

Volunteer Examiner Manual 9th Edition Supplemental Information 2021



Completing the NCVEC 605 Form, Basic Qualification Question, Online Exams, Remote Video Sessions, Session Documents Upload Webpage, Expired License Credit.

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Prospective VE Applications

Email (quickest turn-around time), mail, or fax forms (PDF file or scanned JPEG image showing your real signature).
Address: ARRL VEC, 225 Main St., Newington, CT 06111 USA
Fax: 860-594-0339
Email: vec@arrl.org

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Chapter 4: Preparing for the Test Session **ARRL VE Exam Maker Software Phased Out**

ExamTools Online Exams System Replaces ARRL VE Exam Maker Software

ARRL VEC's Exam Maker test generating software is no longer supported as of December 2020. Adobe Flash player was discontinued which is our software's installation platform. An already downloaded and installed copy of Exam Maker should continue to work on computers. The program runs in its own environment on the computer, whereas the Flash Player problem is in web browsers during download. Even though the program will continue to function, we will not be able to push out any important updates to the software, question pools, or questions.

Rather than building a new system, we are urging our VEs to use the [ExamTools](#) online exams program which is a more sophisticated computer system. The system works well for **online or printed examinations** and includes registering and tracking candidates throughout the session, on screen exams and grading, online signing of CSCE and 605 forms by the candidate and examiners, logging and compiling session stats and VE participation list (test report summary), and output files for upload to the coordinating VEC. The program manages/handles almost everything needed to conduct a test session. See the **ExamTools instructions** in the Video-supervised Online Exams section to get started.

Visit the [VE Resources](#) page under the heading [Exam Maker Software - end of service instructions](#) for using your already downloaded copy of Exam Maker until the team can switch over to ExamTools. Exam Maker cannot be used after June 30, 2022 because the 2018 Technician exams will no longer be valid.

Video-supervised Online Exams

VE teams are using the online exams for remote video-supervised testing and at in-person sessions.

The remote video exam session is conducted using an online video conferencing platform and a web-based examination system with on-screen tests. VE teams are using the **ExamTools** online exams for the remote video sessions. The system also works well for in-person sessions.

For teams that do not need the remote video sessions information, just follow the online exams and in-person session instructions for using online or printed exams at in-person sessions.

ExamTools printed exams have the option to use the GradeCam program for grading tests or our grading templates. GradeCam will automatically grade exams in seconds using the camera on a phone or computer, which eliminates the need to manually score the tests. Our blue overlay grading template designs are loaded in the program and can be used with the ExamTools printed exams for manual grading of the tests.

Instructions for conducting remote video-supervised exam sessions and using ExamTools online exams

[updated 08/13/2021]

ARRL VE teams must meet the following criteria and adhere to the following rules/policies to participate in the video sessions program. Long-standing, well established teams with a history of adhering to the highest degree of examination integrity, and that consistently submit accurate exam documents in compliance with ARRL VEC standards will be selected to participate.

Time and experience with in-person exam sessions is invaluable when transitioning to video sessions.

Team leader experience at in-person sessions and/or training with an established team as a team leader for video sessions is required.

Online Exams

VE Teams are using the **ExamTools** website for online examinations. The system works well for **online or printed examinations** and includes registering and tracking candidates throughout the session, on screen exams and grading, online signing of CSCE and 605 forms by the candidate and examiners, logging and compiling session stats and VE participation list (test report summary), and output files for upload to the coordinating VEC. The program manages/handles almost everything needed to conduct a test session.

1. Watch the [ExamTools training video playlist](#).
2. **Read all the information in the [ExamTools Overview](#).** In the [Volunteer Examiners](#) section learn how to [create an account](#). Other helpful information is located in the [ExamTools documentation](#) site.
3. Register in the sandbox/development site at <http://hamstudy.dev/> and then login at <https://beta.examtools.dev/> with your team members. DO NOT use a Facebook or Google login: Make a "real" user. The sandbox/development site is used for any training purposes and runs on its own database to avoid any issues with the [ExamTools](#) production environment.
4. Join the VE Discord discussion group at <https://discord.gg/CsKrBmA> where you'll find a lot of useful information including how to register for ExamTools.org as a VE and how to upgrade your VE Discord membership access.
5. **Join an existing ARRL VE team as a VE for a live training session.** Volunteer in the [#arrl](#) Discord channel so you can see the real system in action.
6. **ARRL VE team leaders:** Review the [ARRL VEC ExamTools FAQ](#) and [ExamTools Team Lead Instructions](#). ARRL team leaders (liaisons) must receive an authorization email from the VEC granting permission to run exam sessions in ExamTools. Email VEC@arrl.org or msomma@arrl.org for approval.

