

# **PARC VE TEAM**

# **HANDBOOK**

## **for**

# **ONLINE EXAMS**

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# PARC Online VE Team Procedures

## 2 Introduction

Participating as a PARC online volunteer examiner in remote Amateur Radio examination sessions affords you with an exciting opportunity to give back to the community. You will reap satisfying rewards helping many people to enter this wonderful hobby.

Remote exams provide a venue for those candidates who are unable or (unwilling) to take an in-person exam due to pandemic or other reasons.

Candidates should be technically capable of operating their electronic equipment. They must have sufficient skill to set up their computer along with a second device using the Zoom Meeting application and operate them. Both devices must have video, sound, microphone, camera, along with a good internet connection.

We are not a catch-all for those that are not technically knowledgeable or capable of operating their electronic equipment.

## 3 Preparation

An online volunteer examiner must be prepared, follow the rules, and meet specific minimum requirements:

- Amateur Extra license holder
- Certified with the ARRL VEC and submitted a copy of your credentials
- Possess a computer with a camera and a microphone (not a Dell laptop or Chromebook)
- Possess a Zoom account (free)
- Download and install Zoom application, and proficient with its use
- Set up and test your equipment before you join your first session

After you are ready to commit to proctoring exams, there are a few additional steps you should take:

- Register with Exam Tools in order to be able to sign CSCEs for candidates (not required to begin observing)
- Download and install the Telegram application to participate in backend communications
- Practice using Exam Tools in the “sandbox” (when it is working; not required)
- If you have Hamshack Hotline, look up our voice conference bridge
- Obtain a copy of the script and practice it (depending on your level of commitment)
- Practice different exam team duties
- Recruit additional team members for training, and build a team
- Lead an exam
- Become more active as time permits

## 4 Preliminary Sessions

Initially, a new remote volunteer examiner should join a session and observe only. This will allow you to see how things work and what to expect. It is also an opportunity to determine your technical capabilities and whether you might have any bandwidth issues. It is also a great time to meet the team members and learn first-hand about some of the inherent difficulties that online exams present.

To join a preliminary session, set your Zoom display name to VE NAME CALLSIGN Observer-ORGANIZATION (if any). It should look something like this:

VE John Doe W1AQ Observer-Anywhere Radio Club

This is very important as it lets the VE team know that they should let your device into the exam session. You can change your name in Zoom by going to “Settings | Advanced | Profile name” and then edit your “Display Name”. You must do this before you log in to a meeting. If you are using a free account, you will select “View Advanced Features” which launches a browser window where you log in to your account. In the top right corner you will see a rounded square that is your thumbnail. It may contain a picture if you have added one or it may be one or two letters. Click on the thumbnail, then click on your email address. You will select “Profile” on the top left, then select edit on the right across from your name. Then edit the “Display Name” as shown above. Another option is to go to [www.zoom.us/profile](https://www.zoom.us/profile) or [www.zoom.us](https://www.zoom.us) and click on “My Account”.

It’s important to not use any distracting backgrounds. Do not put a picture in for the meeting. If you need to, remove this at the same place where you change your display name. That way, it provides a black screen with your name and call sign for everyone to see.

When you join in for the first time, the team leader will introduce themselves and give you a short overview. It is difficult to provide a lot of information initially unless it is prearranged, since time is usually limited at the beginning. However, the leader can conduct a Q&A with you after the sessions are over, or in between sessions.

Once a candidate is admitted, remember that you are an observer. Some things may happen that you do not understand, or may be different than what you are used to. If this happens, take notes and ask about it later. The team leader will be happy to explain things.

Remember, this is not an in-person exam, so the rules and requirements are different. The remote VE teams do not offer unlimited time, nor will they conduct exams without advance notice. Sessions are timed because a new candidate is coming into the session every 15 minutes. It would be unfair to the next person and to the team if the candidate is not ready and prepared to begin on time. While the team does give “time remaining” alerts periodically, they do not necessarily stop the candidate from finishing; it depends on how many candidates are waiting and the particular candidate’s situation.

The team requires that the examiners remain silent and attentive during the exam sessions to watch and listen for anything that might indicate that the exam session’s integrity has been compromised.

Please do not feel overwhelmed. It takes time and experience to learn about the many intricacies that lead to a successful exam session. Remember, PARC has been conducting online exams since the beginning of when remote examinations were first authorized; many team members have conducted well over 3,000 exams.

