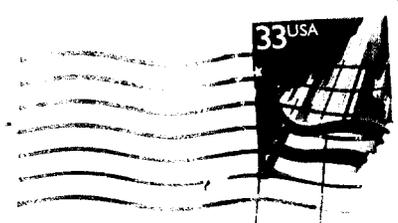
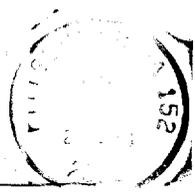


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*To Read*

1998 Biennial Review Amendment of Part 97  
OF the Commission's Amateur Service Rules

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I KNew They'd Make Something New on You, It's A Lie!

# W5YI

America's Oldest Ham Radio Newsletter

## REPORT

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Up to the minute news from the world of amateur radio, personal computing and emerging electronics. While no guarantee is made, information is from sources we believe to be reliable.

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- Cutting Edge & Emerging Technology
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- "Cookies" Your Mother Never Baked

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### The Ten NPRM Questions The FCC Wants Answered!

There appears to be a lot of minor errors in the FCC's *Notice of Proposed Rulemaking* which looks toward restructuring the amateur Service. When we questioned the FCC on them we were told that they were aware of some and which would be corrected in the version that is printed in the Federal Register. "The questions we want answered are correct in the original version," we were told.

It is our opinion that the errors crept in during the revision phase. The FCC staff originally submitted a straight *Notice of Proposed Rulemaking* which was later returned by the Commissioners for amendment. The result was what amounted to a combination NPRM and NOI, *Notice of Inquiry* -- a solicitation of comments on certain items.

Here is a list of the questions that the FCC wants answered concerning the Amateur Service:

1.) Are six classes of licenses unnecessary?

**No!** MORE FREEDOM  
The FCC believes that reducing the number of classes of operator licenses would relieve the VEs from the tasks of preparing and administering unnecessary examinations. It would also ease the Commission's burden of providing oversight of the system and maintaining a database of the current operator class for every amateur operator. In short, how many license classes do you believe should be in the U.S. Amateur Service, and why?

The FCC has proposed four, Technician, General, Advanced and Extra. There is mounting support for three: Technician, General and Extra. The ARRL wants four: A, B, C and D which would basically coincide with Extra, Advanced, General and Technician.

2.) How important is the Novice Class?

1998 MAVView From 1997  
Very few people now take the examinations for the Novice class license. Over the past ten years., the number of Novice operators has declined from 84,589 (in 1989) to 76,515 (in 1998). By contrast the number of codeless Technicians has gone from zero to 184,979.

The FCC "...believes that the no-code Technician Class operator license has replaced the Novice Class operator license as the entry-level license class of choice. Therefore, we tentatively conclude that the Novice Class operator license no longer serves a significant, useful purpose and should be phased out with the current holders of Novice Class operator licenses being grandfathered. No new Novice Class licenses would be granted, but anyone currently holding licenses would be able to modify or renew them. In addition, Novice Class operators would be eligible for examination credit for the telegraphy requirement of any license class. [Editors note: This appears to be one of the errors in the amended version giving credence to the view that

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September 15, 1998

the FCC originally proposed only one telegraphy examination speed: 5 words-per-minute.] We seek comment on this proposal."

### 3.) What should be the disposition of the Novice bands?

*Love Thy Now wife DST.*

Currently, other licensed classes can operate within the Novice bands, but only at a 200 watt reduced power level. Given the small number of new Novice licenses now being issued, if the FCC were to discontinue licensing new Novices, would it be appropriate to delete the frequency limitations on Novices and the power limitations on other classes of operators using the Novice frequencies. The FCC suggested that "...Novices would continue to be limited to 200 watts output power but could operate using the Morse code anywhere within the 80, 40, 15 and 10 meter bands?"

### 4.) Should the Technician Plus license class be phased out?

*YOU PSYCHIATRISTS AREN'T RETARDED*

The only difference between the Technician and Technician Plus Classes is that a Technician Plus operator has passed a five words per minute (WPM) Morse code examination has not. The FCC believes that both operator classes predominantly use FM voice and digital packet communications on the amateur VHF and UHF bands. "Yet, the VEs are burdened with preparing and administering telegraphy examinations, and the Commission is burdened with processing the resulting applications and revising the database."

