

Morse code should be required for all Amateur Extra Class licenses to help maintain a tiered license structure that starts with beginning operators and extends to expert operators. The U. S. does not need to relax their requirements just because other countries are. Of course, many U.S. operators or future operators would like to see the requirement go away. This would make acquiring the amateur radio license much easier. The FCC (with input from the ARRL) should strive to maintain a viable, useful, technical based pool of communicators that are available to help during any communication crisis and continue to explore future electronic options. The ability to operate any mode enhances the performance of the pool of ham radio communicators. A few advantages of keeping proficient Morse code operators are described below.

1. Low power, battery operated commercial or home brewed transmitters and receivers have been utilized many times in past communication crises. The relatively secure Morse code communications is the most useful form of communications during the early stages of a crisis. The less sophisticated equipment is easy to build, maintain and operate and works well when a major crises has occurred.
2. The Morse Code requirement should only pertain to the Extra Class Licensees. A five wpm requirement is really too slow to allow effective communications by recognizing letters. A different speed of copying must be used to increase the copy speed. A much more reasonable speed would be 12-13 wpm. This forces Morse code copying to be by the letter.
3. To further radio communications between countries of different languages, the only common language that works consistently has been Morse code. Of course the communication is very basic but it usually leads to enhanced communications between the countries. Any spoken communications is subject to breakdown because the communicators need to have a common language to communicate.
4. The American communicator should uphold the American tradition of being exceptional at what we do. We must maintain a high standard of communications that offers hope and help to countries not as fortunate as ours. The FCC should make sure that licensees maintain high levels of competencies, not reduce requirements to make it "easier" for interested persons to acquire a less desirable license.