Amateur Radio Volunteer Examiners

The Basics of What They Do and How They Do It

Presented by: Earl, N8KBR ARRL VE & W5YI VE

16 February 2008

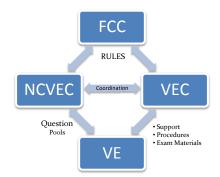
UPDATED! --Includes content updates for new ARRL VE Manual, Ninth Edition

Credits and References

- Title 47 CFR Part 97
 - http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara/cfr/waisidx 02/47cfr97 02.html
- ARRLWeb: Part 97
 - http://www.arrl.org/FandES/field/regulations/news/part97/
- National Conference of Volunteer Examiner Coordinators (NCVEC)
 - http://www.ncvec.org
- ARRL-Volunteer Examiner Coordinator (VEC)
 - http://www.arrl.org/arrlvec/
- ARRL VE Manual, Ninth Edition, released Feb 2008
 - http://www.arrl.org/arrlvec/vemanual/

Background Information

- · Relevant FCC Rules
- NCVEC
- VECs
- ARRL VEC Accreditation
- · VE Qualification for Accreditation
- ARRL VEC Accreditation Steps
- What happens next?
- "Instant Accreditation"
- ARRL VE Credentials
- Maintaining VE Accreditation
- VE Upgrade



Q4

Relevant FCC Rules

47 CFR Part 97 Subpart F -- Qualifying Examinations Systems

•	97.501	Qualifying for an amateur operator license
•	97.503	Element standards
•	97.505	Element credit
•	97.507	Preparing an examination
•	97.509	Administering VE requirements
•	97.511	Examinee conduct
•	97.513	VE session manager requirements
•	97.519	Coordinating examination sessions
•	97.521	VEC qualifications
•	97.523	Question pools
•	97.525	Accrediting V.E.s
•	97.527	Reimbursement for expenses.

National Conference of Volunteer Examiner Coordinators (NCVEC)

- A private not-for-profit voluntary association.
- Membership comprised of the various FCC certified Volunteer Examiner Coordinators (VECs).
- Facilitates the intercommunications between the FCC and each VEC.
- All VECs must cooperate in maintaining one question pool for each written examination element. (§97.523 Question pools)

Q4

Volunteer Examiner Coordinator

- A Volunteer Examiner Coordinator (VEC) is:
 - An organization that has entered into an agreement with Federal Communications Commission (FCC).
- The purpose of a VEC is:
 - To coordinate the efforts of Volunteer Examiners (VE) in preparing and administering examinations for Amateur Radio licenses.

Volunteer Examiner Coordinators

- FCC Certified VEC List http://www.ncvec.org/page.php?id=318
- Examples
 - ARRL http://www.arrl.org/arrlvec/
 - W5YI http://www.w5yi.org/page.php?id=19
- Slightly different forms
- Slightly different support processes for V.E.s
- This presentation will emphasize processes appropriate to ARRL-VEC.

VE Qualification for Accreditation

Required V.E. Accreditation	License Status	Age	Element 2	Element 3	Element 4
Amateur Extra	Valid & Never Suspended or Revoked	>=18 Years of Age	Х	Х	х
Advanced	Valid & Never Suspended or Revoked	>=18 Years of Age	Х	Х	
General	Valid & Never Suspended or Revoked	>=18 Years of Age	Х		

- · Must be Accredited by a VEC
- May be Accredited by more than VEC

Q5, Q6, Q7

ARRL VEC Accreditation Steps

- Download & Study the VE Manual
 - http://www.arrl.org/arrlvec/vemanual/index.html
- Complete an open book review
- Complete the application form
- Make a copy of your Amateur Radio License
- Mail or fax them into ARRL
 - ARRL VEC, 225 Main St, Newington CT 06111 USA
 - Fax: 860-594-0339
- IT IS FREE!

What happens next?

- Once accredited, the VE will receive in the mail:
 - A colorful laminated VE Badge and a badge clip to wear at test sessions
 - A wall certificate suitable for framing.

"Instant Accreditation"

- "Instant Accreditation" may be used during an ARRL Exam Session if:
 - Already a VE accredited by another VEC
 - Have participated in at least one exam session.
- "Instant Accreditation" may be obtained by:
 - Completing the ARRL VE Application
 - Attaching a copy of Amateur Radio license
 - Attaching a copy of current accreditation credentials from the other VEC.