The FCC proposed "...that the Technician Plus Class be phased out. Holders of a FCC-issued Technician Class operator license granted before March 21, 1987, have previously passed the written examination required to qualify for a General Class operator license."

"Other Technician Plus Class operators could qualify for a General Class operator license by passing written examination Element 3(B) which consists of thirty questions on the additional privileges of a General Class operator license and the 13 or 20 wpm telegraphy examination. We seek comments on this proposal."

It should be pointed out that, according to the NPRM, the 5 wpm code examination would still be available and any Technician who wanted to operate CW on the HF Novice bands could do so after passing Element 1A and obtaining a CSCE.

### 5.) Should Advanced Class operators be permitted to be VEs for the General Class?

*VETERIN'S WORK*

Currently, an Advanced Class operator cannot prepare or administer a telegraphy examination for an examinee for a General Class license. Only an Amateur Extra Class licensee can administer that examination. The

ARRL has petitioned the FCC requesting a rule amendment to permit Advanced Class operators who are VEs to prepare and administer examinations for a General Class operator license. The ARRL says that this is legal under the law and will help fulfill the need for more volunteer examiners. "We agree, and therefore propose to authorize Advanced Class operators to prepare and administer examinations for the General Class operator license. These proposals will benefit potential amateur service licensees by having additional volunteer examiners available for the examinations. We seek comment on this proposal."

### 6.) Should RACES station licenses be phased out?

*This is Police WORK*

No new RACES (Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service) station licenses have been granted since July 14, 1980 when they were discontinued to conserve FCC manpower and resources. At the time, there were 611 RACES licenses. There are now only 249 RACES licenses. The FCC wants to phase out RACES station licenses by not renewing them.

By eliminating the RACES licenses, the FCC is taking a step, which not only will conserve the Commission's financial resources, but will also eliminate licensing duplication. Emergency communications that are now transmitted by RACES stations can continue to be transmitted by all regular amateur radio stations.

The FCC said "Our rules permit two types of stations to operate as part of RACES: (1) a licensed RACES station, and (2) any amateur station that has been properly registered with a civil defense organization. Thus, to engage in RACES communications, it is not necessary to have a RACES license with a separate and distinct call sign. We invite comments on this proposal."

### 7.) How can the Amateur Auxiliary improve enforcement of the Amateur Service rules?

*CARD EM*

The Amateur Auxiliary is composed of amateur operators who are recruited and trained by the Commission for the purpose of detecting, on a voluntary and uncompensated basis, improper radio transmissions. This information is conveyed to the Commission. Advisory notices are issued to persons who apparently have violated the Amateur Service rules. According to the FCC, the procedure suggested by the ARRL which would permit the volunteers to bring complaints of malicious interference directly to the Chief Administrative Law Judge (CALJ) is not legally possible.

The FCC said that "...while we do not seek comment on ARRL's specific proposal, we do seek comment, consistent with the ARRL's underlying concerns, on other ideas for improving our enforcement processes as they relate to amateur radio. One possibility, for example, would be to encourage or require persons bringing

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complaints of interference to the Commission to include a draft order to show cause to initiate a revocation or cease and desist hearing proceeding. We also request additional comments and suggestions on how we could better utilize the services of the Amateur Auxiliary, consistent with its statutory basis."

## 8.) What changes should be made to the telegraphy examination requirements?

*A signal is a signal*

The FCC rules provide for three levels of skill in telegraphy, based upon the rate at which an applicant correctly receives a telegraphy message: five, thirteen and twenty words-per-minute (wpm). The VEs determine the examinee's level of skill in sending and receiving text in the international Morse code.

In 1990, in response to the sentiment of the amateur community, the FCC established a codeless Technician Class operator license in order to attract technically inclined persons. The FCC stated that they "...believed that telegraphers would be in less demand than electronics and communications experts"

"An entry-level opportunity was provided to otherwise qualified persons who found that telegraphy was a barrier to pursuing the purposes of the amateur service. Those purposes include encouragement and improvement of the amateur service by providing opportunities for advancing both communication and technical skills, and the expansion of the existing reservoir within the amateur radio service of trained operators, technicians and electronics experts."

