

HAM IT UP! Getting Started in Ham Radio...notes compliments... FactorReady.com...

We are living in turbulent times (visit TruNews.com) and subject to extreme weather, terrorism and other factors that could well disable local power grids, phone services, etc. When all else fails, Amateur (Ham) Radio may well be the only method of communications we have available. Be prepared and promptly proceed in joining the ranks of over 750,000 other Americans who now participate in this rewarding, beneficial and needed hobby. We would indeed suggest at least one member or more per household be actively involved...

1. Getting Licensed. The Federal Communication Commission (FCC) requires licenses for all ham operators in the U.S. There are currently 3 classes of amateur radio licenses: Technician (initial required license) primarily allows access to the ham allocated VHF (Very High Frequency) band, and the ham UHF (Ultra High Frequency) band along with some limited authorization within the High Frequency (HF) 10 meter band. The test consists of a relatively easy 35 question multi-choice exam (from an approx. 400 question study pool). It is normally administered by VEC ham volunteers (at local Ham Radio Clubs) for the FCC, at a fee of approx. \$14. A passing grade of approx. 74% correct answers is required. The test may normally be taken (and repeated if needed) via various ham radio clubs as mentioned (see Club listings at ARRL.org). Technicians can also access the VoIP (Voice Over Internet Protocol) formats offered by ham internet programs such as Echolink.org and [CQ100 at QSO.net](http://CQ100@QSO.net). The VoIP mode allows direct computer-to-computer national and international voice contact with other hams, or even radio-to-radio contact via VoIP interfaces (links and repeaters within frequencies licensed). There are many ways hams are able to communicate, and using voice is just one of them. Morse code remains in use, although no longer required for any license purposes. Packet, Radio Teletype (often called Ritty) and PSK are others. Hams can also use television if desired, to transmit pictures over the air. Upon passing the Technician test the FCC will issue a license Call Sign, which is valid for 10 years and is renewable without further testing or costs. An optional vanity (custom) Call Sign is available if desired at modest cost. General class license (an upgrade from Technician status) offers a generous expansion into many additional HF band allocations, which can allow considerably more world wide radio communication ability. Amateur Extra is the last and highest class available license, which allots the total use of all amateur HF bands. Nevertheless, Technician remains the most important license, as it is mandatory to enter this exciting and useful hobby, and allows considerable privileges by itself.

2. Study Materials. Technician book. These inexpensive test study guides are available from various sources, such as the American Amateur Radio League (ARRL) at 888-277-5289. Note: if you are going to become a ham you should join this national ham organization and receive their monthly QST magazine. Other study sources include the popular Gordon West books at 800-669-9594. Online web ham test studies are offered via HamTestOnline.com, HamUniverse.com, eHam.net and QRZ.com. Plus, another good magazine pertaining to the hobby is CQ at cq-amateur-radio.com.

3. Equipment. Most hams start out with a hand held (battery operated) VHF and/or UHF Transceiver, which may be acquired new for under \$100. Operation range on these small (approx. 5 watt) units is normally up to 20 miles, depending on terrain, and is greatly extended via local radio club permanent mounted repeaters in most areas. Local Police and Fire frequencies are often on these bands as well. National mail order equipment suppliers include Universal-Radio.com and RandL.com, etc. If you already have a computer with a mic, speaker and internet access it would allow VoIP use with no additional equipment. Simply download, install, and registered your Call Sign with any of the ham VoIP specialized programs mentioned above. Also, don't hesitate to ask your Elmer (helpful ham friends) for their equipment and

supplier recommendations. Many test reports for various equipment and field use comments are also posted online at eHam.net.

4. You'll be more than welcomed by other hams into this rewarding and useful hobby. Not only will you enjoy "rag chewing" and participation if desired in various ham radio Nets (communication circles) but it also offers extremely valuable and life saving communication ability under adverse conditions. Your local club probably has affiliations with ARES (Amateur Radio Emergency Service) and/or RACES (Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Services) too, which are two national emergency oriented ham organizations you may have volunteer member interest in. This document was prepared for your emergency resource information and in the interest of the ham hobby by Joe Lanier, Ke5nys at FactorReady.com in Jasper, Texas (our local club web site is w5jas.org and the national club site is ARRL.org).

PS from FactorReady.com : May we indeed suggest at least one member or more per household be actively involved in Amateur Ham Radio, as it could well be the only means of communication under emergency conditions. Furthermore, that we all stock at least some degree of emergency food and water and obtain emergency power provisions as well (see our Home page tab articles on these important topics). Stay Well, Stay Prepared and Stay Prayed Up! "Remember, The Sun Was Still Shining When Noah Built The Ark..."