Q8

ARRL VE Credentials

- Until license expires.
- Valid at any ARRL VEC Exam Session
- Does not convey the right to participate as an examiner at an exam session. The VE Team decides who will serve as a VE at the exam session.

Maintaining Accreditation

- Term of Accreditation
 - Until your FCC license expires.
- ARRL accreditation renewal is automatic
 - Must maintain a current address, contact phone number and/or email address on file at the VEC office.

Q9

VE Upgrade

- General Class VE or Advanced Class VE
 - You may serve as an Extra Class VE only after the upgrade appears in the FCC Database.
- How?
 - Bring your current Credentials
 - Bring your Proof of Upgrade
- Submit information to ARRL-VEC ASAP
 - Update records
 - Obtain updated Credentials.

The Exam Session

Start to Finish

One VE Team ... Many Roles

- VE Team Contact Person
- Accredited VE -- Team Liaison/Session Manager
- Minimum of 3 Accredited V.E.s

One VE Team ... Many Roles

VE Team Contact Person

- Doesn't have to be accredited or licensed.
- Local contact person for public, ham and nonham.
- May be fulfilled by one of the V.E.s

Q16

One VE Team ... Many Roles

Accredited VE -- Team Liaison/Session Manager

- Receives all the confidential test materials for a particular exam session.
- Held directly responsible for the security of the test materials during the time that they are in his or her possession.
- Must meet criteria for license class

One VE Team ... Many Roles

Criteria to serve as VE Team Liaison/Session Mgr.

Required V.E. Accreditation	Element 2	Element 3	Element 4
Amateur Extra	х	х	х
Advanced	х	Х	
General	х		

Q15

One VE Team ... Many Roles

Minimum of 3 Accredited V.E.s

Criteria to administer and grade an Exam Element

Required V.E. Accreditation	Element 2	Element 3	Element 4
Amateur Extra	х	Х	х
Advanced	х	Х	
General	х		

Q10, Q14

Securing a Test Site

- When and Where is decided by the VE Team
- Define Date and Time
- Space size and arrangement
- Number of Candidates
- Cost?
- Big hurdle, if none available.
 - Can use home or garage!
- Liability insurance coverage that may be a consideration.
 - If not sponsored by an organization that has coverage.

Q17

Registration Plan

- · VE Team decides upfront how to handle registrations.
 - Open to Walk-ins
 - V.E.s have plenty of time Exams are not time limited!
 - · Test Site is not restricted
 - Pre-registration Only
 - Test Site space is limited
 - VE Team can set a deadline and limit on candidates served.
 - Closed
 - May be used when setup specifically for a class
 - VE time and Test Site space are limited and Candidates already fill space available.

Session Length & Timeframe

- · Many factors affecting
- The <u>average</u> ARRL/VEC session tests <u>10 people</u> and lasts <u>about 3-1/2 hours</u>.
- · Range from
 - A couple of hours to
 - Multiple sittings over a couple of days.

Q21

Publicize

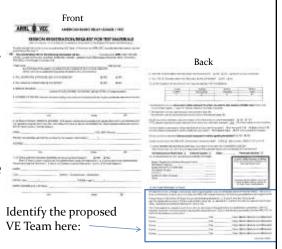
- Public Notice no longer required by FCC.
- ARRL/VEC policy proper local exposure
- Easily accomplished via:
 - Local radio nets
 - Web Sites
 - Newsletters
 - Newspaper
 - Television
- Listed on the searchable ARRL On-line Database when you notify ARRL-VEC.

Forms and Materials

- Test Session Registration/ Request For Test Materials
- Exams
- Answer Sheets
- Grading Templates
- NCVEC Form 605
- Certificate of Successful Completion of Examination (CSCE)
- Candidate Roster
- Test Session Report

Test Session Registration/ Request For Test Materials

- VE Team Session Manager fills this out and sends it in to VEC.
- Used to order the necessary forms for the session.
- Used to register and publicize with ARRL.
- Inventory the package of material when received and prior to exam day.



Field Stocking

- Option open to active VE Teams to receive and retain quantities of test materials
- VE Team Liaison responsible for security of material
- Qualification
 - Conducted at least 4 ARRL-VEC test sessions
 - Registered at least 4 future test sessions
- Provides flexibility to conduct "on-the-spot" testing with short notice.

