

✔ What You Need to Get a Ham Radio License

1 Choose a License Level

There are three U.S. license classes:

- Technician – Most beginners start here
 - Allows local VHF/UHF communication (repeaters, handheld radios)
 - Some limited long-distance (HF) privileges
- General – More worldwide HF access
- Amateur Extra – Full privileges, hardest exam

👉 You only need the Technician license to start.

2 Study the Exam Material

The Technician exam covers:

- Basic radio theory
- FCC rules & operating practices
- Safety (RF exposure, grounding)
- Antennas & propagation

Study options:

- YouTube playlists (like Ham Radio Crash Course)
- Free study sites (HamStudy.org, QRZ.com practice tests)
- Books (ARRL Technician License Manual)

🕒 Many people study 1–3 weeks.

3 Take the Exam

- 35 multiple-choice questions
- Passing score: 26 correct (74%)
- No Morse code required
- Exams are run by Volunteer Examiners (VEs)

Exam formats:

- In-person (local radio clubs)
- Online (with webcam)

💰 Cost: Usually \$15 or less for the exam

4 Pay the FCC License Fee

After you pass:

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- Pay \$35 to the FCC
- License is valid for 10 years
- No age limit (kids and teens can be licensed!)

5 Get Your Call Sign & Start Transmitting 🗣️

- Your call sign appears in the FCC database (often within days)
- Once it's active, you can legally transmit on amateur bands

⚠️ You may listen anytime, but you can't transmit until licensed.

🛒 What You Do Not Need

- ✗ No expensive equipment to start
- ✗ No Morse code
- ✗ No background in electronics
- ✗ No minimum age

📻 After You're Licensed

You can:

- Use handheld radios (walkie-talkie style)
- Talk through repeaters
- Help with emergency communications
- Experiment with satellites, digital modes, and more