

The eKilo - What

Monthly Newsletter of the San Angelo Amateur Radio Club

January 2007

FCC Releases Report and Order in "Morse Code" Proceeding

From ARRL Web site

The FCC has issued the complete Report and Order (R&O) in the "Morse code" proceeding, WT Docket 05-235. The R&O follows fast on the heels of the Commission's December 15 public notice announcing the elimination of the Morse code exam requirement for all Amateur Radio license classes. The R&O also addresses the ARRL's request to eliminate the disparity between "Tech Plus" licensees (Technicians with Element 1 Morse credit) and Technician licensees—present and future—who have not passed a Morse code test.

"In summary, we believe that the public interest will be served by revising the Amateur Service rules to eliminate the telegraphy testing requirement," the FCC concluded in the R&O, released today. "We also believe that these rule changes will allow Amateur Service licensees to better fulfill the purpose of the Amateur Service and will enhance the usefulness of the Amateur Service to the public and licensees."

No Effective Date Yet

Today's R&O spells out the specific Part 97 changes going into place once the new rules go on the books and indicates that the effective date will be 30 days after the document appears in the Federal Register. Publication likely will occur in January, with the new rules going into effect in February.

Reprising the History the Morse Decision

Delegates at World Radiocommunication Conference 2003 (WRC-03) effectively eliminated the international requirement to demonstrate Morse proficiency to gain access to HF bands, the FCC recounted in discussing how it reached its decision in the Morse issue. A dozen and a half petitions for rule making -- most calling on the Commission to simply eliminate the Morse requirement -- in the wake of WRC-03 gave rise to the "Morse code" proceeding. A flurry of comments followed.

"The record reflects a division of views in the Amateur Radio community regarding this proposal," the FCC's R&O said. "Many of the comments from individual Amateur Radio operators support eliminating the telegraphy proficiency requirement." Others suggested dropping the requirement for General applicants while keeping it for Amateur Extra applicants, the FCC noted.

"Others argue that the present telegraphy examination requirements should be maintained because any reduction in these requirements will be detrimental to the Amateur Service while providing no long-term benefits," the Commission continued.

The FCC proposed in 2005 to drop the Morse examination requirement altogether, although the ARRL was among those who felt the Commission should retain it for Amateur Extra class applicants. The FCC remained unconvinced.

"We nevertheless believe that the public interest is not served by requiring facility in Morse code when the trend in amateur communications is to use voice and digital technologies for exchanging messages," the FCC said. "Rather, we believe that because the international requirement for telegraphy proficiency has been eliminated, we should treat Morse code telegraphy no differently from other Amateur Service communications techniques."

The Commission said its reasoning "applies equally" to both the General and the Amateur Extra class licenses. "We are not persuaded that the Amateur Extra Class being the highest license class is a sufficient reason alone to retain a requirement that we conclude is otherwise inappropriate and unnecessary." At the same time, the FCC said, its action doesn't preclude Amateur Radio licensees of any class "from pursuing and/or continuing to pursue Morse code proficiency should they so desire." The FCC said its rules don't require applicants to pass practical examinations to demonstrate proficiency in non-telegraphy communications techniques, and it feels the current regime of written examinations is "sufficient to determine whether a person is qualified to be issued an Amateur Radio operator license."

No Special Advantage to Retaining the Morse Requirement

In today's R&O, the FCC cast aside arguments that Morse ability is advantageous in emergency communication situations. "The Commission previously addressed the essence of this argument and concluded that most emergency communication today is performed using voice, data, or video techniques," the FCC said. The Commission also turned away assertions that retaining a Morse code requirement would help in keeping out the bad apples.

"The record is devoid of a demonstrated nexus between Morse code proficiency and on-the-air conduct," the FCC observed. "As a result, we concur with the observation that 'maintaining the code requirement does not purge Amateur Radio of bad operators. Education and self-policing does.'"

The Commission further reiterated its belief that the ability to demonstrate increased Morse code proficiency doesn't necessarily indicate an applicant's ability to contribute to the advancement of the radio art. "A number of commenters agree that

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FCC R&O*(Continued from page 1)*

the Morse code requirement 'keeps individuals that would enhance the hobby from getting a license,' and that there is 'no relationship between an individual's knowledge of Morse code and that individual's knowledge of radio regulations and practices and skills necessary to operate an amateur station.'"

