



Do You Know?

Updated 21 June 2018

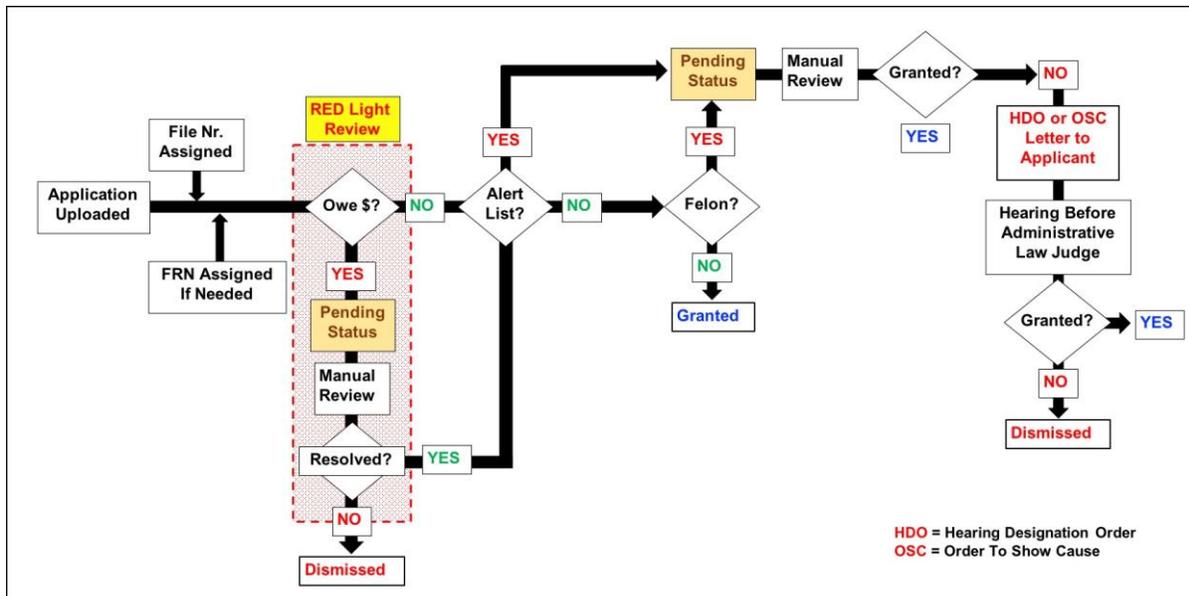
Did you know that every application for a new license, a modification, renewal, etc. undergoes automatic reviews when it is received by the FCC?

The first review is the “Red Light Review”. This review determines if the applicant owes the FCC any money.

The second review is the “Alert List”. The review determines if the licensed applicant’s license has been previously flagged by the FCC. The application could have been flagged based on information from a third party. The application is then referred to the Enforcement Bureau for action.

The third review is to check the answer to the felony question.

The following graphic indicates the flow of an application once it is uploaded by a VEC:



The following tables indicate the application flow for an applicant named “Timmy”. All of Timmy’s applications were submitted through the same VEC:

1. In Table 1 below, Timmy applied to renew his license. As you can see Timmy’s renewal was granted the same day it was submitted by the VEC.

Table 1	
Date	Event
02/26/2008	Renewal Only Received
02/26/2008	Red Light Review Completed
02/26/2008	Application Granted
02/27/2008	Authorization Printed

2. In Table 2 below, Timmy applied to update his administrative data (e.g., mailing address) and this is when Timmy's life as a Ham changed.

Table 2	
Date	Event
08/16/2012	Administrative Update Received
08/16/2012	Off-lined for Alert List Review
07/21/2015	Alert List Review Completed
08/21/2012	Off-lined for Enforcement Bureau Action
07/21/2015	Enforcement Bureau Action Completed
07/21/2015	Application Granted
07/22/2015	Paperless Authorization Printed

Why? Sometime between 26 Feb 2008 and 16 Aug 2012, one of Timmy's *friends* or neighbors probably contacted the FCC to inform them that Timmy had been convicted of a felony. After the FCC determined that the information was credible, they flagged his license using a code that is not visible to the public. Then the FCC waited for Timmy to submit an application for any purpose.