Questions are welcome at the right time—but not during an exam, or when a candidate is in the room.

## 5 Chronology of an Exam

There are several different phases of an exam. We will discuss them here:

## 5.1 Initial Emails

If the candidates is asking a question that has already been documented, please refer the them to the website. Do not “spoon-feed” the candidates. Doing so will lead to their dependence on others to answer their questions, and a handicap that will prevent them from learning through self-education, experimentation, and exploring the many facets of ham radio. Also, a person who fails to read the instructions will not read the manual of the equipment they buy, nor will they likely pay attention to regulations or requirements or pay proper attention to their equipment outputs. This will result in possible illegal transmission and further, may propagate bad operating practices for them and others that learn from them.

## 5.2 Registration

Did the candidates affirm they have read the website and FAQ? Did they pay their fee for the exam? Do they have a valid address that the USPS delivers mail directly to, and does it belong to the candidates? Do they have an FRN that matches their name and address? Did they include a phone number and email address? Did they complete the exam tools registration?

## 5.3 Waiting Room

Have they named their devices to identify which is the computer and which is the phone? Does the name match the candidates's name?

## 5.4 Initial Instructions

During the time period that the candidates enters the main Zoom room until they affirm the questions, watch for any suspicious activity. Also, look for items that are not allowed such as hats, earpieces of any kind, watches, etc. Is the candidates paying attention? If not, stop and instruct the candidates to follow the instructions and listen carefully. They should not be looking around the room or touching their phone. The only thing they may do is shut down applications on their computer. During this initial period, Zoom Operator makes any name changes to assist the team. Always make our changes using ALL CAPS, this informs everyone that the Zoom Operator made the change. Make sure the candidates name is as it appears on Exam Tools and includes COMP for computer and PH for phone. Add an \*I\* to the end so that everyone knows the candidates has been read the initial instructions. This is especially helpful when using breakout rooms or multi-candidate instruction methods.

## 5.5 Room Scan

During the time period that the candidates affirms the questions until they set up the phone to view the computer screen and keyboard, watch for any prohibited items listed in the online rules.

Are any written items, charts, “sticky notes” or monitors of any kind within the candidates's field of vision? Inspect the laptop for any wires connected other than power, a cable to an external camera (only allowed if the computer does not have a built-in one). Ensure that all monitors and TVs located within the field of vision (90 degrees left and right of the exam view) are covered or disconnected entirely. It is not sufficient to turn them off. No ham-related equipment or papers should be situated anywhere in the field of view. The laptop or computer keyboard or monitor area should be completely free of any distractions.

If any team member cannot certify that the area is clear, ask the candidates to identify another location that is acceptable. Candidates will try anything to push the limits. However, if they are faced with an exam being terminated for “non-compliance” they will generally find a suitable location that meets the requirements. Be polite,

but DO NOT allow yourself to be bullied or pressured into agreeing to any arrangement that compromises the exam's integrity.

When scanning the computer exam area (computer, seat, desk, and peripheral vision), hold the phone (camera) horizontal (landscape mode). When scanning the room (360 degree scan), hold the phone (camera) vertical (portrait mode). Finally, when setting the phone up to view the testing environment (computer monitor and keyboard as well as hands), the best view is in horizontal (landscape mode) once again. Sometimes the position and layout may require vertical (portrait mode) in order to get the full view of the monitor and keyboard. It is best to use the rear camera for this positioning as it prevents the candidates from seeing the phone screen should they receive a notification. They just did the entire scan using the rear camera so leave it in that mode if possible. Otherwise, there is no leniency for any glance toward the phone. That will result in an automatic void of the exam. Then the team needs to put the candidates back in to the waiting room and discuss whether to allow a retry or not. If the entire team is on telegram or HH, the team can discuss over telegram while muting their microphones as an alternative to putting the candidates back into the waiting room. This method prevents the need for a complete rescan should they decide to give another exam.

Begin the room scan by asking the candidates to switch the phone to the rear camera so that you and they both have a common view. Instruct them to stand a distance of 2 to 5 feet behind the chair they are going to be sitting in which includes the computer keyboard (or as far as possible). Instruct them to point the camera toward the computer area while holding the phone (camera) horizontal (landscape mode). Then ask them to turn 360 degrees in the same direction without stopping, while standing in the same spot. If someone is in the room with the candidates, this method reduces the possibility they can stay hidden as you scan. This also allows you to see any suspicious items or technology--such as hidden cameras--that might allow another party to view the exam and assist with the test.