Video-supervised Session

During the beta testing period, we found that when very detailed instructions and procedures are given to candidates ahead of the session, it resulted in smoother sessions for everyone with less technical issues. We urge you to follow this guideline. An example has been provided from one of the teams currently conducting video-supervised sessions.

Please refer to Columbia University ARC's web page for highly detailed instructions on how to conduct the video portion of the session: <https://www.w2aee.columbia.edu/content/remote-license-exams>
You may use their wording (or similar text) when setting up video testing in your area.

Zoom is currently the most common video conferencing platform being used, but others can be utilized (such as Microsoft Teams, GoToMeeting, BigBlueButton, Discord, etc.) if the team is more familiar with those systems.

The team will need to set up a way to electronically accept test fee payments directly (such as Paypal, Venmo, Zelle, Apple Pay, Google Pay, etc.) and then the team will have to send the VEC a check or pay for the candidates with a credit card.

We suggest beta testing your entire process with team members, family members, or known candidates (such as students from your club's ham radio classes) before offering video exams in your community or to a wider audience.

Session Documents Upload Web Page

When the team is ready to go, we can set you up with access to our private and secure e-file documents upload page for the video sessions and add your team to the list of available remote testing teams. The ExamTools system automatically creates two files (one PDF and one JSON) for easy upload by the team. Our upload page will display an on-screen acknowledgement of receipt of the upload or a failure message when unsuccessful.

ExamTools VE teams must upload one (1) session PDF file and (1) JSON file at the same time. Please keep the JSON and PDF file names the same as what ExamTools names them. Again, **please do NOT change the names of these files**. The output session PDF file will include the following forms: ExamTools Session/VE Manifest (which is Test Report/Candidate Roster), 605s, Examinations/Exam Answer Sheets, and CSCEs.

In-person Sessions and Printed Exams Information

ExamTools **online** exams can also be used at in-person sessions.

View the [in-person sessions exam process](#) instructions.

The program will also create **printed** exams that utilize **GradeCam for grading tests**. GradeCam will automatically grade exams in seconds using the camera on a phone or computer, which eliminates the need to manually score the tests.

Our blue overlay grading template designs are loaded in the program. Therefore, they can be used with the ExamTools printed exams. **Follow the instructions above for creating an account and becoming an ExamTools Team Lead (#6).**

Read the [printed exam creation](#) instructions for more information.

Additional Training

Recent video by Marcel Stieber AI6MS.

Fully-Remote Amateur Radio Exam Administration: [Slides](#) or [Video](#)

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Chapter 5: FORM 605

Supplemental Information for VEs and Applicants Completing the NCVEC 605 Form

Basic Qualification Question Instructions (Felony Question), FRN, and Email

All exam applicants must provide an FRN and email address and must answer the Basic Qualification Question on the NCVEC 605 Form at the exam session.

Each applicant for a new license or license upgrade and three ARRL VEC accredited Volunteer Examiners must complete [NCVEC QUICK-FORM 605 APPLICATION 2018](#) (September 2017 series, updated March 2018) at ARRL VEC coordinated exam sessions. All NCVEC 605 Form versions issued prior to September 2017 are obsolete and cannot be used. Here are step by step instructions for completing the [NCVEC 605 Form](#).

FCC Registration Numbers (FRN): Exam Candidates are REQUIRED to register in the FCC CORES registration system and receive an FCC Registration Number (FRN) before exam day. Candidates can go directly to the FCC CORES User Account and Registration page: <https://apps.fcc.gov/cores/userLogin.do>. Click [Here](#) for FCC CORES Tutorial Videos.

Email Address: A valid email address is mandatory on the application form. On December 30, 2020, the FCC Wireless Services ceased the printing of paper licenses. The FCC will now only provide these documents electronically through email.

Basic Qualification Question: Applicants are required to answer the FCC basic qualification question. Applicants that answer "YES" to the basic qualification question must submit the required documentation directly to the FCC. Instruct candidates to follow the [FCC instructions and procedures](#) and reference the application file number. The candidate must take action within 14 days of the application filing date, or the application will be dismissed by the FCC. The candidate should not communicate any information or documents to the VE team or the VEC. Candidates should be aware that some information about them will be made publicly available on the FCC's website: [FCC Licensee Privacy](#)

All ARRL exam session forms can be viewed, downloaded, or printed from the [VE Resources](#) page.