On 16 Aug 2012, Timmy submitted an application to change his street address.

Because Timmy's license was previously flagged and placed on the Alert List (probably based on information provided by a *friend* or neighbor), his application was immediately off-lined for Alert List Review and then sent to the Enforcement Bureau for action.

It appears that the Enforcement Bureau's standard procedure is to take a "wait and see" approach regarding applications similar to Timmy's. Typically, they wait for the licensee to contact the FCC regarding the status of the pending application. In my research albeit limited, I have found no instances where the FCC initiated contact with the licensee.

On 21 July 2015, the Enforcement Bureau completed their review and Timmy's application to change his mailing address was granted nearly 3 years to the date after it was received by the FCC.

It is possible that the FCC may have notified Timmy that they will address the felony issue when he renews his license.

Question: Why did it take the FCC nearly 3 years to process Timmy's application to change his mailing address?

Answer: I have no idea. My research suggests that applications pertaining to licenses on the Alert List are not treated with any degree of urgency.

3. In Table 3 below, Timmy submitted another Administrative Update because he had moved to another state.

Table 3	
Date	Event
03/08/2016	Administrative Update Received
03/08/2016	Off-lined for Alert List Review
05/11/2016	Alert List Review Completed
05/11/2016	Application Granted
05/12/2016	Paperless Authorization Printed

The application was immediately recognized as being on the Alert List (Probably due to the "invisible to the public" flag) and taken off-line for manual review and processing. It was not sent to the Enforcement Bureau for action because that was done during the previous application.

Question: Why did it take a little over 3 months to review, process and grant Timmy's application?

Answer: I have no idea. As noted above, these type applications are not processed with any sense of urgency by the FCC.

4. In Table 4 below, Timmy submitted an application to renew his license.

As we see below, Timmy's renewal application was immediately taken off-line for an Alert List review.

Table 4	
Date	Event
02/16/2018	Renewal Only Received
02/16/2018	Redlight Review Completed
02/16/2018	Off-lined for Alert List Review

Because licensees are not required to answer the felony question when submitting a "Renewal Only" application, the only way the FCC might know that Timmy had been convicted of a felony is the due to the flag on his license and subsequent assignment to the Alert List

Typically, the FCC will take its sweet time with Timmy's application. Eventually, they will send Timmy a certified letter, asking him to confirm or deny that he was convicted of a felony and if confirmed to provide an explanation that describes the circumstances of the crime, whether he plead guilty or was found guilty, sentence, etc. They may also ask Timmy to provide copies of all police and court documents.

The information requested from felon applicants identified in this process is much more detailed than for those licensees who answer "Yes" to the felony question and the process is excruciatingly slow for reasons unknown.

After reviewing Timmy's explanation and documents, the FCC will either grant the application or refer the application to a hearing before an Administrative Law Judge especially if the felony involved murder or a sexual offense involving children.

All of the correspondence between Timmy and the Commission will not be viewable by the public.

If the past is any indication of how long it will take the Commission to finalize Timmy's application, then Timmy may not see any action on his application for up to a year or longer.

5. So, this begs a question whether you knew it or not:

Imagine you have an Amateur Extra class license granted years before implementation of the felony question and the call sign of your dreams. You are also a felon. If you submit all your renewal and administrative update applications Interactively (e.g., on-line) or by snail mail, you are not required to answer the felony question. You think life is good.

(Cue the dramatic and dark music) Then, a *friend* or neighbor discovers your conviction and notifies the FCC. The FCC will flag your license and wait for your next application (Cue the theme from *Jaws*).

Here's the question: What happens when you submit your next application (e.g., Renewal or Administrative Update)?

Here's the answer: In all likelihood you will end up in the same situation as Timmy.

Now you know.

Questions? Comments? Contact Bob/AA3RR at aa3rr@cableone.net