

Frequently Asked Questions About the FCC's Morse Code Report and Order in WT Docket 05-235 and the FCC Order on Reconsideration in WT Docket 04-140
If you have a question not covered in this FAQ, please contact the ARRL Regulatory Information Branch.

Q. The Report and Order in WT Docket 05-235 that eliminates the Morse Code testing requirement for all license classes was adopted by the FCC on December 15, 2006. When will it become effective?

A. Typically, the effective date of a FCC order comes 30 days after its publication in the Federal Register. If that's the case, the new exam requirement and the revised 80-meter segment for automatically controlled digital stations would likely go into effect sometime in February 2007. When the rule changes adopted in the R&O are published in the Federal Register, the effective date will be included in the Federal Register summary. In any event, the new rules will not go into effect anytime before they show up in the Federal Register.

As soon as the R&O is published in the Federal Register the ARRL will verify the effective date and publicize it on the ARRLWeb and in QST.

Q. I am a "no-code" Technician. What does WT Docket 05-235 mean to me?

A. Once the changes are in effect, all Technician licensees -- whether or not they have passed a Morse code examination -- will have "Tech Plus" operating privileges. This means you will have all of your current VHF/UHF and above frequencies and also will have access to the Novice/Technician Plus frequencies on HF. These include:

3525-3600 kHz CW only
7025-7125 kHz CW only
21,025-21,200 kHz CW only
28,000-28,300 kHz CW, RTTY and Data
28,300-28,500 kHz CW, SSB

The power limit is 200 W PEP output for Technician operators.

Technicians can upgrade to General by passing the Element 3 written exam and to Amateur Extra by also passing the Element 4 written exam. No Morse code test will be required.

Q. What about other bands and modes?

A. There are no additional new privileges available to Technician/Tech Plus licensees as a result of WT 05-235. The R&O does not change the operating privileges of Novice, General, Advanced and Amateur Extra class licensees either.

Q. I have a Certificate for Successful Completion of Examination (CSCE) for Element 3 (General written test) and have been waiting for the FCC to drop the Morse code requirement. What will I need to do? Will I automatically receive my General license?

A. It will **not** happen automatically. You also will need to wait until the new rules are in effect. CSCEs remain valid for 365 days. There's been no change in that rule. If you have a non-expired CSCE for Element 3 credit, you would need to go to take the CSCE to a VE test session, pay the test session fee, if any, and have the examination team prepare and submit the paperwork for your license

upgrade.

If the CSCE for Element 3 credit has expired or expires before you attend a test session to process your upgrade, you will have to retake the examination element in order to receive the credit toward your upgrade. The test session fee will apply.

Remember: A CSCE is only valid for 365 days. An expired CSCE for the General license theory will not be usable for an upgrade. If your CSCE expires before the new rules go into effect you will have to re-take the Element 3 General class theory exam in order to upgrade.

Q. I hold a Novice license. Am I grandfathered to Technician now?

A. No. There is no grandfather provision. In order to upgrade to Technician, you will need to pass the Element 2 written examination. The FCC did not change operating privileges for Novice, General, Advanced and Amateur Extra class licensees.

Q. I am a current Advanced licensee. Am I affected by this change?

A. No, this ruling does not impact your license. While no new Advanced class licenses are being issued, current Advanced class licensees will have the same privileges they already enjoy. The R&O does not change operating privileges for Novice, General, Advanced and Amateur Extra class licensees.

Q. I got my Technician license prior to March 21, 1987. What happens to my license?

A. You actually could have already taken that license and proof that you had the Technician license before that date to a volunteer examiner (VE) test session, paid the test session fee and already enjoying General privileges. This latest R&O doesn't change anything in this regard.

This is based on the fact that before that date, the only difference between the Technician and General class licenses was the Morse code speed; the theory exams were identical. Starting March 21, 1987, the Technician and General class license exams no longer were the same, so the "grandfather" rule doesn't apply for Technician licenses issued after March 21, 1987.

Proof that you held the license prior to March 21, 1987, could be a copy of your old Technician license or the page from the amateur Call Book showing your license class as Technician).

Q. Do I still need to pass a Morse code test in order to use CW on the air?

A. No. Any Amateur Radio licensee who wishes may use Morse code on the amateur frequencies they are authorized to use -- except the five USB-only channels at 5 MHz.

Q. The FCC issued an Order on Reconsideration involving automatically controlled digital operations previously allowed on 3620-3635 kHz. What is that Order's effect?

A. The FCC Order on Reconsideration states that when it becomes effective, the automatically controlled digital operation formerly allowed on 3620-3635 kHz will now be allowed on 3585-3600 kHz. The change affects Part 97.221 (b). While it is correcting a problem in the R&O for WT Docket 04-140, this change does not

take effect immediately but on the date announced in the Federal Register when the R&O is published -- no sooner. Until that time, you may not have unattended automatically controlled digital stations on either the old or the new 80 meter subband.

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