You should also check behind any curtains or doors that cannot be locked. Verify that all doors are closed and locked. Also, check behind shower curtains. If the scan shows something amiss in the room or the video freezes, repeat until all of the team members are satisfied. This is also the time to check the candidates's clothing, ears, and arms for watches or other technology that could potentially be used to cheat.

After you are satisfied with the exam area and the room scan, have them place their phone to view the primary monitor and keyboard. You need to view the entire screen to ensure that no extra windows, messaging, or popups are open or occurring during the exam. If you see anything, it is recommended that you void the exam and give a new one rather than compromise the integrity of the exam session.

It is recommended that both applicant's hands remain in view at all times on the desktop, keyboard, or beside it; not hidden, below the worktable, or around their face. It is not necessary to see the candidates from the second device as long as you have a good view of their entire face via the computer camera.

Optimal camera placement includes one of the cameras viewing the door used to enter the room. It is also better for the camera phone to be left on the rear camera so that the candidates cannot see any messages or notifications that pop up on the screen during the exam. Otherwise, the exam should be voided if the candidates looks at the phone during the exam. There are exceptions to this rule. It is always at the discretion of the team as a whole, to determine if the exam integrity has been compromised.

Ensure that room sounds can be monitored during the exam. Static events behind the candidate's peripheral vision or 180 degree plane (ear-to-ear, behind their head) are less concerning than are sounds coming from in front of the 180 degree plane. These could indicate the presence of covert cameras, speakers, or noise sources that may talk or distract (people and pets). In the 120-degree front field of view, be aware of any noise sources that could aide in the candidate taking the exam. This includes papers, equipment, blinking lights, and any audible devices.

## 5.6 Screen Sharing

After the candidate turns on screen sharing, look for any running applications. While these are not the only indicators of improper activity, they are some of the more obvious ones.

On a Mac computer, you must verify that no applications in the taskbar have a dot below them other than FINDER, CALCULATOR, and ZOOM applications. On a PC, you have to make sure the only applications that have an underline are the CALCULATOR and ZOOM applications. Absolutely nothing else can be open. Inspect the desktop icons looking for anything that may help with the exam.

The calculator should be in basic/standard view and as small as possible on the monitor's left side, so there is room for the exam. Ensure that no numbers are stored in the calculator's memory. If this were an in-person exam, the candidates would be given a 9 function basic calculator in most cases. There is no reason for an candidates to be given access to anything other than a basic standard calculator with the memory cleared. Instruct the candidates to demonstrate the memory is clear.

The computer MUST RUN ZOOM as an application--not in a web browser. They cannot use a Chromebook since this device stops the computer camera once screen sharing starts, and blocks some windows or popups from examiners' view. You cannot run the exam in older browsers such as Explorer. Candidates must use an up-to-date browser such as Chrome, Firefox, Safari, NEW Edge, or Brave. They cannot use a VPN, Incognito Mode, or any other private browsing method. Developer versions and experimental versions of any browser are not allowed. If the candidates is honest, there is no need for such privacy tools because the website is focused solely on the exam. Also, the exam may not perform correctly in these modes.

Once the browser window is open, ask the candidates to narrow it down to fit easily between the calculator on the left and the Zoom gallery on the right. This should be no more than 5 inches since the exam is only about 3 to 4 inches wide. Make sure it does not touch the top. If it does touch, this will sometimes make it hard to adjust and prevent resizing. It also can block out portions of the screen that the candidates needs to see. Cheaters use polarizing screens and other techniques to prevent the observers from seeing popups or test aids. If the browser shows desktop all the way around it, the observers may notice unusual flashing or squares occurring intermittently during the exam. This is an indication of possible breach of exam integrity and should be investigated.

Remember, the Zoom objects are not seen on the examiners screens, only on the candidates's screen. The Zoom gallery is a strip of videos that takes up about 2 or 3 inches on the screen's right side. There is also a Zoom screen control that occupies about one-half inches across the top of the candidates's screen.

## 5.7 Starting the Exam

Once the browser is open and sized, ask the candidates to type the exam address "exam.tools" and press enter. They will be directed to the exam site.

