

9/13/05

Comment RE: RM 05-235

Charles Young

AG4YO

Sirs/Mdms;

I had planned a long discourse in response to the proposal to eliminate Morse Code testing as a requirement for all Amateur Class licenses. Indeed things have changed since RM 98-143 which indicate that removal of telegraphy testing may be premature. Some of the events include the retention of telegraphy testing by Japan which renders removal of testing by other countries as statistically insignificant. The use of slow speed CW for distance communications in high noise at low power indicate there may be uses for telegraphy yet to be discovered. Indeed, a new coast station license was granted by the Commission recently for the ship telegraphy bands and preliminary testing indicates that there may still be a need for that service. Additionally, there are various military grade requirements which still require telegraphy. These compelling reasons aside, there has been a development which illustrates the need and value of trained telegraphy operators.

As I write this, I am in New Orleans, Louisiana, the scene of the most disasterous weather event in this country in decades. I was on the ground several times here immediately after the storm, and brought with me an ICOM 706 Amateur Radio in a backpack. After performing my job duties, I sought to discover the nature of emergency communications here beginning 6 hours after the storm.

The storm isolated this area from all infrastructure. There was no power, no internet, very little two-way communications as most entities were on battery power. Power generators had been flooded out for State Police, Orleans Parish, Jefferson Parish, and St. Tammany Parish. The tower for police communications in Gretna, Louisiana was destroyed. In my work capacity, I provided several generators for state and local entities to power two way systems.

In surveying the amateur band, there were SSB, data, and CW signals coming out of the area at 6 hours after the disaster. At 8 hours, there were hardly any digital signals, and at 24 hours there were only CW signals coming out of the area. The CW traffic was health and welfare and some requests for help and assistance. Over the next several days, there continued to be CW signals coming out of the area when there were little or no SSB signals. It was clear that this was not a matter of choice, but a matter of power consumption, therefore necessity.

There can be no clearer evidence that we still need trained CW operators. There can be no more damning evidence against those who say that there could never be a disaster so serious where other modes of communications would not work. The removal of telegraphy testing is indeed premature

and ill advised. I humbly suggest that telegraphy testing be retained for a least the Extra Class license.

Those who suggest telegraphy has outlived its usefulness and therefore no trained operators are needed are simply wrong. I ask the FCC not to ignore the obviousness of the need to continue in light of what was learned post Hurricane Katrina.

Signed Electronically,

Charles Young

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