

How do I?

An occasional series

This week: The Reluctant Ham ...Radio Or else.

So...you are new to the wonderful world of amateur radio. But unlike some who were excited by *SPUTNIK* or The Apollo Program or the Space Shuttle, or the International Space Station, and perhaps even got to be around when one of the amateur radio operator astronauts talked to your school or other group, you are only in this because someone at work said you need a license. Or else. Or instead of having an *elmer* who encouraged you, you were pretty much told you need to get it. Or else.

So now you sat through a day long class, or more, (and hopefully got paid for the time) and took a Technician license exam. Hopefully you passed it. (if not, check elsewhere on this site for test locations and look under the RESOURCES tab for more articles. Good luck!). So what do you do now?

It seems that most of the employees in this area that are being told they need to be licensed amateur operators are part of the first responder community. Whether they might be part of a natural disaster cleanup, or part of a team searching for a lost child or elderly person, or whatever, amateur radio comes into play. I am sure you will have classes and drills where you can exercise those skills, but what else can you do?

Your Technician License is a window to the world. You have the entire amateur part of the VHF/UHF spectrum to play in. You have CW (Morse code) privileges on 10, 15, 40 and 80 meters and SSB (sideband) voice privileges on 10 meters. You probably are issued, have access to, or own a HT (handheld). With them you can not only use the many repeaters installed by local clubs, you can also use the internet to extend the reach of that tiny little HT. You can also use an HT and a small yagi antenna to access amateur radio satellites. Best of all, you can get practical experience operating under tactical conditions by joining a local 2 meter net or helping with public service events like parades and bike races. (See elsewhere on this site for public service activities).

Radios To Go! from the ARRL is a great practical guide to what you and an HT can do.

Catch ya on the air!

