

How do I?

An occasional series

This week: Upgrade to General

Congrats! You passed the Technician License exam. You are in the process of getting your feet wet in this great world of amateur radio. Sure you can do lots of stuff. You are not just confined to HT's on a local repeater, or even a mobile or fixed base VHF/UHF station. You can get on 10m SSB and when conditions permit, talk all over the world, DXing or contesting or whatever. You have even more privileges: CW on 10, 15, 40 and 80m.

But you want to more: SSB on 12, 15, 17, 20, 40, 80 and 160m. Maybe digital modes like PSK31 or JT9, JT65 or FT8 caught your eye. Maybe another mode like *Olivia* or *Hellschreiber* sounds appealing. The solution: upgrade to General.

The process is much the same as getting a tech license but you already have a FRN. Start by buying a study guide. ARRL, Gordon West and others make some good ones. Find an *elmer*. Best place to start is a local club like this one. Study! Use the on line resources like eham.net and apps (see *There Is An App For That!*) in this series) to take practice exams. When you are consistently doing better than 88 percent or so, you are ready to take the real thing.

For many, a Technician license is all they "need" for what they want to do in amateur radio. That's fine. There are even 9,000 or so Novice Class licensees around, and it has been decades since new ones were issued. There is no requirement to upgrade. But having a General license opens doors to more opportunities. Whether it is chasing DX, or Contesting, or Special Event stations, or nets or rag chews, a General class license gives you more privileges and can make this hobby even more fun.

Catch ya on the air!