They will need to click the "I Understand" button in the green bar at the bottom. If it is in dark mode, have them click the black/white moon in the bottom right corner. The dark mode is more challenging for the examiners to watch, and schematics are challenging to see in dark mode. There are also applications that can provide covert communication to an candidates during the session that is not noticeable by observers when using dark mode. Once they are in light mode, you have them join the session by clicking the button that displays Join Exam Session.

On the next screen, verify that the sizing is correct. Make sure that their name, address, and phone number are displayed. This is necessary for sizing purposes. Have the candidates squeeze up from the bottom of the browser to shorten it and cuts off the words "No Exams Have Been Taken" but leaves the words "Exam History" at the bottom. This will ensure they see all of the exam questions and schematics without scrolling.

Explain to the candidate that pressing a letter key automatically advances the questions.

If there is insufficient room on the browser to display below the "Exam History" sentence, request the candidate to use view sizing to correct this. On a PC, have the candidate press CONTROL and MINUS until it fits. (For a Mac, press COMMAND and MINUS.)

Ask the candidate to click on "start exam."

Please give the candidate the instructions and turn off all examiners' video and audio. The candidate places the pointer over the word "Remaining". When they have answered all of the questions the "Remaining" changes to a gold grade exam button that the candidate will press. Be sure to explain this. Also, they must click on "Remaining" after using the calculator to refocus the controls on the exam page in order to continue to select the "A" "B" "C" or "D" key on the keyboard. Even though using a mouse may function, mouse clicks and scrolling can break the exam.

All examiners should observe the candidate for glances in any direction other than directly at the exam screen and possibly at the keyboard. All other glances are most certainly a need for a verbal warning if not a restart or void of exam. Make sure the candidate is not wearing anything other than required prescription glasses on their face. Nothing else is to be worn during the exam and that includes hearing aids. If the candidate needs the hearing aid for the instructions, they keep them on to the point where you tell them to start. You instruct them to remove the hearing aid before turning off your microphone with the additional instruction to reinsert again before pressing the gold "Grade Exam" button.

Observe the screen view and keyboard view for any pop-ups, windows, notifications, flashing lights, or anything else suspicious that may be noticed.

Utilizing both the computer camera and second device camera, be alert to motion in the room which may be as slight as moving shadows or light changes as these are indicators of another person present in the room.

Pets are distracting to both the examiners and candidates and prevent a secure environment as well as mask other possible issues with their movement and noises. A pet may also cause a false failure by distracting the candidate or causing a glance off the screen. For these reasons and others, pets are not allowed access to the testing environment.

Finally be alert to sounds. Sounds of distant speaking, codes, or hints being given by another source. These could include a covert ear piece or speaker giving the candidate help. There could be a covert camera in the room disguised as a smoke detector, wall plate, cigarette pack, clock, book, stuffed animal, external mouse, etc. So be very alert to the possibility that they exist. A candidate cannot speak during an exam because this could give a third party the information they need to assist the candidate with unauthorized help during the exam.

## 5.8 Finishing the Exam

After they click the "Grade Exam" button, the hard part of observing is over. The Exam Tool Operator authorizes the session to grade the exam. The score comes up as either a green PASS screen or a red FAILED screen. If you get a red FAILED screen, immediately console the candidate and ask them to close the browser window. Please do not allow the red FAILED screen to sit there and 'stare' them in the face accentuating the fact that they failed. If you get the green PASS screen, congratulate the candidate and immediately ask them to select "finish and sign forms", then "finish and sign". Please hold congratulations to the end. The second device should be removed while the examiners observe the candidate type and sign their name. Once they click the logout, the Zoom Operator stops the recording and screen share. Additionally, this person must ensure that the candidate logs out so that they cannot get back into the exam system after the session is terminated.

The examiners can switch to a Zoom Gallery View to say their final goodbyes. Remember to keep all instructions and farewells friendly but quick. If you spend time with chatter, you are inconveniencing other candidates waiting to test, and the examiners may have other things to do after the sessions are complete. The lead needs to record the score and the names of all VEs who participated in the session.

## 6 Communications

There are several options available to teams to communicate before, during, and after an exam. We discourage Volunteer Examiners speaking on their microphones at any time there is a candidate in the session. The candidate needs to have one point of contact and hear instructions from only one VE during the session. Having all the verbal commands coming from the Team Guide allows for better concentration on instructions by the candidate.