Another Option for Exams



Conducting the Exam Session

- VE Team Exam Day Preparation
- Register the Candidates
- Collect Test Fee
- Candidate -- Section 1 of NCVEC Form 605
- Administer Exams
- Grade Exams
- Complete the CSCEs

VE Team Exam Day Preparation

- V.E.s arrive early
- V.E.s organize to operate efficiently
- Ensure adequate number V.E.s
- Check VE Credentials
- Materials (Pens, Pencils, etc.) and Forms?
- Room setup
- Table and chair placement
- Segregation of V.E.s from Examinees for grading

Register the Candidates

- Welcome visitors & introduce VE team members
- · Check Identification of Candidates
 - Legal photo ID like Driver's License
 - If not, two substantial forms of ID are required.
- Collect and check NCVEC Form 605 for completeness and accuracy against ID
- Collect Exam Fee of \$14 from each candidate

Q18

V.F.s & Relatives

- A husband and wife who are accredited V.E.s may serve on the same V.E. team for an exam session.
- V.E.s who are <u>related to a candidate</u>, e.g. husband/wife, <u>may not</u> administer elements at the same session.

Candidate Roster - Pre-exam AMERICAN RADIO RELAY LEAGUE / VEC ARRL # VEC CANDIDATE ROSTER SESSIONOATE: JUNE 17, 3400 TEST SITE (100 MARS OF COMMENT BEVERLY HILLS, FLORIDA PONDORNO DROAMZATION NAME (Aprillation Frame, with room). PLAS. RIGHT. AMERICA. BASIS. Cort. P AHORSW T. MURPHY GEORGE L. JAKASON WATER. WILLIAM J. SHORT JANICO F HEFON TORNHE L MC ASAMS W KM4ABE RICHARD E. H. ADAMS - W3AZE

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Q22

ARRL VEC Test Fees

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- The ARRL VEC Test Fee for 2008 will remain at \$14.00.
 - A VE team can not vary the fee that is charged.

- WAGYY

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EDWARD P. HUGHES P. MICHAEL K. HUGHES P.

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DAVID R. PRINGLE

FREDERICK H. S AWYER MARK T. KEENS

JASON M. STOWART

- This fee is <u>charged once</u>, no matter whether taking any one, two, or all three test elements, <u>one time</u>.
 - Elements do not have to be taken in any particular order.
- <u>Retests</u> of an element failed at the same test session will require payment of an additional test fee.

Q2, Q18

Hamfests & Exams

- The FCC and ARRL/VEC requires that exam candidates cannot be charged a registration fee or any other kind of entrance fee to a hamfest, if they come only for the exam.
- The normal Test Fee applies, in any case.

Q20

NCVEC Form 605

- Candidate fills in Section 1
 - Name, Address, SSAN or FRN
 - Callsign (if applicable)
 - Telephone and Email
- Used for new license applications and upgrades, license renewals and address, name and systematic call sign changes. NOT VANITY
- ARRL Members can submit license modifications and license renewals on NCVEC Form 605 to ARRL-VEC.
- Used by VECs only. This form <u>cannot</u> be submitted to FCC.

MOVED QUENTION OF APPLICATION FOR ABAPTICATION FOR ABAPTI

Q13, Q27, Q31

FCC Form 605

- Not used in an VEC administered exam session.
- Currently the <u>only form</u> accepted by the FCC for amateur license renewal or <u>address change requests</u> filed <u>directly with FCC</u> by mail or on-line.
- Can be used to request a Vanity Call Sign
- FCC Forms may be privately reproduced as long as copies are exact duplicates of the FCC Form, including paper size.

Q23, Q24, Q31

Terms, Renewals, & Expiration Dates

- Effective June 8, 1994, only new licenses or renewals will receive a fresh 10-year license term.
- All others (upgrades, address/name/call sign changes, etc.) will retain the original license expiration date.
- The FCC requires that renewals be submitted no sooner than 90 days before the license is to expire.

Q32, Q33

Conducting the Exam Session

- VE Team defines the rules to ensure integrity of the exam session.
- "Each examinee must comply with the instructions given by the administering VEs." (Reference: 47 CFR Part 97.511 Examinee Conduct)

Example Rules to Communicate:

- ✓ Restroom timing
- ✓ Approaching the V.E.s / VE pick up of exam when complete
- ✓ Talking Limitations / Questions during the test
- ✓ No writing in Exam Booklets Fill-in answer on Answer Sheet
- ✓ No Cheating / No Materials on the table
- ✓ No programmable calculators or otherwise must be cleared
- ✓ No Noise generators, i.e. watches, pagers, cell phones
- ✓Etc.

