



For Immediate Release
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Ham Radio: A Crucial Link When Networks Fail FMARC to offer FCC License Testing at Hamfest 2025

Fort Myers, FL – December 17, 2024 - Ham radio, often referred to as amateur radio, is a popular hobby that connects people across communities and the globe by using specific radio frequencies. These frequencies, set aside and regulated by the **Federal Communications Commission (FCC)** in the United States, provide a way for individuals to communicate outside of the internet or cell networks. To ensure safe and responsible operation, the FCC requires hobbyists—known as "hams"—to be licensed. Passing a knowledge-based exam confirms that the operator understands proper radio practices, technical guidelines, and regulations.

WHO: The Fort Myers Amateur Radio Club Inc.

WHAT: FCC Amateur License Testing

WHERE: Hamfest 2025 at FSW College

WHEN: Saturday, January 11, 2025 at 9 AM

HOW: Register at <https://swflhamfest.com/index.php/license-testing/>

What makes ham radio unique is its versatility. It's not just about chatting over the airwaves—operators also explore technology, experiment with radio equipment, and serve their communities during emergencies. Whether you're testing long-distance communications, learning about electronics, or offering vital aid in a disaster, ham radio offers endless opportunities to engage and learn.

Getting Started in Ham Radio

Joining the ham radio community begins with obtaining an FCC license. Licenses come in three levels, each unlocking additional privileges and capabilities.

1. **Technician License (Beginner):**

This entry-level license is the gateway for most operators. The exam, made up of 35 multiple-choice questions, focuses on basic concepts such as radio safety, operation rules, and regulations. Resources like practice quizzes and study guides make preparation straightforward and accessible for newcomers.

2. **General License:**

This license allows hams to broaden their reach and communicate globally. It grants access to more parts of the radio spectrum and is a natural next step after obtaining a Technician license.

3. **Amateur Extra License:**

The most advanced level, this license gives operators full privileges across all amateur frequencies. The test is more challenging, delving deeper into technical aspects, but achieving this level opens up a world of possibilities in the hobby.

How Hard Is It to Get Licensed?

The exams are designed to be manageable for all skill levels. Most find the Technician license fairly simple with a bit of study, thanks to the availability of question pools and online tools. Moving up to General and Amateur Extra introduces more complexity, but with focused effort and preparation, they're also attainable.

Why Explore Ham Radio?

1. **Emergency Communication:**

In emergencies, when phone lines or internet services fail, ham radio becomes a lifeline. Licensed hams provide critical support to emergency responders, organize relief efforts, and connect isolated areas. This role is one of the hobby's most significant contributions to public service.

2. **Learning and Innovation:**

Ham radio enthusiasts often build equipment, explore digital communication methods, and learn the science behind radio waves. It's a hobby that fosters creativity and practical skills, making it an ideal choice for tinkerers and learners.

3. **Global Friendships:**

Ham operators regularly participate in conversations, contests, and special events with people worldwide. Some even connect with astronauts on the **International Space Station**, making ham radio a gateway to unique and exciting interactions.

4. **Community Connection:**

Clubs and gatherings unite ham radio enthusiasts, creating a supportive and collaborative environment. Events like **Field Day** provide opportunities to practice emergency skills while engaging with others in the community.

5. **Personal Achievement:**

Earning a license is a rewarding challenge and the first step into an endlessly fascinating field. The hobby grows with you, offering learning and personal enrichment every step of the way.

Accessible, affordable, and packed with potential, ham radio is a fulfilling activity for adventurers, tech enthusiasts, and those with a passion for public service.

Learn more about the Amateur Radio hobby at the Southwest Florida Regional Hamfest this January 10th and 11th at Florida Southwestern College in Fort Myers. The Fort Myers Amateur Radio Club (FMARC), established 1957, is hosting the Hamfest. FMARC supports the exchange of knowledge, fosters camaraderie among hobbyists, and emphasizes public service during

emergencies. The club, an ARRL affiliate, promotes the art and science of amateur radio through various activities, training, and initiatives.

Click for information: <https://swflhamfest.com/index.php/license-testing/> or visit <https://FMARC.net>.

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Stephen Hoch, WU3I, operates at Winter 2024 Field Day. Photo by the Fort Myers Amateur Radio Club Inc.