



# Do You Know?

Updated 30 October 2017

I received an e-mail asking for information about error codes and how to avoid them.

Before I discuss error codes, let's talk about "**Status Codes**"

There several "status codes" used by the FCC:

- 2 – Pending Application (The application has been taken "off-line" for processing.)
  - There are many reasons why an application would be taken off-line for processing but in almost all instances, we never learn why an application was taken off-line for processing.
  - With one exception, off-lined applications are typically granted in 1-3 workdays.
  - The FCC does not tell us when the issue is resolved.
  - We know that applications in which the applicant answered "Yes" to the felony question will always be taken "off-line" for processing. Like the other off-lined applications, we are never told when the application is granted or dismissed.
- G - Granted (The application was granted) – The most common status code.
- R – Returned (The application is returned to the applicant. A letter from the FCC will follow)
- D – Dismissed (The application is dismissed. A letter from the FCC will follow)
- W – Withdrawn (The applicant has withdrawn the application)

Now let's talk about error codes...

## What is an error code?

The FCC has created a list of error codes that describe why an application for a license was not processed. There are thousands of error codes but only a relatively few of them apply to amateur radio. Based on my experience, there are only a few commonly observed error codes plus a few infrequent error codes. The chart below contains some examples and the description.

Error Code	Error Description
60	There is an invalid Licensee State and Zip Code combination
4025	Invalid Licensee Tin(SSN)/FRN
10540	Tin(SSN)/FRN registered to different call sign
11835	TIN(SSN) registered to multiple FRNs in CORES. Please file again using FRN.
13667	Licensee Name Change must be 'N' when application and license name are different

## How do errors occur?

- Data entry errors made by the VE team and/or the Team Leader usually result from a failure to inspect paperwork, identify, and resolve discrepancies and typo errors when entering information.
- Omission of information by the applicant
- Efforts to correct a mistake.

## How can errors be prevented?

- It's all about attention to details and knowledge of the FCC rules and Laurel VEC policies.
- VEs inspect and compare an applicant's paperwork (Application, license if applicable, Element credit if applicable) during the Registration Phase and look for differences (Name, address, etc.) and ask the applicant to clarify those differences.
- If a non-ham applicant enters a SSN on the NCVEC Form 605, ask him/her if they've ever had a FCC Registration Number (FRN). You can usually find it in the CORES data base and enter it in lieu of the SSN.
- VEs review the applicant's paperwork before signing the NCVEC Form 605 and CSCE for completeness and accuracy and make corrections as required.
- Review the applicant's paperwork for completeness and accuracy before entering the data into *SessionManager*.
- When entering the names and addresses of non-hams, you must enter them 100% accurately. Or you'll have to do it again when the applicant contacts you to inform you in no uncertain terms that **you** screwed up. They may even imply that you are a moron. You don't want to be a moron.
  - Double check the information you manually enter.
  - Triple check the information you manually enter.
  - After that, and before you move on to the next applicant, check it one more time.
  - There are no penalty points for being accurate
- Fortunately, *SessionManager* has some built-in quality control features and recent updates to *SessionManager* should reduce some errors.
- Unfortunately, *SessionManager* can't identify or prevent all potential mistakes.
  - Misspelled names
  - Misspelled street names
  - Incorrect SSN
  - Incorrect building or apartment numbers
  - Mismatched city and Zip Code
  - All manually entered data
  - Erroneous upgrades

## What if the applicant had sloppy or nearly illegible hand writing?

You have two options. Choose wisely:

- Ask the applicant to block print the information and ensure it is legible.
- Go through the process described in Error Scenario 1 below.

## Is it realistic to expect no errors ever?

No. But do you expect your place of employment or the government to deposit your pay or retirement check in your bank account every month? Or are you okay with your check occasionally being deposited in my bank account? I'm okay with that but I suspect you're not. Just a thought.

Below are some examples of common and not-so common errors that I have personally dealt with and how they get fixed.

**Error Scenario 1** – A non-ham's application data (e.g., applicant's name, mailing address, or Social Security Number) is entered incorrectly into *SessionManager* and uploaded to the FCC.

- There is no applicable FCC error code for this type of error.
- The substitute error code will be an e-mail or phone call from the applicant informing you that you screwed up when he/she sees his/her license on-line.
- A new application and session file, with the correct information, must be uploaded with the appropriate boxes for name and address checked.
- In most cases that will require you to manually enter all the data, including license information (e.g., call sign, license class, and expiration date).
- If the correction is limited to the mailing address, the updated application should be processed with no problem.
- If the correction involves the applicant's SSN, a phone call to the FCC is required to provide the correct SSN and associate the newly issued FRN with the correct SSN.

