

How do I?

An occasional series

This week: Many Flavors of Hams

Congrats! You've passed the Technician license test and have joined the ranks of a great hobby! We are all amateurs. We presumably do this for fun. Like anything else, some of us take it more seriously than others.

What can you do? Someone said there are 28 different types of hams. Let's look at a few.

1. The *Public Service specialist*. I don't know that we know how many there are. My guess is a significant number of Technician class licensees are only interested in amateur radio because they use it as part of a local SKYWARN group, or CERT team, or ARES or RACES, or simply want to help with a local parade, race, etc. Many of these folks do nothing more than that.
2. The *Rag Chewer*. Some of us enjoy a good conversation. We like to talk and learn stuff. We may have a small circle of friends, some of whom we only know over the airwaves, that we talk to daily or weekly. It may be a formal or informal net. It may simply be calling CQ and waiting to see who shows up. But we can talk about more than just radios and antennas!
3. The *DX'er*. Some of us chase countries, continents, CQ zones, ITU zones etc in hopes of getting a confirmed contact. This can lead to type 3A: *The Paper Chaser* who has a shack wall papered with awards. or 3B: *The QSL card collector* with exotic QSL cards from all parts of the globe.
4. The *Contester*: Sometimes very hard to tell from the Type 3's: the Contester is dedicated to participating in on air contests, foreign or domestic.
5. The *Builder*. The Builder may have the finest collection of home made or kit built (really two separate groups) equipment that was never used. The Builder has a parts collection that puts Digi-Key or Mouser Electronics to shame, but rarely uses the stuff made from it. The Kit Builder has a similar collection, but all the parts came from kits.
6. The *Prepper*: a staple of movies like *The Postman*, the Prepper awaits doomsday.

They may be an offshoot of the Public Service community, or they may simply squirrel away equipment for the end times.

7. The *Leader*: That latest, greatest mode that everyone is clamoring to try? The latest radio gear? Who has it first? the leaders! They are acquiring, testing, and promoting the latest **IT!** VOIP? IRLP? FT8? CF4FM? Yep, they had it first and by the time the masses catch on they have already moved on to what is next.

8. The *Collector*: Has an inventory that rivals or excels most museums. It may be a general history of radio, or it may be very specific: Vibraplex keys made before 1930. If you meet one, you will learn something!

These are just a few of the folks you will meet in the fascinating world of Radio!