

Regarding RM-10786, the proposal by NCI to remove the Morse Code testing requirements:

To the best of my knowledge, the only reason for the FCC continuing to require Morse Code proficiency for HF privileges is because of international treaties requiring it. ITU Radio Regulations that were recently enacted at WRC-03 have eliminated that requirement. The FCC should act swiftly to remove the requirement to demonstrate proficiency in this out-dated mode.

I have nothing against Morse Code, it's fine for those who enjoy using it. But the time for making it a requirement has long past. The FCC should move Amateur Radio testing requirements into the twenty-first century.

We don't require automobile owners to demonstrate proficiency in travel by horse to get a drivers license. We don't require ship captains to demonstrate proficiency in navigation using an astrolabe. We don't require secretaries to demonstrate proficiency with manual typewriters or quill pens and ink blotters. Likewise, it's time to stop requiring proficiency in Morse Code for any Amateur Radio license.

Morse Code is no longer monitored by the Coast Guard nor other ships for potential emergencies. Morse Code is no longer used by Western Union, the military, the government, nor anyone else of any significance. Therefore, the reason for requiring Amateur Radio operators to be proficient in Morse Code to provide a backup source of commercial or government radio Morse Code operators in times of emergency no longer exists.

The only people who argue in favor of retaining the requirement for Morse Code proficiency testing are those enamored by the mode. The argument that "Morse Code gets through when nothing else does" has been false for many years. Back in the early 1980's, I myself witnessed automated digital communications on links so noisy that the signal could hardly be discerned by hear, yet the copy was nearly 100 percent. And that was at a speed no human could match, even under the most ideal conditions.. And this was twenty years ago!

The only other argument by Morse Code testing supporters that makes any sense is that having to demonstrate Morse Code proficiency acts to weed out people from Amateur Radio who aren't serious. That's preposterous. All it does is keep out technically savvy people who would otherwise make fine Amateurs, but simply don't care about the most privative modes. We need people who look to radio communications' future, not those who are mired in its past.

The time for requiring Morse Code proficiency is gone. The Commission should remove those requirements as soon as possible.

Gary Mitchell