Interruptions also distract the guide who may lose their place, repeat, or miss necessary information. The team lead should be the only one to verbally interrupt should the Team Guide fail to recognize visual clues being delivered.

How do we transmit visual clues? We naturally use smiles and frowns as facial clues, but they are not as noticeable or direct as needed. Therefore, when a Team Guide asks the team to verify if they are satisfied or questions the team. A yes is signified by holding a clear thumbs up closer to the camera than your face so that it is an obvious indication of your affirmative vote. Likewise, a no is indicated by a thumbs down in the same way. The Team Guide will pause if they do not receive a unanimous “thumbs-up” vote for clarification. Team members will then communicate their issue by Telegram or Hamshack Hotline as appropriate. Once a consensus is reached the Team Guide will continue.

Other ways that we communicate are through apps or phones. All Volunteer Examiners are usually not collocated for the exam session so in-person is not feasible. Also, the distance between examiners is far enough that reliable consistent radio communication is not the ideal choice. Therefore we use a combination of Telegram, Hamshack Hotline, and Telephone communications.

Telegram is a messaging app with a focus on speed and security, it's fast, simple, and free. You can use Telegram on all your devices at the same time — your messages sync seamlessly across any number of your phones, tablets or computers.

With Telegram, you can send messages, photos, videos and files of any type (doc, zip, mp3, etc), as well as create groups for up to 200,000 people or channels for broadcasting to unlimited audiences. You can write to your phone contacts and find people by their usernames. As a result, Telegram is like SMS and email combined — and can take care of all your personal or business messaging needs. In addition to this, it also supports end-to-end encrypted voice calls.

We use Telegram with TWO Group Channels. One is labeled PARC EXAM Communication (red circle) and the other is labeled PARC VE Team (white circle). We can also direct message if needed. Some may not understand two groups, but they are for two completely different purposes and respecting those purposes is important to maintain the group integrity.

PARC EXAM Communication is to be used only for communication directly related to the exam(s) in progress. No off-topic discussion, rambling, chatting, non-exam communication is allowed. All messages typed in this group should be very professional and succinct. Outside of exam sessions, it may be used for a pre-session alert or urgent VE Team communications. Once contact is made for that purpose, move to the general group. This group is for ALL Volunteer Examiners on any PARC Team to communicate exam concerns and information. This group should be on all members devices with alerts, sounds, banners, and notifications enabled. If you are acting as Team Guide or Team Lead, please put a separate device/account on this group so that you do not miss a message. This is the life blood of the team during an exam. Any PARC Team Member can request to be added to this group after participating in at least one session as an observer.

PARC VE Team is used by every PARC VE that has made a commitment to continue with PARC for proctoring exams. We do not admit anyone to this group until they get to know the team. Obviously, a newbie could be confused by the extraneous non-exam communication that goes on in this group. Even though profanity is NOT allowed or respected in any communication by team members, off-topic communication is allowed in this group channel. That communication may include conversation about Hamshack Hotline, Telegram, Exam Tools, Zoom, radios, dinner, anecdotal comments, observations, concerns, and many other things that are not critical to the exam. Any PARC Team Member can request to be added to this group after participating in a few sessions using the PARC EXAM Communications group.

Hamshack Hotline (HH) is a FREE dedicated voip telecom service for the Ham Radio community. Typically, phones are established in hamshacks, EOCs, Clubs & club members, ARES, and other Ham related areas and functions. It is not the intention of HH to replace traffic carried over radio in an emergency or other tactical operation, but rather to augment it, by offloading managerial tactical operations and providing a full duplex path for such communications when spectrum is occupied, conditions diminished, or otherwise unavailable. HH also supports FAXing of information (with appropriate equipment) which allows tactical offices to share documents & data between tactical locations. In a non-tactical use, HH is an effective resource for off-air troubleshooting when

you need to coordinate a troubleshoot of a radio circuit off-air and between multiple SMEs. In addition to all this, conference bridges on the HH network allow large groups of Hams to coordinate & meet in real time anywhere in the world.

Getting on board HH is easy! Just acquire a supported SIP capable phone (the HH network prefers to register hardware phones first), and open a ticket once you have your phone.