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Chapter 6: Conducting the Session

Determine if any Applicant Requires Special Assistance / Procedures for Testing the Disabled: Additional Information.

Minor children (under the age of 18) may be accompanied in the room by an adult during the test.

Accommodations should be made for individuals with special needs such as ADD, ADHD, NLD (Non-Verbal Learning Disorder), and ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder). The individual should be allowed to have an accompanying support person present or therapeutic support animal that is trained to recognize the needs of the individual in the case of stress or anxiety. Additional accommodations may need to be considered including sound blocking devices for individuals with sound sensitivity, private rooms or rooms of smaller groups, awareness of any tactile sensitivity, etc.

The exam session environment should be calm, respectful, and accommodating to youth and individuals with special needs and be welcoming to all.

Candidates with Expired Licenses: Additional Information

Expired License Credit is now available

Credit for expired licenses is now available provided the ex-licensee takes a new Technician exam.

The FCC does not reinstate or renew the expired license, but they do offer partial credit for expired General, Advanced, and Extra licenses and Technician licenses issued before March 21,1987.

The ex-licensee will not automatically qualify for any new license.

At a minimum, previous license holders must take the current 35-question Technician exam at a VE exam session to return to Amateur Radio.

Then depending on the previous license class, the FCC will give partial examination element credit.

The FCC will issue a new license and new sequentially issued call sign to the ex-licensee.

Expired Novice and Tech Plus licenses and Technician licenses issued *after* March 21, 1987 do not receive any credit.

FCC rules, candidate information, and VE instructions related to Expired License Credit and Exam Element Credit:

<http://www.arrl.org/exam-element-credit>

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Chapter 7: Session Report and Returning Documents

Upload the completed session documents for quicker service. New and upgraded licenses are issued within 1 to 2 business days (for weekend sessions) and are usually issued on the same day for weekday sessions.

Session Documents Upload Webpage

Upload in-person or remote session documents via the ARRL VEC’s secure session upload webpage. Sessions are processed to the FCC within 1 to 2 business days instead of relying on the postal service to deliver the test package.

Uploading completed sessions as a PDF file (scanned documents) via the web allows for quicker processing to the FCC. Please contact the [VEC](mailto:VEC@arrl.org) department (VEC@arrl.org) for the information on e-filing exam session documents through our secure upload page. Authorized VEs will be sent the upload page URL which is hidden from the public.

The VE team must only accept FRNs (FCC Registration Numbers) at the session. Social Security numbers are not permitted on any exam documents or in session files per FCC mandate. Candidates will have to be registered in the FCC system and have FRNs already issued. FCC CORES User Account and Registration page:

<https://apps.fcc.gov/cores/userLogin.do>.

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FCC Application Fee

Currently, there are **no** fees to file applications to the FCC. However, sometime in 2022, the FCC will begin charging an [application fee](#) per application. An effective date for the new Amateur Radio license application fees has **not** been announced.

VECs and Volunteer Examiner (VE) teams will not have to collect the \$35 fee at exam sessions. Once the FCC application fee takes effect, new and upgrade applicants will pay the \$15 exam session fee to the VE team as usual, and pay the \$35 application fee directly to the FCC by using the [Pay Fees System](#).

The FCC announced on March 19 that the amateur radio application fees, including those associated with Form 605 filings, would not become effective until the "requisite notice has been provided to Congress, the FCC's information technology systems and internal procedures have been updated, and the Commission publishes notice(s) in the Federal Register announcing the effective date of such rules."

The FCC has stated that amateurs will have at least 90 days advance warning of the actual effective date, because it will publish such date in the Federal Register. Further news and instructions will follow when the FCC releases them.

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Web Resources for ARRL VEs

The ARRL VEC [VE Resources](#) page offers information you will need to help conduct exam session business. Our support page offers easy access to exam forms and session information, online exams and remote video sessions, question pools, FCC Rules, basic qualification question information, and much more!

VE Resources page: <http://www.arrl.org/resources-for-ves>

Expired License Credit and Exam Element Credit information: <http://www.arrl.org/exam-element-credit>

FCC Basic Qualification Question information and instructions: <http://www.arrl.org/fcc-qualification-question>

Candidates - what to bring to a session: <http://www.arrl.org/what-to-bring-to-an-exam-session>

Obtain a license copy: <http://www.arrl.org/obtain-license-copy> (The FCC Wireless Services ceased printing paper licenses.)

Exam Session search: <http://www.arrl.org/exam>

Teams conducting Online Exams: <http://www.arrl.org/findonlineexam>

FCC Application Fees: <http://www.arrl.org/fcc-application-fee>

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