

**Before the
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
Washington, D.C. 20554**

In the Matter of)
)
Amendment of Part 97 of the Commission's)
Amateur Radio Service Rules to Eliminate) RM - 10786
Morse Code Proficiency Testing Requirements)
For All Classes of Amateur Licenses)
)
To: The Commission)

Comments Of Charles Thompson, KE6DRN / VK6DRN

- Official and emergency usages of morse code communications have almost ceased to exist:
 - Virtually no government or commercial radio service uses Morse telegraphy in today's world.
 - Thus, the historical need of the government, commercial, and maritime services for a "pool of (Morse) trained operators" has ceased to exist.
 - Morse Skill is no longer required for effective emergency communications by amateur operators, other modes are preferred by agencies receiving support from amateur radio operators
- The maintenance of morse proficiency as a requirement for any amateur radio license is no longer in accord with the purpose of the amateur radio Service and serves no regulatory purpose.
- Other skills and modes of operation by radio amateurs would be much more in line with objectives of the commission
- IARU and many of it's member nations recognize that continuing Morse proficiency requirements is not in the best interest of the future of the amateur radio service.
- The Commission cited in its most recent comprehensive review of its Part 97 amateur rules (WT Docket No. 98-143) reasons for keeping *any* Morse testing – reasons that seem to no longer exist.
 - The Commission concluded in WT Docket No. 98-143 that the public interest will best be served by reducing the (Morse) telegraphy examination requirement to the minimum requirement that that meets the [ITU] Radio Regulations.
 - The "*minimum requirement that meets the ITU Radio Regulations*" for any class of amateur license is now no Morse test at all.
- Since the Commission is no longer bound by requirements in the ITU Radio Regulations it can, move promptly to remove an unnecessary requirement.

- It is not in public interest for Commission to impose more unnecessary burdens on those seeking an amateur radio license than would be faced by equally qualified individuals in other countries. (Switzerland, the United Kingdom, Belgium, Germany, The Netherlands, and Norway have already eliminated Morse test requirements.)
- The Commission’s own findings, and a significant body of public comment, from Proceedings in both 1990 and 1999 clearly demonstrate that a Morse proficiency test requirement is unnecessary:
 - It is not central to the basis and purpose of the Amateur Radio Service.
 - It is an unnecessary barrier to entry and advancement by otherwise qualified persons.
 - It does not encourage an individual's ability to contribute to advancement of the radio art.
 - It does not provide any indication of a radio amateur’s good character, high intelligence, cooperative demeanor, or willingness to comply with the Commission’s rules. On the contrary, most abuses reported by FCC’s own Riley Hollingsworth (K4ZDH) pertain to non-Morse modes of operation.
 - It no longer continues to serve a regulatory purpose.
 - It otherwise does not serve the public interest and necessity.
- The Commission has the authority to amend its Part 97 rules to eliminate Morse proficiency requirements by expedited order, without formal notice and public input.
 - The Commission considered the issue of continued Morse proficiency requirements in WT Docket Number 98-143 where there was extensive input from the public and concerned parties.
 - By granting NCI’s Petition, no party or other person would be prejudiced by such Commission action.
- The Commission should refrain from combining prompt elimination of Morse test requirements from its rules with other substantially unrelated issues.
- In summary, the Commission should enact the following changes to its rules
 - Eliminate the “Element 1” Morse test totally from rules for all license classes.
 - Since the only testing distinction between the Technician class and the (grandfathered) Technician Plus class is the “Element 1” Morse Test, modify, as a consequential and logical change, the privileges afforded to Technician class licensees to be equivalent to those currently afforded to Technician Plus licensees and “Technician with Morse credit” licensees.

Respectfully submitted,

Charles Thompson KE6DRN / VK6DRN
 561 Teal Court, Livermore, CA 94551
 email to: chuck@osisoft.com