**Note:** It has taken me about 15 minutes or less to get a SSN problem successfully resolved.

**Error Scenario 2** - Occasionally, a licensed applicant will complete an application and add a suffix (e.g., Jr., Sr., II, III, etc.) or a middle initial **that is not on their current license AND** does not request a name change.

- None of the VEs catch this mismatch between the license and application during the Registration Phase, the Signing Phase and the Team Leader also misses it.
- Obviously, nobody discussed the differences with the applicant.
- The application with the suffix and/or a middle initial is entered into *SessionManager* and uploaded to the FCC **without** the Name Change box being checked.
- The FCC will reject and flag the application because the name change box wasn't checked with error code **13667 - Licensee Name Change must be 'N' when application and license name are different.**
- The application must be re-submitted without the previously added information or with the added information **AND** the Name Change box checked.

**Note:** A recent upgrade to *SessionManager* forces you to address the Name Change box issue. BUT, if this happens you must make sure that applicant wanted his name changed on his license and has initialed the NCVEC Form 605 indicating he wanted to change his name.

Anytime you attempt to change any portion of a licensed applicant's name, you will be reminded about the name change box. I don't expect to see this error again.

**Error Scenario 3** – An unlicensed applicant shows up and provides his/her SSN in lieu of a FRN.

- Unbeknownst to the VEs at the exam session the applicant has one or more FRNs.
- The VEs did not confirm that the applicant had never been issued a FRN
- The application is uploaded and gets rejected and is flagged with the error code **11835 - TIN(SSN) registered to multiple FRNs in CORES. Please file again using FRN.**
- The application must be resubmitted with the applicant's desired FRN.

**Note:** I recently processed an application for an applicant who had 3 FRNs, two of which were issued on the same date and all within a week of each other.

**Error Scenario 4** – An unlicensed applicant shows up and provides his FRN and passes the Element 2 exam.

- Unbeknownst to the VEs at the exam session, the FRN he provided belongs to his wife.
- The application for a new license is uploaded and a license is granted to the applicant  
**Note:** The ULS and CORES data bases only talk to each other when an initial license is granted and the applicant did not provide a FRN in the application. There is no further cross-checking.
- Fortunately, the husband realized his mistake.
- I called the FCC and his SSN was associated with his FRN.
- If his wife had applied for her license before we resolved the husband's mistake, I believe her application would have been rejected and flagged with error code **10540 - Tin(SSN)/FRN registered to different call sign** and I would have been on the phone with the FCC trying to sort it out for both of them.

**Error Scenario 5** – A licensed applicant who failed to upgrade his/her license is erroneously upgraded.

- An applicant failed the Element 3 exam.
- His answer sheet was clearly marked "FAILED"
- A VE prepared a CSCE and the NCVEC Form 605 indicating the applicant had successfully upgraded.
- Three VEs signed the CSCE and NCVEC Form 605 without reviewing the applicant's paperwork.
- The Team Leader did not inspect the applicant's paperwork
- A VE presented the applicant with the signed CSCE indicating the applicant had successfully upgraded to General class.
- The Team Leader did not review the paperwork prior to entering the application into *SessionManager*.
- The session file was uploaded and the applicant's license was upgraded by the FCC.
- When I inspected the session paperwork I noticed the discrepancy.
- It was clear that the VEs involved failed to perform their duties.

**Note:** Unfortunately, I ended up notifying the person that his license had been erroneously upgraded. I explained what happened and it is an understatement to say that he was upset. I contacted the FCC, explained what happened and after 30 minutes or so the upgrade was revoked and his license was reverted to Technician class. Fortunately, this person passed the

Element 3 exam a month later. He chose not to visit a Laurel VEC sponsored exam session and I am certain he has not spoken favorably about the team involved or the Laurel VEC.

Training and due diligence on the part of VEs and the Team Leader will prevent almost all paperwork related errors from leaving the exam facility.

All errors impact in varying degrees (mostly negative) on the applicant/licensee, the VE Team involved and the Laurel VEC. When we make mistakes, we must do the following to mitigate the potential damage:

- Be proactive whenever possible
- Contact your Regional Coordinator for assistance ASAP
- Apologize for the error
- Take ownership of the screw-up
- Let the applicant know what you're doing to correct the error
- If possible, let the applicant/licensee know how quickly it will be corrected.
- Learn from the mistakes and take all necessary actions to prevent them in the future.

**Now you know.**