Q36

Calculators

- Most calculators, including some programmable calculators, are acceptable.
- The <u>candidate must</u>, at the <u>VEs' request</u>, <u>demonstrate</u> that all of the calculator's <u>memories</u> have been cleared.
- The <u>VE team</u> has the <u>right to refuse</u> a candidate the use of a calculator <u>if</u> the team isn't convinced that the calculator's memories have been cleared.

Exams

Morse Code

• Element 1 is no longer administered or required for any license in the Amateur Radio Service.

Question Pools & Credit Requirements

The Question Pools may be downloaded from the NCVEC website at http://www.ncvec.org

	Valid Until	# of Questions in Pool	# of Questions in Exam	Passing Score Required	
Element 2	June 30, 2010	392	35	26 out of 35	
Element 3	June 30, 2011	484	35	26 out of 35	
Element 4	* June 30, 2008	741	50	37 out of 50	
* New Element 4 Pool released. Effective July 1, 2008 until June 30, 2012					

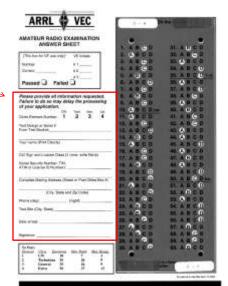
Providing the Exam

- Match Test Element to desire of the Candidate
- · Pass out exam, note paper, and answer sheet
- When examinee is done, a VE should collect the Exam, Answer Sheet, and any note paper.

(It's nice to have an additional VE to do this leg work.)

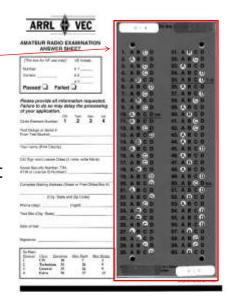
Answer Sheets

- Candidate fills-in this information
 - Element #
 - Test Design Number
 - Callsign, if applicable
 - SSAN or FRN
 - Mailing Address
 - Test Site
 - Date of Test
 - Signature



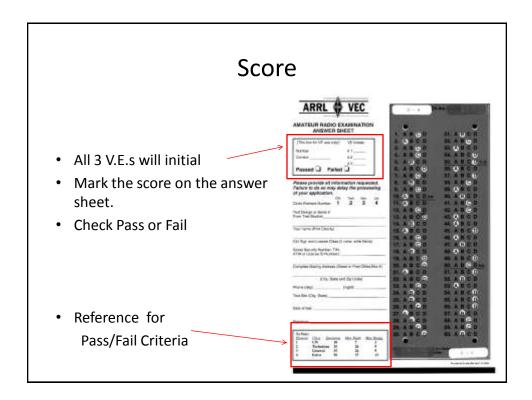
Grading Templates

- Pre-developed overlays.
- V.E.s should doublecheck to ensure correct for exam being graded.



Grading the Exam

- All 3 V.E.s will individually grade the exam.
- All 3 V.E.s must agree.



Notification

- Notify Candidate of Pass or Fail
- Notify Candidate of Score, e.g., 26/35
- Offer candidate the next element exam
- At the option of V.E.s, offer a second version of element exam if examinee <u>failed</u> an exam.

Amateur Radio License & Credit Requirement

License Class	Element 2	Element 3	Element 4
Technician	х		
General	х	Х	
Amateur Extra	х	Х	х

Q25, Q26

"Grandfather" & Element Credit

- At a test session, the VEs will review all credit documents presented by applicants.
 - Licenses
 - CSCEs
 - Etc.
- Criteria in 47 CFR Part §97.505, Element credit.
- Pre-3/21/1987 Technician-class amateur may receive an automatic upgrade by completing a NCVEC Form 605 at a VE Session and paying the \$14.00 fee.