Hamshack Hotline is used by the team for backend live voice communications. There is a Hamshack Hotline extension at all PARC club shacks, PARC Control Rooms, and the Auburn University Club shack. In addition, all of the PARC VE Admins have HH phones in their homes and have HH on their mobiles as an application. If a team experiences an anomaly, bug, error, glitch, etc. with an exam, exam tools, Zoom, or the candidates, they can call the backend for expedited assistance. It is highly recommended that all Team Guides and Team Leads acquire a HH extension and phone to access the PARC VE Team conference bridge.

## 7 Training Sessions

If you are ready to try your hand at some of the team positions, PARC can schedule a special training session that will have a much broader time frame per candidates. The team will reduce the number of sessions from 4 per hour to 2-3. Fewer candidates per hour will allow everyone to get comfortable with what is going on. There will be time for discussions between exams, if necessary as well as a debriefing.

During a training session, each trainee can be assigned a different role. We will rotate the team positions and responsibilities among the VEs who wish to practice and prepare. Do not expect to be the best. And do not even expect it to go smoothly. It may be “clunky” and things may go wrong (actually, they will go wrong), and you will probably make mistakes. This is okay. This is to be expected. We will be “in the background” to help. We will not let you fail. It is training. You will learn and hopefully, have some fun in the end while providing a great service.

Now it is time for you to let us know you are ready.

## 8 Proctoring Sessions

When proctoring sessions, look for anything suspicious that could lead to a breach of exam integrity.

Read over the website's online exam procedures, rules, and the FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) document. If there is anything that is not clear, send us an email to provide you with an explanation. If you have a question and it is not clear on the website, then it is possible that others have the same questions but have not asked. Asking questions and finding errors on the website helps everyone. Once you have reviewed and studied the website information multiple times and observed a few sessions, you will be ready to proctor exams. We would rather void an exam than allow the validity of online testing to be called into question. You will be trained on all aspects of the exam process, including signing as a VE for the exams electronically. You can set up your profile and signature using an iPad, touchscreen, or even using a mouse. It does not have to be pretty, just unique to you.

You will not be automatically listed in exams when you start proctoring. All candidates that reserved a time-slot prior to the time you were added to Exam-Tools will NOT include you as an examiner. The Administration Team will add you to sessions manually as time permits. Do not be impatient and message that you are not in the session. They are aware that you are not in the session and will get you added when and if they can add you.

## 9 Team Positions and Responsibilities

Unlike in-person exams, online exams are comprised of several different positions:

- **VE Liaison** – The VEC recognizes this person as the official contact for the team
- **Team Guide** – This person gives the instructions verbally to the candidates and guides them into and out of the exam
- **Zoom Operator** – The person responsible for admitting and removing people from the Waiting Room into the Main Room and Breakout Rooms. Also, may rename the candidate's Zoom devices
- **VE Signatories** – It takes a minimum of three VEs to sign the documents for submission
- **Exam Tools Operator** – Ensures that all documents are signed by the VE signatories, and that all documents are completed for submission
- **Exam Scheduler** – Handles time-slot assignments, organizes exam sessions, and uploads them for the sessions
- **Team Accountant** – Monitors the payments and ensures that all candidates pay their fee and submit to the VEC
- **Team Contact** – Monitors and responds to email communications. Documents and communicates any unusual situations or issues with the rest of the team
- **Administration Team** – The group that handles issues on the backend system and makes adjustments to candidates and exam sessions.

## 10 Building a Team

When you are ready to build a team, you can invite VEs to be trained at PARC sessions until you have enough examiners to begin hosting your own sessions. You may take as much time as you like. Remember, this is not a competition; we are all in this together to help the community.

## 11 Selecting an Exam Session Type

Choose the session type that best fits your needs. VEs can participate in more than one. PARC offers:

- **Team VE** – You are a member of the PARC VE Team and participate in as many exams as you like.
- **Breakout Team Sessions** – Your team is assigned a breakout room. The candidates come into the main room and are given the main instructions, then passed to your team's breakout room to conduct the scan, setup, and exam.
- **Hosted Sessions** – These sessions run on PARC Zoom, Hosting, Scheduling, Payment System, and everything associated. Your team is handed off the controls at a scheduled time of day. Your team performs all functions of the exam except paperwork, payment, submission, and tracking.
- **Independent Support** – With this type of session, you are on your own. You provide your Zoom, scheduling, website, instructions, hosting, payments, tax reporting and payment, submissions, and tracking.