Eliminating the Technician Disparity

The FCC also reviewed how it changed its mind regarding requests to eliminate the distinction between Technician and so-called "Tech Plus" (Technician with Element 1 Morse credit) licensees. In its Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM) in the proceeding, the FCC said it wanted to maintain the status quo. The League was among those asking the Commission to reconsider.

"Based on our review of our rules, we agree," the FCC explained in its R&O. "Consistent with our decision herein to eliminate the Morse code requirement, we are eliminating this disparity by amending Section 97.301(e) to afford Technician and Technician Plus licensees identical operating privileges."

The rule revision will mean Technician and so-called "Tech Plus" (Technician with Element 1 Morse credit) licensees will get voice and telegraphy privileges in four HF bands that are identical to those of Novice class licensees. "In eliminating this disparity between Technician and Technician Plus licenses, we are simplifying the Amateur Service licensing structure and promoting regulatory parity," the FCC said.

No Additional Changes

The FCC again denied requests—including one from the ARRL—to create a new entry-level Amateur Radio license along the lines of the old Novice ticket. Pointing out that the rules it's adopted grant Technician licensees additional operating privileges in four HF bands, the Commission said it didn't see any need for additional changes. The FCC also declined the League's request to grant Novice and Technician licensees voice and image privileges in certain segments 80, 40, 15 and 10 meters.

"Our action today giving Technician class licensees the same privileges as Technician Plus class licensees does effectively provide some of the relief ARRL seeks because Technician class licensees now have voice and digital privileges in the 10 meter HF band," the FCC said.

The Commission expressed concern that giving Novice and Technician holders voice privileges on other HF bands "would be a disincentive for these licensees to improve their knowledge and skills and attain a higher class license."

Web Site Resource

The ARRL is posting all information relevant to the FCC's actions in WT Docket 05-235 on its Web site www.arrl.org.

License Upgrade Procedures

The FCC's 05-235 R&O on the Commission's proposal to eliminate the Morse code requirement for all license classes was issued on 12/19/2006. However, it does *not* go into effect until 30 days from the time it is printed in the "Federal Register." The Federal Register Publication Date and the Effective Date are *not* yet known. As soon as the R&O is published in the Federal Register, the ARRL will verify the effective date and publicize it on the ARRL Web and in QST.

The FCC has clarified that there will be no changes in the administration of Amateur Radio examination elements or upgrades and in granting a Certificate for Successful Completion of Examination (CSCE). CSCEs are only valid for examination credit for 365 days from date of issuance per FCC Rule 97.505(a)(6); applicants cannot use CSCEs older than that to upgrade. Amateurs possessing CSCEs that have gone beyond the 365 day window must retest. The FCC will not make any exceptions to this rule. Volunteer Examiner Coordinators (VECs) will handle all upgrades through volunteer examiner teams.

Candidates for General or Amateur Extra testing between now and the effective date of the new rules will still have to pass Element 1 (5 WPM Morse code) to obtain new privileges. Those earning Element 3 or Element 4 credit between now and the effective date of the new rules will receive a CSCE from the VE team. Once the new rules are in place, anyone holding a valid CSCE may apply for an upgrade at a VE examination session. As with any candidate who attends a test session, the candidate must present a photo ID, their current license and CSCE document, pay the \$14 test session fee and fill out a NCVEC Form 605 to have the upgrade paperwork processed. The upgrade may *not* be sent directly to the FCC or the VEC.

License Testing News**ARRL VEC**

Glenn Miller/AA5PK,
Volunteer Examiner

The next test session is scheduled for Sunday, January 21, 2007, at 1300 at the clubhouse. Pre-registration (submission of NCVEC Form 605 and \$14 check/money order payable to "ARRL/VEC") is required not later than January 15.

License testing information and a link to download the form are available on the club Web site <http://www.w5qx.org>. Information/forms can be obtained by contacting Don/AB5BG at 651-5441 or Glenn/AA5PK at 949-4775.

