

Proposal to FCC to institute an introductory-level Communicator license class in the Amateur Radio Service

In the late 1980's and early 1990's when the current Amateur Radio Service Technician Class license was conceived and implemented, it was an appropriate alternate introductory license class. However, due to the recent elimination of the Novice Class license; the Technician Class license no longer serves well as the only introductory license, and is doing poorly in drawing new members into the Service, especially young members. Technologies like the Family Radio Service, high-speed telephone & cable modems, the Internet, and inexpensive cellular telephones, have overshadowed the privileges of the Amateur Radio Service, and made the requirements for young beginners to obtain a Technician Class license out of date. Additionally the Technician Class license has now evolved into a beginning and ending point for most modern day Amateurs, who are mostly interested in VHF/UHF communications, rather than HF communications. Incentive licensing has virtually been eliminated.

Therefore, it is recommended that a new "Communicator Class" license be added to the Amateur Radio Service, expressly to encourage young individuals to enter the Amateur Radio Service, and provide and encourage communications and experimentation by families and youth groups.

Communicator licensees would be restricted to voice and digital communications on twenty simplex-only, 25kHz-spaced channels, between 445.75Mhz-446.25Mhz, with the following restrictions:

- (1) Individuals operating with a Communicator license must be under 16 years of age,
- (2) Fixed control station antennas will be no more than 6.1 meters (20 feet) above the ground or above the building or tree on which it is mounted, and
- (3) Transmissions limited to 2.5 watts ERP, or less.

The new license class would have the following goals:

- 1) Encourage more young people to enter the Amateur Radio Service, by providing an entry-level ARS license class that includes privileges allowing reliable short-range communications, which would be desirable to groups, families, and young people.
- 2) Not significantly impact the growth of business communications systems.
- 3) Not significantly impact existing users of the affected Amateur Radio Service frequencies.
- 4) Encourage basic knowledge of radio, electronics, operating principles and etiquette

among a wider segment of the general population.

5) Take advantage of the advances being made in UHF radio technology, spurred by the success of the Family Radio Service.

The Communicator license exam would consist of 25 fairly simple questions. Emphasis would be put on understanding the existing operational, safety, etiquette and emergency questions from the Technician Class question pool that relate specifically to their privileges. Communicator licensees would be required to have a general understanding of Ohm's Law and Power relations, but not have to carry out any calculations. They should be required to have a general understanding of how antenna length relates to wavelength, but not have to carry out any calculations. General knowledge of simple resistive circuits, and their power dissipation, would be required. Knowledge of capacitors and inductors would not be required.