

## Getting a Ham Radio License

Unlike some other types of radio services, you need an FCC license to communicate with a ham radio. There are three levels of Amateur Radio licenses, and getting your first one is not all that hard. Many people pass their FCC exam in a week of spare time study and there are lots of groups and people who will help you.

## Costs

In general, expect to spend about \$40 in books and fees to earn your first license. With another \$200 you can purchase your first radio and the gear you will use to get on the air. Of course good, used equipment is available for less.

You will never know who you'll run into when communicating with amateur radio: young people, retirees, teachers and students, engineers and scientists, homemakers ...

## Amateur Radio Association of Bloomington (A.R.A.B.)

A.R.A.B. members can help you become an amateur radio operator. License tests are given monthly in Bloomington. To learn more, contact Michael J. Ostlund, 952-832-0809 or come to one of our monthly meetings. A.R.A.B. meets on the second floor of the Bloomington City Center the first Tuesday of each month at 7:30 PM (except for July and August). Our website is: [www.mnhamradio.com](http://www.mnhamradio.com).

We want to help you get on the air and enjoy the many benefits ham radio offers!

Amateur Radio Association of Bloomington  
c/o Michael J. Ostlund  
5307 Hyland Place  
Bloomington, MN 55437



[www.mnhamradio.com](http://www.mnhamradio.com)

## Ham Radio is Fun!

*The Amateur Radio Association  
of Bloomington  
invites you to see  
what ham radio is all about!*



**Amateur Radio**, often called “ham radio” has consistently been the most reliable means of communications in emergencies when other systems failed or were overloaded.

## Ham Radio Works!

Most of the time, communication systems work fine. Most of the communication systems used today are feature-rich and therefore, are very complex. Ham radio is different; simple to use and, most importantly, very reliable. Other communication systems fail when they are needed the most. Because communication is vital to emergencies and ham radio always works, ham radio has been called into action again and again to provide communications when it really matters.

## Why Ham Radio Works

Telephones, cell phones, Internet, trunk lines, satellite phones have to go through many vulnerable choke points and need electricity. Even if the system is functioning, these systems can be overwhelmed by the number of cries for help and families seeking information.

## Ham Radio is Different

While hams MAY use the Internet or a repeater system, they do not HAVE to do so! Hams talk directly with each other because each station is fully independent. Hams can operate without other infrastructure. By selecting the right frequencies, hams can talk across town or around the world. In an emergency, when your family’s lives may be at risk, which

communications system would YOU want to have?

Ham radio operators provided emergency communications during these recent events:

- Hurricanes Katrina, Wilma and Rita—2005
- Wildfires in Texas, Oklahoma and New Mexico—2005
- Tsunami in Asia—2004
- Earthquake in Central California—2003
- Northeast Blackout—2003
- Shuttle Columbia Recovery Effort—2003
- 9/11 Terrorist Attacks—2001
- “500-Year Flood” ND & MN—1997
- TWA Plane Crash—1996
- Oklahoma City Bombing—1995

## Hurricanes, Ice, Snow, Tornadoes, and SKYWARN



The National Hurricane Center in Florida relies on its ham radio station, WX4NHC, to receive reports from hams in affected areas ([www.w4nhc.org](http://www.w4nhc.org)). The National Weather Service uses ham radio operators for their “SKYWARN”

program to get ground level reports of events that are missed by Doppler radar.

Ham radio operators by the hundreds volunteered for service to the devastated areas of the Gulf Coast after Hurricane Katrina and her sisters Rita and Wilma pounded a five state area and destroyed other communications systems. For their life-saving work, the hams

received commendations from the President and Congress as well as international praise. It truly proved the saying, “When all else fails, ham radio works!”

Within minutes of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, ham operators communicated from emergency operations centers as other systems failed. The ham operations continued for weeks as the amateurs handled emergency and other important messages for disaster and government agencies and for families.

Hams use a variety of radios and antennas on a numerous frequencies to communicate across town and around the world. They use ham radio for personal enjoyment, for keeping in touch with friends and family, for public service communications and to experiment with radio technology.



Boaters, RVers and outdoor enthusiasts also use ham radio as an excellent way to maintain communications from wherever they are.

Big station or small and portable, hams enjoy the security of knowing they can get a message through in almost any situation without depending on a fragile infrastructure that can fail or be overloaded.

FEMA advises that in a crisis you should plan to be totally on your own for at least 3 days – **How will you communicate?**