Note: In light of the FCC R&O, this date is subject to change. A new testing date will likely be scheduled to accommodate those wishing to upgrade their current licenses once Element 1 is officially eliminated. More details on the Concho Valley Two Meter net.

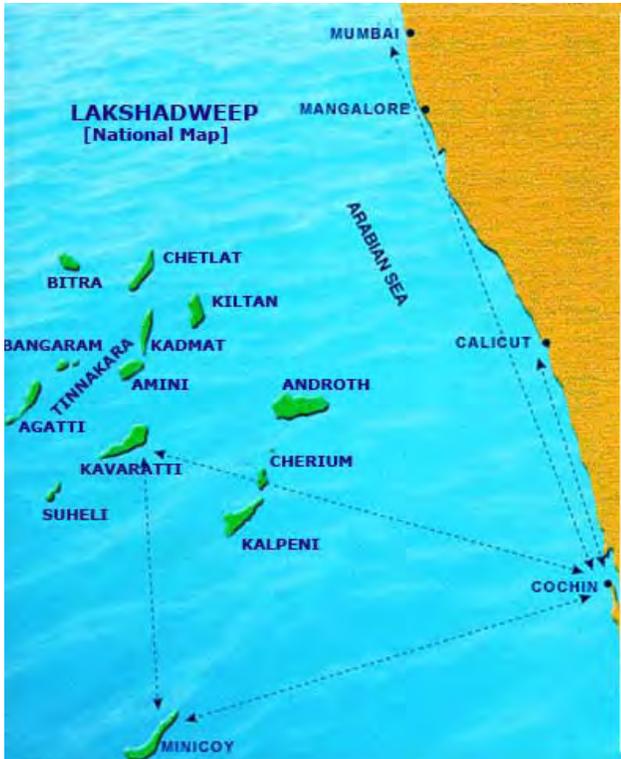
CQ DX de WB5ZAM



DXpeditions in January: (Jan 15-25, a second group—VU7 = VERY RARE!) According to the DX sheets there were 214 countries active the last week of December, even with a low sunspot count. Band conditions are poor to non-existent to the other side of the world, but openings to all sorts of places on this side are being reported. Also on the air in January: 1A, 6W, J2, XT, XU, S2, 8Q, 3B6-Agalega, 3V, 5H, 5U, 6W, SV/A (Sunday mornings) and VP2.

Island of the Month

VU7-Lakshadweep Islands. This set of islands sits just to the southwest of the Indian coast. They are noted to have the only coral reefed islands of the islands around India. Accessible by sea and air from India, the islands lie between 8°-10°N and 71°-74°E in the Persian Sea. There are a total of 36 islands and reefs, found from 200 to 400 kms off the Indian coast.



Lakshadweep is formed from ten inhabited islands, 17 uninhabited islands, 5 submerged reefs, and four newly formed islets. The main island is Kavaratti which is the administrative capital, and is the prime spot for the January DXpedition, as well the major tourist center for the islands.

The total population in 2001 was approximately 61,000. They suffer a temperature range of 28C-32C year around, and a high humidity averaging 70%-78%. The ecosystem had been strongly protected and offers eco-tourists pristine beaches and reefs. Water sports are the prime tourist attraction, as well as being off the beaten track for most tour operators. Healthcare is provided by a hospital on Kavaratti and clinics on the other inhabited islands, with helicopter rescue available for transport to the main island and/or fixed-wing to the mainland. Police and military services are from the Indian Government.

The main language is Malayalam. English is a secondary language mostly noted in the more heavily tourist visited areas. Electrical service is provided by a very advanced solar collection system, and the islands are noted to be very ecologically focused, with very little pollution escaping into the ocean or onto the landscape of the islands.

The islands were a focus of studies by Charles Darwin, who, in 1842, concluded there were sub-surface volcanoes that were erupting and causing the islet and reefs to appear and disappear

(does that lead to the assumption that the area is an active volcanic zone?) The population is 93% indigenous and are Sunni Muslims. Their prime occupations are fishing, coconut production and coir twisting (coconut hair fiber, twisted into rope or matting). Tourism is still in its infancy in the islands, although one site had photos of bungalows that were noted as the tourist center for one of the islands.