## 12 Leading a Session

### 12.1 The Script

You'll want to first practice reading the script out loud before you attempt to be the session lead. The script is available on the PARC website. It is periodically updated due to changes from the FCC, VEC, and Exam Tools software updates. Once you have read it out loud a few times, record yourself and listen to it a few times. Try using different microphones—with headsets, without headsets, etc—to get comfortable. There is no such thing as too much practice. You will not be pleased with your live performance until you have done it more than a dozen times.

It's important to read the script to the candidates to guide them through an exam. They need to have a full and thorough understanding of all the rules, procedures, as well as the reasons why it is important. Please do not adlib or customize the script. All of the wording has been tried, tested, revised over time. There is a reason for everything in the instructions

## 12.2 Technical Competence

You will be the person primarily responsible for answering any questions the candidates might have, so familiarize yourself with different types of computers, phones, applications, browsers, computer, and network lingo. You do not have to be an expert, but it helps to be familiar. Don't be afraid to depend on your team members while you are learning. The more diverse your team is, the broader the knowledge of different equipment your team will possess.

Your equipment needs to be functioning properly. Be sure that you have a good internet connection of 30 Mbps or better, along with a UPS (Uninterruptable Power Supply)/backup power supply, good lighting on your face, and preferably multiple monitors to display the video. Optionally, you might want to set up a second laptop or iPad displaying the script to read. A good microphone and speakers are vital to conducting an exam.

Look directly into your camera! Do not set up your camera at an angle to your face while you are reading. We do not use Dell laptops because they mount the camera at the bottom of the laptop monitor. This results in the viewers including candidates and other examiners looking up your nose or under your chin. Any other computer using this placement of the camera should not be used. If you have such a device, purchase an external camera to plug in and place so that the view is face on instead of an angle. Use a plain background or a PARC background. Do not use distracting wallpapers. Almost any wallpaper can be distracting—either a coordinated or blank background is best.

## 12.3 Appearance

You need to be as professional as possible—both in appearance as well as demeanor. Many times we are the candidates's first contact with the hobby, so please dress appropriately when performing as session lead. It's not necessary to dress in a suit and tie. However, a nice button-up shirt or a golf shirt with a ham-related logo looks great. Do not show up on the Zoom screen looking as though you just "fell out of bed" or have not combed your hair or bathed in a week. If that *is* your style, then it might be better to allow others to lead. There are still things you can do.

Remember—even though we are volunteers, we need to be professional, courteous and as accommodating as possible. Don't take any actions that might open yourself up to liability. For example, avoid directing an inexperienced person to make changes on their computer that might cause them to feel that their computer was damaged or they lost data.

When dealing with unprepared or ill-equipped candidatess, bear in mind you may be keeping other candidatess waiting as well as wasting the time of the other examiners in the session.

Do your best, but do not go too far.

Welcome aboard.

**This is a working document and will have updates in the future.**

**If you find anything that could use more explanation, we are happy to add it. Please email us the information at [vetesting@yahoo.com](mailto:vetesting@yahoo.com)**

## 13 Appendix

### 13.1 Frequently Asked Questions

### 13.2 Legend of codes used in Exam Tools

#### SESSION TABLE:

P = Need Phone Number

T = Difficult Applicant

AG = General Element

AE = Extra Element

KT = Technician Element

ME = Multiple Exams

PH = Get Phone Number

RC = Repeat Customer

RA = Repeat Attempt

“Y” = Youth (without number means get age)

Y:14 + Youth with age

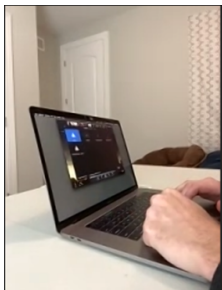
YC = Youth must have parent in room! (under 13)

DEC = Decoy exam - not a real applicant

HHH = LAST RESCHEDULE from multiple issues

### 13.3 Images

The view we want:



We are concerned about seeing the monitor and keyboard along with both of their hands. We also want the view to be back toward the egress door with either the computer camera or the second device camera as shown above.

The breakout room button:



You will need to click on this button to select a breakout room to join. This may be automatic the first time. If you leave the breakout room at anytime you will need to click here to find the options to re-join the breakout rooms.

Approved Wallpaper:



Customized Thumbnail:



After you are a regular team member, we will create you a customized thumbnail.