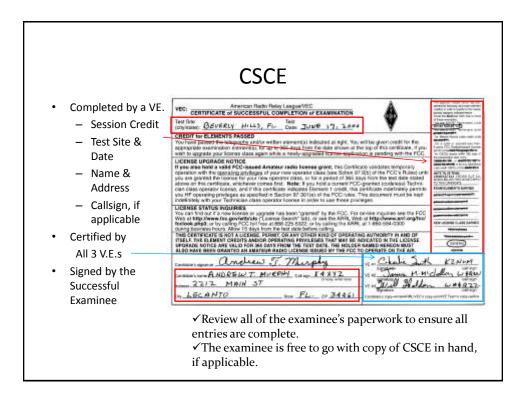
Q37

Certificate of Successful Completion of Examination (CSCE)

- Conveys credit to the holder for successfully completed elements <u>for a specific exam</u> session.
- Individuals should retain all individual CSCEs.
- Credit, as shown on a CSCE, is valid for upgrade purposes for 365 days.
- Validation of a new license-class earned, if applicable.
- One copy retained by: Successful Candidate, VE Team, & VEC



Q34, Q35, Q38, Q39



Record the Exam Session Results

- Certify Section 2 of the NCVEC Form 605
- Candidate Roster
- Test Session Report
- Wrap up
- Mail Results to the VEC

NCVEC Form 605

- Section 2 Completed by V.Es
- Certified by the same 3
 V.E.s that graded the exams and certified CSCE.
 - No License Earned
 - License Earned
 - Name, Callsign, Signature,
 Date
 - Date, Exam Site, VEC

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Candidate Roster - Elements Taken/Credit AMERICAN RADIO RELAY LEAGUE / VEC CANDIDATE ROSTER TEST WITE (MANAGE OF COLUMN) BENEFICY HILLS, FLORIDA V KAXYZ ANDROW T. MURPHY GEORGE L. JAKSON W WATKO WILLIAM J. SHORT JANICO F HEFON TORNHE L- MC ASAMS RICHARD E ME ADAMS WW3AZE EDWARD P HUBBES EDWARD P. HJOHE, JR 4+ MICHAEL K. HUGHES - WAGYY CLARBUS NICKERS DAVID R. PRINGLE FREDERICK H. S AWYER MARK T. KEENS JASON M. STEWART Q22

Test Session Report

- The Test Session Report form is a summary of the overall story of what went on at the session.
 - Exam Summary
 - Test Fee Summary
 - List of Participating V.E.s
- The summary serves as a tally sheet for elements passed compared to elements administered, and the Forms 605 submitted for processing.
- This information is also referred to the FCC for its use.



Retaining a Portion of the Test Fee

- VEC may have specific rules to follow.
- Records of expenses and reimbursements must be retained for 3 years.
- V.E.s have out-of-pocket expenses:
 - Phone calls, Postage, Photocopying, Stationery (pens, pencils, erasers, paper, staples/stapler, etc), Room/site rental, Publicity/advertising, Mileage, Necessary computer software/hardware, Basic refreshments for the attendees of the session (not simply refreshments for the VEs only)

Necessary and Prudent

 All of these expenses--as long as they were necessary and prudent may be directly reimbursed to the VE Team.

Wrap-up

- Collect all forms and materials
- Unless the team is field stocked, <u>all used and unused</u> test materials are to be returned to the VEC, including all leftover photocopied test booklets.

Q30

Wrap-up

- Collect all forms and materials per VEC instructions
- Mail it in ASAP to the VEC but not later than <u>10</u> days after exam session.
- About 5 calendar days later, begin checking FCC database, QRZ, or other on-line license search tool to verify examinees receive upgrades or new call signs.
- Follow-up on any loose ends.
- Collect Lessons Learned for next session.

Q29, Q40

What's in it for you ...

Coshocton
Knox
Licking
Muskingum

(as of 14 Jan 08)

- Public Service (& a warm fuzzy feeling)
- Recognition by ARRL on VE Session Count Page. http://www.arrl.org/arrlvec/veparti.php?state=OH

_	Examples:				
	<u>Call</u>	Count		<u>C all</u>	Count
	AA8BN	168		K8SM	6
				N8LJF	5
	WD8E	46		KA8PCP	4
	W8NM	23		KC8YLD	4
	N8KBR	16		KC8MIS	4
	NR8U	11		W8TJT	3
	AB8LW	7		KD8BUF	3
	N8WL	6		KD8BUD	2

ARRL VE Patches are available to V.E.s ONLY!

What are the obligations of the VE?

- When you serve ...
 - Serve with integrity.
 - Work as a <u>team member</u> with a team of fellow V.E.s.
 - Ensure compliance with the FCC rules and VEC procedures.
- Not necessarily obligated to serve on a regular basis.

Do you want to know more?

- Yes!
 - We can help!
- We can help you, help:
 - Your fellow hams
 - Folks aspiring to become hams for the hobby and fun.
 - Folks aspiring to serve in a role as an emergency communicator.

Q & A