There have been very few approved DXpeditions from the islands in decades, and the first formal ones were approved to operate in December 2006. With the sunspot cycle at almost the very bottom (some days with no sunspots), propagation was minimal to areas in the US that had to aim through the auroras of the North and South poles. The second group is to be on island by mid-January for a 10-day stretch. While the first group was thought to be barefoot (100 watts only) and using two-element beams or vertical arrays, the next group is supposed to come "high-powered." But the stubborn sun is still in the low end of the cycles and we may continue to be unable to hear them. There are prediction charts available at the DXpeditions site <http://www.dx-pedition.de/lakshadweep2007/predictions/predictions-usa.html>

Hopefully as this next sunspot cycle appears another group will venture out and suffer the warmth and humidity and provide another opportunity for the rest of the world to contact the islands. More information on the islands can be found at: <http://www.vu7.in/>

QSL of the Month

ZS1YL: Lee says that her vacation home is the most southern ZS station, and likes to paint and operate her TS-130S to a Heathkit amp to a three-element beam.

See you on the bands chasing DX. 73 de Bill.



Concho Valley Two Meter Net

Date	NCS	Check-ins	Duration
Dec 4	AA5PK	15	12 min
Dec 11	AA5PK	14	10 min
Dec 18	- - - No Net - - -		
Dec 25	KB5VTD	12	6 min
Jan 1	KA5VTG	19	11 min

This net meets every Monday night at 8 p.m. on the club's 146.34/.94 repeater. All amateurs licensed to operate on that frequency are invited to participate.

Concho Valley Open FM Repeaters

2 Meter		70 centimeter	
145.27-	San Angelo PL 88.5	441.750+	San Angelo PL 162.2
or PL 100.0 for local transmit		442.250+	San Angelo PL 162.2
146.72-	Eldorado PL 100.0	444.225+	Robert Lee PL 162.2
146.88-	San Angelo	444.350+	San Angelo PL 162.2
146.94-	San Angelo PL 103.5 when needed		
147.06+	San Angelo	6 Meter Crossband	
147.34+	Robert Lee PL 88.5	147.30/53.63	San Angelo PL 88.5

SKYWARN Training

Saturday, January 27
0900 until ~1200
Trinity Lutheran Church, 3536 YMCA Drive

Scanner Jack's Corner

By Jack Roberts/KB5TMY

These are the frequencies (MHz) to monitor during SKY-WARN nets:

146.94 primary, 146.88 alternate, 444.225

162.550 NWS

County FIPS codes: 048451 Tom Green, 048081 Coke, 048095 Concho, 048235 Irion, 048399 Runnels, 048413 Schleicher, 048431 Sterling, 048441 Taylor

Membership Renewal

Membership renewals are due in January 2007. Renewals are as follows:

Regular memberships: \$20

Each additional family member: \$5

Seniors (age 65+) and Juniors (under age 19): \$10

Renewal package deal: 5 years for \$80

Associate members: \$25

Dues may be paid to the secretary at any club meeting or mailed to the club's post office box.



P.O. Box 4002
San Angelo, TX 76902-4002

Get all the latest club news on the World
Wide Web at www.w5qx.org

2007 SAARC Officers:

President - David Behrend/KB5FNK

Vice President - Kent Frazier/K5KNT

Secretary/Treasurer - Bob Freeman/KD5PIX

Emergency Coordinator - David Buck/KB9VTD

Activities Manager - Chad Goodman/KD5SMK

Grounds Custodian - Ron Mechenburg/KC5WXJ

SAARC Monthly Meetings: 2nd Thursday,
1930, clubhouse, 5513 Stewart Lane

Annual Dues: \$20, Sr. & Jr. \$10

The Kilo-What: Edited by Glenn/AA5PK at 949-4775 or email aa5pk@qsl.net

Article submission deadline: Ten days prior to monthly club meeting.



**NEXT MEETING:
THURSDAY, JANUARY 11, 7 P.M.
MATHIS FIELD CLUBHOUSE**