Manual telegraphy is now used less as a communications mode. Radiotelegraphy is just one facet of many diverse modes of radiocommunication that require a technologically literate licensee."

"The international *Radio Regulations* that apply to the Amateur Radio Service require that all amateurs licensed to operate below 30 MHz demonstrate their ability "...send correctly by hand and to receive correctly by ear, texts in Morse code signals."

The *Radio Regulations* do not specify any particular speed. We note that the 1995 World Radiocommunications Conference (WRC-95) resolved that Article S25, which includes the international amateur code requirement, be considered at the 1999 WRC. Subsequently, this consideration was delayed to the WRC scheduled for 2001."

Based in part on an ARRL survey, an ARRL committee proposed to reduce the General Class code speed requirement from 13 to 10 wpm, and for all code examinations to specify one out of five minutes of copy.

"In view of changes in the technologies that amateurs use to communicate generally, and views with regard to the Morse code requirement specifically,

- (a.) We seek comment on all aspects of the Morse code standards used in our examinations.
- (b.) Do the three levels of 5, 13, and 20 wpm remain relevant to today's communications practices?
- (c.) Should we continue to have three different levels, or should these be reduced to one or two -- and, if so, what should be the required speeds?
- (d.) Were we to reduce the required Morse code elements, should we add elements to the written examination to ensure a working knowledge of the newer digital technologies, which, in part, are replacing the Morse code?
- (e.) Or, should we consider specifying the method of examining for Morse code proficiency, such as requiring fill-in-the-blank or copying one out of five minutes sent, instead of allowing VEs to determine how to test for code speed?

We request comment on these and any other issues related to our code speed requirements."

## 9.) Should the code speed be reduced to 5 wpm for everyone as a way to eliminate the need to grant waivers of the higher code speed requirements for the handicapped?

*yes!*

The ARRL asked that the rules be changed to allow telegraphy examination credit for the higher telegraphy speeds to examinees with a disability. The League wanted the applicant to be required to attempt the higher-speed telegraphy examination before examination credit is given pursuant to a doctor's certification and volunteer-examiner coordinators (VECs) would be authorized to request medical information from the certifying physician pertaining to the examinee's disability.

The FCC added "It should be noted that these issues only remain relevant if we retain the higher telegraphy speeds requirement, since if the requirement were eliminated, a person with a disability would not have to apply for examination credit. We tentatively conclude that, if we do maintain the requirement, neither of these proposals is an appropriate means to address potential abuses of the physician certification requirement. We believe that these proposals place an unfair burden on examinees with disabilities, and raise serious privacy and confidentiality concerns. We seek comment on ARRL's proposal and our tentative conclusion."

## 10.) What changes, if any, should be made to the written examinations?

*Easy To Understand Words*

There are currently five different written examinations prepared and administered to applicants for amateur operator licenses in order to demonstrate to the FCC that

(Continued on Page 7 - See **Questions**)

# WSYI REPORT

America's Oldest Ham Radio Newsletter

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FCC MAIL ROOM

September 15, 1998

## CUTTING EDGE TECHNOLOGY

- **When winds hit an electric power line in just the right way**, a mechanical vibration at the cable's resonant frequency causes it to physically move up and down. Power-line engineers call this phenomenon "galloping conductors." If the cable's oscillations become too powerful, it can snap and fall to the ground. Wind-tunnel tests prove that a cable with an oval cross-section, rather than round, presents less wind drag. Oval conductors are already on the market.
- **One of the main enemies of electronic circuitry is corrosion.** Humidity and salt air rapidly eat away anything made out of metal, unless it is protected in some way. A new device is now on the market that, when installed inside a computer, emits a chemical that deposits itself upon the electronic components. It promises to prevent corrosion for up to two years.
- **In an effort to conserve battery power**, engineers are using phosphorescent additives in backlit liquid-crystal displays. Just 30 minutes of exposure to light can provide several hours of sufficient glow to illuminate watch displays, mobile phones and small toys.
- **Engineers are working on using the visible light spectrum to allow satellites** already in orbit to communicate with each other. This lightens the load on the ground controllers, saves power, and there is no atmosphere to interfere with the signal. Laser beams and infra-red light use frequencies high enough to provide extremely high data rates, and there is no need to obtain a license from the FCC or the ITU.
- **Fingerprints are not always reliable as a means of identification.** Some people have lighter ridges on their fingertips, making them difficult for computer scanners to read. A few fingerprint-recognition programs don't take into account those who are missing a digit, and repeatedly insist upon the user inserting a finger that doesn't exist into the scanner! This is why many companies are switching to iris recognition. The iris of the eye never changes, except in size when light strikes it. New algorithms scan the human eye and automatically adjust for pupil size, whether eyeglasses or contact lenses are

