

What's Next – Welcome to Amateur Radio!

Clear instructions and useful links to guide you after passing your exam

Disclaimer:

We are not required to provide the following information and links. We do this to help and assist you as we welcome you into the great hobby of Amateur Radio.

FCC Processing Update – November 2025

The recent government shutdown has officially ended. However, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has not yet resumed normal operations. The FCC is expected to reopen the week of November 17, 2025.

Once reopened, their systems will be heavily backlogged. Applications will be processed in order of exam date, which means your paperwork will move through the queue behind earlier exams. Depending on when you tested, it could take several weeks before you see any updates in the FCC database.

The FCC's backend licensing system is a legacy platform with older architecture and known stability issues. Many federal business systems of this vintage use older languages such as COBOL. This can contribute to processing delays and occasional system crashes.

With the post-shutdown backlog, outages and slow processing are likely. Only a small number of qualified personnel can maintain these systems, so recovery from system failures can take days.

What You Can Do

1. **Pay your \$35 license fee as soon as the system allows it.** When the payment system comes back online, submit your payment promptly to secure your place in the queue.
2. **Watch your email closely.** The FCC will send an email to the address listed on your Form 605 once their system begins processing. This email contains the payment instructions. Check your spam and junk folders regularly. Missing this email or failing to pay in time will result in your application being dismissed, and you will have to begin the process again.
3. **Felony documentation.** If you have a felony conviction, submit the required documentation as soon as the FCC systems are back online. This process is strictly between you and the FCC — we cannot assist or intervene.

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4. **Do not contact the FCC, ARRL, or us about your paperwork.** The FCC's public call center is operated by a contractor and may not have accurate information during recovery. Patience is required until the systems are operational.
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When to Expect Progress

- Once the FCC systems reopen, licenses will be issued in order of exam date.
 - Upgrades and new licenses will process as soon as payment and verification steps are complete.
 - You may see your call sign appear in the FCC ULS database within days or it may take several weeks depending on the backlog.
 - If you have already paid and do not see your license after several weeks, it is likely still in the queue. Do not worry.
 - Once the systems stabilize, all pending applications will continue to move normally.
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Helpful Tips

- Paying promptly is the best way to avoid unnecessary delays.
 - Keep monitoring email and FCC notices, but do not worry about contacting us or the FCC unnecessarily.
 - Remember that backlogs are normal after system outages and shutdowns. Patience is key.
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Congratulations

You are now a licensed Amateur Radio Operator!

The most important thing you can do now is to keep learning and stay active in the community. Here are some suggestions to help you get started:

- Join a local amateur radio club and meet other hams.
 - Attend hamfests and local events.
 - Consider joining the ARRL for resources and advocacy.
 - Avoid buying low-cost handheld radios such as Baofeng or Wouxun, which can be difficult to program and have limited range.
 - Before buying any equipment, learn what others in your area use so you can make informed choices that will serve you for years.
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Helpful Resources

Find an ARRL Affiliated Club:

<https://www.arrl.org/find-a-club>

QRZ Jumpstart Program – \$17.99 Radio Offer

1. Get your FCC-issued call sign.
2. Create your QRZ account: <https://www.qrz.com/jumpstart/account-required>
3. Apply within six months of your license issue date.
4. Submit your application: <https://www.qrz.com/jumpstart>
5. Receive your unique discount code by email.
6. Add a QRZ-1 radio and accessories to your cart.
7. Use your code for a one-time 70% discount.

More details: <https://www.gigaparts.com/qrzjumpstart>

Equipment Reviews and Information:

<https://www.eham.net/reviews/>

Join PARC Radio & Technology's Online Worldwide Club:

<https://parcradio.org>