

# Get Your Amateur Radio Technician License

Hamfesters Radio Club suggests that the most effective way to learn the material for an amateur radio license is through self study. You can start now, work at your own pace and not have to wait for a formal class to begin. There are excellent material available for self study, as well as online practice exams. When you are ready you can take the Volunteer Examination (VE) test almost any weekend. Most technician hams get their license by studying on their own.



There are 35 questions taken from a pool of questions (which are published to study from!) You must get 26 (approximately 75%) of the questions correct. There is no penalty for guessing at an answer; do not leave an answer blank!

The question pool is changed every 4 years. So make sure your study materials consist of the current pool questions.  
<http://www.arrl.org/tech-question-pool>

## Detailed steps you might follow for self study:

**1 - Order your study materials.** There are two good sources for this material: The "American Radio Relay League (ARRL) License Manual (Revised 2nd Edition)" which provides tutorial and background information for the exam. It contains the entire publicly published question pool. The License Manual can be ordered directly from the ARRL (info at bottom of page) or via Amazon. Another study guide is the "Technician Class" by Gordon West. This also is available at Amazon or directly from the publisher (resources at bottom). Another source is Ham Radio Outlet in Milwaukee. They provide one day service to the Chicago area via UPS.

**2 - Study your material** using a method best for you. When using the ARRL course, browse through the entire book to familiarize yourself with the material. Then go back and carefully read and study a chapter. After finishing a chapter, go to the back of the manual and review each question in the Question Pool. Cover the answers or fold the edge of the page containing the answers down so as not be tempted to peek at an answer. If you miss a question or have concerns about that question use the page reference associated with that question to quickly return to the area that discusses that point.

Perhaps the best way to learn is using the "Ham Radio Answers" system. Here you view an introductory video followed by reading the material in the ARRL manual. The combination of the two media can help in learning the material. (see Reference below)

There are 396 questions in the Tech question pool, so memorizing the answers might be difficult. It is best to understand the material; the correct answer will follow.

Once you feel comfortable with the study material and the question pool it is time to take a practice exam.

**3 - Take a practice exam.** If your book has a CD you can use it to administer a realistic VE test. A better way might be to try one of several online web based practice exam sites. Try the one that works best for you. Some sites tell you right away if your answer is wrong, others make you finish the test and then evaluate you. A list of sites is at the end of this article.

# Get Your Amateur Radio Technician License

4 - **Take the VE test.** Once you feel comfortable with the material and are getting good scores (say, about 80% correct each time you take the test) on the practice test, look for a VE test site. There are several in the south side of Chicago and just about any weekend you can find a VE session. (see Resources for locations) **Good luck**

5 - Oh, and one more thing. If not already, **become involved with a local radio club.** Here you will find help to get you started in your new endeavor. There will be many hams available to answer your questions such as which radio to buy and what size antenna to install.

## Resources:

### Order a License Manual - Training Course

**American Radio Relay League (ARRL)**, 225 Main St.; Newington, Ct. 06111;

Tel: 860/594-0200 <http://www.arrl.org>

**Ham Radio Answers:** <http://dcasler.com/ham-radio/training/> (excellent learning system)

**Ham Radio Outlet:** <http://www.hamradio.com> 800/558-0411 (next day service to Chicago via UPS)

### Gordon West Training:

[http://www.gordonwestradioschool.com/main/page\\_w5yi\\_training\\_resources.html](http://www.gordonwestradioschool.com/main/page_w5yi_training_resources.html)

### Ham Test Online:

<http://www.hamradiolicenseexam.com> (complete study materials and practice exam - fee required).

**Practice Exams** (make sure they are using the current question pool)

<http://ac6v.com/help.htm#PE>

<http://www.qrz.com/testing.html>

<http://www.n3fjp.com/amateurstudy.html> (download question program to your computer)

### VE test sites

<http://www.arrl.org/find-an-amateur-radio-license-exam-session>

<http://www.hamfesters.org/main/ve-testing/>

<https://w9src.org/event/ve-testing-session-16/>

### Related References

<http://www.arrl.org/getting-licensed>

<http://www.arrl.org/getting-your-technician-license>

Prepared by **Hamfesters Radio Club**, meeting in Crestwood, Illinois  
[www.hamfesters.org](http://www.hamfesters.org)

Questions: contact Brian Davis, W9HLQ  
[w9hlq@arrl.net](mailto:w9hlq@arrl.net) 708/532-5833