used. It also determines if the eye is alive or not.

- **How far have automated teller machines (ATMs) permeated our economy?** Try the high seas. There are now ATMs installed and available for use by sailors aboard two U. S. Navy aircraft carriers.

## EMERGING COMMUNICATIONS

- There is projected to be **400 billion minutes of telephone activity** in the U.S. in 1998. That's 25 hours annually for every American person ...nearly 3 days for every U.S. household.
- **CQ QRM! Japan is saturated with mobile phones**, much to the displeasure of people in hospitals, schools, movie theaters, museums, high-end restaurants ...even on airliners. In an attempt to get people to shut off their phones in public places, the Japanese government may soon legalize small, low-power jammers on mobile-phone frequencies. These cigarette-pack-size units with flip-up antennas may be offered for sale to business owners, under controlled conditions. The Wave Wall, made by a company called Medic Inc., costs about \$480. Battery-operated, they can be used anywhere. The Wave Wall is already being offered in Europe and it is only a matter of time before they hit our shores. The potential for abuse is immense! A photograph is available at: <http://www2s.biglobe.ne.jp/~chiyoda/>
- **The FCC requires all cellular telephones, by the year 2001**, to give their location to within 125 meters whenever they dial 911. This will help emergency workers find callers who need help and don't know where they are, or are unable to speak legibly.
- **Motorola is branching out into the consumer TV set-top box business!** The "big M" will announce its new TV interface box in mid-September at the International Broadcasters Convention in Amsterdam. The box will offer computer and broadcast television programming, telephone service, high-speed Internet access/browsing, e-mail, movies-on-demand, electronic commerce ...and more! It will be a major introduction. Motorola is entering a new product line to offset declines in its semi-conductor and cellular phone business.

## COMPUTERS & SOFTWARE

- **iMac-ulate conception!** The introduction of Apple's new jazzy iMac computer has been outrageously successful! Over 200,000 have already been sold.
- **An exceptionally well-rendered drawing of 1940's movie actress Hedy Lamarr** appears on the cover of the latest version of Corel's popular Corel-Draw computer software. Look closely; at first glance you'll swear it's a photo. Ms. Lamarr (still alive, perhaps to Corel's surprise) is suing the company, alleging that they used her name and likeness without her permission. In her youth Ms. Lamarr came up with the idea of using split-second, frequency-hopping radio transmissions to control torpedos by remote control, for which she was granted a patent in 1942. This spread spectrum technique today controls cellular telephones.
- **Heaven European countries are adopting a shared monetary system.** The new unit is called the "euro," and you will see it appearing in computers very soon. The symbol for the euro looks like the letter "c," with two horizontal lines through it. This never-before-seen symbol is causing software companies to scramble in order to accommodate the euro in word processors, spreadsheets, printers and monitors. The euro may rival the U.S. dollar as the world's main reserve currency, because those who use it will account for almost 20% of the world's gross domestic product. The euro will debut on January 1, 1999.
- **Computer hardware and software has a very short lifespan!** Today, more equipment is replaced due to obsolescence rather than device failure. And Windows-based software has so thoroughly dominated the computer industry that many software companies are letting their old DOS-based programs die on the vine; they no longer offer technical support or DOS-based upgrades for them.
- **If the possibility of airport X-ray machines erasing computer data** worries you, try storing it on optical disks. X-rays won't affect them, nor will magnetic fields. Optical disks can't be damaged by spilled coffee or soft drinks. Just don't sit on them! They break.
- **Take a very good look at your**