

How do I?

An occasional series

This week: One of the first steps to getting licensed.
Getting an FRN #



If you move, or change eMail addresses, you need to update your information in both CORES and the ULS. Failure to do so can put your hard earned license in jeopardy!

Ok, so you got up today and realized you really want to get an amateur radio license and see what the great wide world of amateur radio is all about. You may have some experience with **Citizens Band** (CB) radio, where no license is required; or the **Family Radio Service** (FRS) where no license is required; or the **General Mobile Radio Service** (GMRS) where you pay a fee but no examination is required.

The **Amateur Radio Service** (ARS) and the **General Radiotelephone Operators License** (GROL) both require testing. The GROL is a commercial license, and the testing is done by third party testers. The test fees seem to start at \$50 per test session. Currently there is no fee for amateur radio licenses, but starting in probably February 2022, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) will collect a \$35 fee for a 10 year new or renewal license. The Volunteer Examiner Coordinator (VEC) such as the ARRL or W5YI may charge a fee to take the exam, but the Laurel VEC does not.

The reasons why the FCC requires amateurs to be licensed goes to back before the First World War. Amateur radio was in its infancy and was unregulated. The US Navy experienced considerable interference (QRM in ham speak) from amateurs using the same frequencies. The interference became so bad that not only was ham radio regulated by the Navy but there was a pretty powerful effort to outlaw amateur radio completely. Fortunately wiser heads prevailed and eventually the FCC was created to regulate communications, which included the Amateur Radio service, in the US.

The FCC is attempting to streamline its paperwork processes. The universal application is Form 605. While the amateur radio version of Form 605 is a single page, all the Form 605 variants and their instructions are found in a 29 page PDF on the FCC web site. The FCC now requires virtually all forms to be filed electronically. This has the benefit for amateurs of getting your license sooner! Electronic filing cuts 24 to 48 hours out of the cycle time between getting your CSCE - Certificate of Successful Completion of Examination and getting your new call sign.

We have discussed preparing for testing elsewhere in this series <https://www.radioclub-carc.com/resource-license/>. The legal side, required before you take the exam, starts with getting a FCC Registration Number or FRN. All FCC applications require this number in advance. The FRN is obtained through CORES - the Commission Registration System.

Step 1

Go to <https://apps.fcc.gov/cores/userLogin.do> and register.

You will need to provide your Social Security Number, Name, and Mailing Address.

As part of this process you will create a password and a security question.

The most recent FCC password specification requires 12 to 15 characters, at least one lower case letter, at least one upper case letter, at least one number, and at least one punctuation mark or special character.

This setup should be a one-time task. You are required to maintain current information in CORES to protect your license privileges. Return to the CORES system if or when you need to update your information or pay FCC fees. For that reason, please be sure to keep a record of your CORES and ULS ID and Password.

Step 2

Once you pass your license exam and receive your call sign it will appear in the Universal Licensing System or ULS. <https://www.fcc.gov/wireless/universal-licensing-system>

You probably will want to print a copy of your license. The FCC

Step 3

If you move, or if you change your email address, you need to update your information in both CORES and the ULS. Failure to do so can put your hard earned license in jeopardy!

There is a related FCC document posted on this website. It provides step-by-step procedures and screen snapshots of the registration process. Look or Search for this document name: 2021-1115-Applying for an FRN-2.pdf

Follow the trail to <https://www.radioclub-carc.com/resources/> for more information.

Catch 'ya on the air!