



# Do You Know?

15 October 2017

This is a little historical review of those pesky FCC and NCVEC forms.

## 1. Amateur radio licensing transformation #1.

- a. On December 1, 1983, the FCC amended its rules to permit Volunteer Examiners to administer all classes of license exams, thus establishing what we know as the VEC/VE program.
- b. The application form that was used by the VEs, as directed by the FCC rules, was the FCC Form 610.
  - There was a felony question on the FCC Form 610
  - The original FCC Form 610 did not have a place for VEs to sign.
- c. In 1984, the FCC Form 610 was modified. What was exactly modified is not clear.
  - Most likely the FCC Form 610 had the VE certifications and signatures added on the top of the form. The VE certifications and signatures were on the Form 610 in early 1992.
  - Applications for a Novice license only required two VE signatures
  - Three VE signatures were required for Tech, General, Advanced and Amateur Extra.
  - VECs mailed the applications directly to the FCC.
- d. The FCC Form 610 was also the prescribed Do-It-Yourself form for renewing your license, changing your address or name, and requesting a duplicate license.
- c. The National Conference of Volunteer Examiner Coordinators (NCVEC) is a not-for-profit organization.
  - The NCVEC was formed around 1994 primarily as an "industry" association to coordinate the actions of the various independent VECs and to formalize the management of the question pools.
  - Another purpose of the NCVEC was to facilitate discussion between the FCC and its members.
  - The first NCVEC form was used in August 1998.
  - The NCVEC form included a place for VE certifications and signatures as a tradition instead of a requirement.
  - The first and subsequent NCVEC forms **are not** FCC forms.

## 2. Amateur radio licensing transformation #2.

- a. On 12 Feb 1999, the FCC amended its Part 97 rules and sections §97.17 (b) (1) and §97.21 (a) (2) were changed to state "*The VEs may collect all necessary information in any manner of their choosing, including creating their own forms.*"
  - The "*necessary information*" can be collected on a napkin, on the back of an envelope, or on a VE-designed form as long as the "*necessary information*" is uploaded to the FCC in the format prescribed by the FCC. The "*necessary information*" to be collected is not defined in Part 97.
- b. **HOWEVER**, the VECs preferred to use a common form to collect the "necessary information" which had led to the development of a NCVEC form.
- c. Since Part 97 does not require VEs to sign any form including an application and a CSCE, the requirement for VE signatures is a VEC requirement.
- d. In August 1999, the FCC implemented the Universal Licensing System (ULS).

- ULS introduced a new era of electronic, interactive filing and handling of Amateur Radio applications.
  - ULS offers users fast and easy **electronic filing**, improved data accuracy through automated checking of applications filed online, and enhanced electronic access to licensing information.
- e. ULS enables licensees to do the following common filing tasks on-line:
- Changing Address
  - Changing Name
  - Checking Application Status
  - Obtaining a Vanity Call Sign
  - Requesting a Systematic Call Sign Change
  - Renewing a License
  - Replacing a License (Duplicate)
  - Cancelling a License
- f. Only a few of the above tasks can also be done through a VEC coordinated exam session:
- Changing Address
  - Changing Name
  - Requesting a Systematic Call Sign Change
  - Renewing a License
- g. The FCC combined 40 application forms into four new forms.
- Form 601
  - Form 603
  - **Form 605**
  - Form 606
- h. The old FCC Form 610 series long familiar to amateurs, was replaced by the "universal" FCC Form 605, which is **primarily an electronic document**, but is also available on paper from the FCC.
- i. Like the original Form 610, there is no space for VE certifications and signatures on the Form 605.
- j. Retiring the Form 610 and implementing the ULS also gave VECs the authority to design their own forms.

### 3. Amateur radio licensing transformation #3.

- a. In mid-April 2000, the FCC restructured amateur radio licensing.
- b. The number of licenses to be granted was reduced to three
- Technician
  - General
  - Amateur Extra
  - The Novice, Technician Plus and Advanced class licenses were grandfathered.
- c. The NCVFC Form 605 was modified to accommodate the licensing restructure of 2000
- d. Several minor modifications have been implemented over the years
4. In late June 2017, the FCC announced that effective 3 August 2017, it was adding a basic qualifications section to the FCC Form 605, which includes a question regarding whether an applicant has been convicted of a felony in any state or federal court.
- a. The question will appear on the electronic and paper versions of the Form 605 for licensees to modify their licenses and perform administrative updates. VECs must also ask the question on their applications.

- b. At the request of the VECs, the implementation date was pushed back to 7 September 2017.
- c. At the recent VEC conference in July 2017, the ARRL VEC volunteered to update the NCVEC Form 605.
- d. When it is released next month (September 2017), the updated **FCC Form 605** will contain the following question:

***Has the Applicant or any party to this application, or any party directly or indirectly controlling the Applicant, ever been convicted of a felony by any state or federal court?***

- I think we all agree that it is poorly worded. The essence of the question is highlighted.
  - According to the FCC, it **DOES NOT** apply to the parents of minor children who are applying for a license or upgrading.
  - Notwithstanding the assurances of the FCC there will probably be some misguided VEs who will interpret the question as worded.
  - FCC Form 605 is a multiple service application form. It is used for the Ship, Aircraft, Amateur, Restricted and Commercial Operator and General Mobile Radio Services.
  - While the wording of the question may be confusing (Duh!) it is perfectly correct for one or more of the other services that use this form.
- e. The updated NCVEC Form 605 has the felony question worded exactly like the FCC Form 601.
- Apparently, the ARRL simply looked at FCC Form 601 which the FCC recently updated and copied the question verbatim and pasted it into the NCVEC Form 605.
  - The felony question instructions are included on the back of the new NCVEC Form 605 which is inconvenient.
  - Whether the other VECs intend to hand out instructions when appropriate is unknown.
- f. Due to the NCVEC's approach to the new felony question, the Laurel VEC has created its own amateur radio license application form which it calls the LARC-VEC Form 605.
- Just like the NCVEC Form 605, the LARC-VEC Form 605 is not an official FCC form.
  - This form is unique to the Laurel VEC.
  - The felony question is straight forward and nobody should be confused.
  - With this form, VEs collect the "necessary information" that each VEC must upload to the FCC including the answer to the felony question.
  - Laurel VEC VEs will hand out instructions to any applicant who answers Yes to the felony question and passes an exam or requests a systematic change of call sign.

**Now you know**