



Ham: Keeping a Family Talking

One test, a \$35 license and a radio that reaches repeaters, nets and help miles away

The license at a glance

\$35

one-time FCC fee

35

questions on the test

26

right answers to pass

10

years before renewal

No Morse code since 2007. Exam groups charge a small session fee, often \$15 or less, and some are free.

Get licensed in four steps

1

Get an FCC Registration Number

Free, on the FCC CORES website

2

Study the Technician question pool

Every question is public; practice free at [PassThePool.com](https://www.passthepool.com)

3

Take the test at a local exam session

Find one on [ARRL.org](https://www.arrl.org); bring photo ID and your FRN

4

Pay \$35 and get your call sign

The FCC emails a payment link; your call sign follows within days

One license per person

Unlike GMRS, every family member who talks on ham radio needs their own license. There's no age limit, and ARRL exam teams charge kids under 18 just \$5 and repay their \$35 FCC fee.

Using the radio



Say your call sign

Every 10 minutes and at the end of a conversation



Use a repeater

Set the offset and tone; a hilltop repeater carries you 20 miles or more



Join a weekly net

Check in to practice before you ever need it



Plain language only

No codes, no encryption, no business talk

How far it reaches

Setup	Typical range
Handheld to handheld, in town	1 to 3 miles
Handheld from a hilltop	5 to 20 miles
Mobile radio with roof antenna	10 to 30 miles
Through a repeater	20 to 60 miles
HF radio (General license)	Hundreds to thousands of miles

Typical estimates for 2-meter and 70-centimeter radios. Hills, trees and antennas change everything, so test from your own home.

Remember

GMRS keeps the family talking; ham radio connects you to the whole region when the phones go down.