% is needed to pass in each element. The first two exams have 35 questions, and the Extra Class exam is a bit tougher with 50 questions.

Again the question pool is available on line for each class of license.

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 practise page is at

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

However, 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 favoured by recent examinees, if you have good internet access. Every question has a follow-up explanation.

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

There are a couple of things to do before you front up such as getting an FRN number from the US Federal Communications Commission website. You don’t need to be a USA resident so don’t be put off by this. The FRN number uniquely identifies you to the FCC. (People who own US vessels may already have an FRN, as it is the same number used for getting a US Marine radio License). Bring this FRN number with you to the exam. Each individual testing for a ham license must have their own FRN.

In addition to the FRN, you should bring a photo ID (eg drivers license or passport), a pencil, and a simple non- programmable calculator. If you are upgrading from a lower level US license, also bring proof of holding that license. This can be obtained from the FCC website using your FRN.

It sounds complicated but is not and opens up additional communication opportunities, such as the use of winlink.