



[Home](#) / [Wireless](#) / [Bureau Divisions](#) / [Mobility Division](#) / [Commercial Radio Operator License Program](#) /

# Obtaining a License

Submit [FCC Form 605 \(http://www.fcc.gov/formpage.html#605\)](http://www.fcc.gov/formpage.html#605) along with the appropriate original Proof of Passing Certificate(s) (for the requisite written and/or telegraphy examination element(s)) to apply for a commercial operator license.

There is one EXCEPTION: You do **NOT** have to submit a Proof of Passing Certificate when applying for a Restricted Radiotelephone Operator Permit (RR).

Most Commercial Operator License Examination Managers (COLEMs) file these documents for applicants who test with them. Ask your COLEM if it provides this service to its customers.

Use the [FCC Form 605 \(http://www.fcc.gov/formpage.html#605\)](http://www.fcc.gov/formpage.html#605) and the [FCC Form 159 \(http://www.fcc.gov/formpage.html#159orig\)](http://www.fcc.gov/formpage.html#159orig) (fee processing form) to renew your license or to replace a lost, stolen, or mutilated license. IMPORTANT NOTE: All commercial radio operator licenses issued on or after May 20, 2013 are valid for the lifetime of the holder, and do not need to be renewed. For licenses issued before that date, see Terms of Licenses to ascertain if your license needs to be renewed.

## Operating/Maintaining While Application is Pending

A person who has filed an application for a commercial operator license with the FCC, and who holds a Proof of Passing Certificate(s) indicating that he or she passed the requisite examination(s) within the previous 365 days, is authorized to exercise the rights and privileges of the applied-for operator license during the period before the FCC acts on the application, but only for a period of **90 days** from the date the application was filed, **provided** that the applicant has not had a commercial radio operator license revoked or suspended in the past, and is not the subject of an ongoing suspension proceeding.

## Term of Licenses

The following licenses are issued for the **holder's lifetime**:

- Restricted Radiotelephone Operator Permit
- Restricted Radiotelephone Operator Permit-Limited Use

- Marine Radio Operator Permit
- General Radiotelephone Operator License
- GMDSS Radio Operator's License
- Restricted GMDSS Radio Operator's License
- GMDSS Radio Maintainer's License
- GMDSS Radio Operator/Maintainer License
- Radiotelegraph Operator License

The following licenses are valid for a **5 year term**:

- Third Class Radiotelegraph Operator's Certificate
- Second Class Radiotelegraph Operator's Certificate
- First Class Radiotelegraph Operator's Certificate

These licenses may be renewed from ninety (90) days prior to the end of their term up until five years following expiration without having to re-take an examination. After the five-year grace period expires, applicants must retake the requisite written and/or telegraphy examination(s). An expired certificate is not valid for any radio operations.

**Important Note:** Effective May 20, 2013, First and Second Class Radiotelegraph Operator's Certificates will be renewed as Radiotelegraph Operator Licenses valid for the lifetime of the holder, and Third Class Radiotelegraph Operator's Certificates will be renewed as Marine Radio Operator Permits valid for the lifetime of the holder.

---

#### **Bureau/Office:**

[Wireless Telecommunications \(https://www.fcc.gov/wireless-telecommunications\)](https://www.fcc.gov/wireless-telecommunications)

#### **Tags:**

[Commercial Operators \(/tags/commercial-operators\)](/tags/commercial-operators) - [Wireless Services \(/tags/wireless-services\)](/tags/wireless-services)

#### **Updated:**

Thursday, May 5, 2016