

OVERVIEW - AMATEUR RADIO LICENCE

Amateur Radio is a radio communication service for the purpose of self-training, interconnection and technical investigations carried out by amateurs. This will ensure that these activities are conducted by authorised persons interested in radio technique solely with an aim of acquiring knowledge for self and not for pecuniary interest. According to our Regulations, the Authority may grant an Amateur Radio Licence to an applicant who has passed the radio amateur examination or possesses the requisite qualifications prescribed for the purpose.

As at December 2016, 177 Licences have been issued for Amateur Radio services however, majority are not currently active as majority of the licensees are foreigners who use the facilities for short periods during their stay in the country. The licence is valid for a period of 10 years.

AMATEUR RADIO LICENCE EXAMINATIONS AND CERTIFICATION

The National Communications Authority (NCA) in accordance with the provisions of Regulation 47b of the Electronic Communications Regulations, 2011, L.I.1991 has developed a Beginner's Amateur Syllabus. In addition, the Authority is now offering Amateur Licence Examinations for persons wanting to obtain an Amateur Certificate of Proficiency

This examination is a requirement for persons seeking the Amateur Class C Licence. The Beginner's Amateur Licence is considered to be the entry level for Amateur radio in Ghana. The syllabus and related examination for the Beginner's Amateur Licence correspondingly reflects the minimum level of knowledge, skills and experience required to safely assemble and operate a Beginner's Amateur station without causing interference to other users and services.

The NCA is the examining body for the Amateur Licence Examinations. The minimum age limits for this Certificate of Proficiency is 14 years.

Frequently Asked Questions- Amateur Radio Operations

1. What is an Amateur Radio Service?

Regulation 45 of the Electronic Communications Regulations, 2011, L.I.1991 defines the amateur radio service as a type of radio communication service used for interconnection, leisure-time activity, testing and research.

2. What is Amateur Radio?

When radio waves are used for communication purposes by non-professionals for leisure time activities, research, testing and interconnection, it is referred to as Amateur Radio.

3. How can I become an Amateur Radio Operator?

To become an Amateur Radio Operator, you need to first obtain an Amateur Radio licence. This requires that the applicant applies for the licence. As part of the application process, the applicant would be made to sit for an examination.

4. Who can apply for this Licence?

Anyone who is fourteen (14 years) and above can apply for the Amateur Radio licence and sit for the Beginner's Amateur Radio Licence examination. The Beginner's Amateur Radio licence is considered as the entry level for Amateur Radio Service in Ghana. This examination can be likened to the traditional Driver's Licence acquisition procedure.

5. Can an adult/guardian apply on behalf of a minor (below 14years)? If no, how does such a person get involved?

No, such a person can join an authorised Amateur Radio Club for the time being and can take the examination when he/she gets to the required age.

6. What are some of the equipment used in operating the Amateur Radio?

A complete Amateur radio station comprises of: Transceiver, Antenna, Power Supply Unit, coaxial cable, Amplifier, headphone/ microphone headset and related devices.

7. What is the purpose of this service?

Amateur Radio operations are intended for non-commercial purposes such as self-training in radio communications, experimentation, disaster communication, technical investigations and leisure time activities.

8. How does amateur radio operations contribute to disaster communication?

When regular communications channels fail, amateur radio operations can swing into action assisting emergency communications efforts and working with public service agencies.

9. Is this licensing procedure backed by law?

Yes! Regulations 45-47 of the Electronic Communications Regulations, 2011, L.I.1991 provides the legal backing for Amateur Radio Licensing in Ghana.

10. Do all Radio Amateurs have the same qualification?

No, there are three licence categories namely:

- Beginner's
- Intermediate
- Advanced

11. What do I need to read to prepare for the examination?

The National Communications Authority has published a syllabus for the beginner's level at <http://nca.org.gh/assets/Uploads/AMATEUR-BEGINNERS-SYLLABUS2.pdf> .

12. What is the relevance of the examination?

The syllabus and the related examination would help a prospective licensee to gain the knowledge, skill and experience required to safely install and operate an Amateur Radio Station.

13. How can one apply to register for the examination? or How can one apply for registration of the examination?

To apply, visit our website, <http://nca.org.gh/assets/Uploads/APPLICATION-FOR-AMATEUR-RADIO-OPERATOR-LICENCE-AP14.pdf> to download an application form at no cost.

14.How much does it cost to acquire an Amateur Radio Licence?

A licensee is required to pay a onetime fee of GH¢96.25.

15.Is the onetime fee refundable if one does not pass the exam?

No, but an applicant has the opportunity to re-sit the examination at a cost of GH¢50.00.

16.Will classes be held for people who need more interaction?

No, however applicants are encouraged to join clubs for assistance.

17.How can I join the club and where do they meet?

The NCA has started advocating for the establishment of clubs in Senior High Schools because the old Amateur Radio Clubs are defunct. The NCA shall publish the list of authorised clubs in due course.

18.What is the duration for the licence?

The Licence is valid for a period of ten (10) years.

19.Are there examination centres for this examination?

Yes, the examination will take place at the NCA's premises across the country. Candidates will be informed of the dates and times appropriately after they have applied to the NCA.

20.How often is the examination conducted in a year?

The examination will be written once every month. As a result, when applying, you would have to indicate your preferred month.

21.How is the examination? Is it written or practical?

The exams for the beginner's Amateur radio will be written (Multiple Choice Questions).

22.Is there an examining Body for this exam? If yes, how credible is the board?

Yes, the NCA will administer the process as stated in Regulation 47 of the Electronic Communications Regulations, 2011, L.I.1991.

23.How can I utilize my licence if I do not have an operating station?

Some Amateur radio clubs have set up stations hence you can arrange to operate their equipment.

24.Has this service been in existence for long? If yes how many licences have been issued so far?

Yes, since its inception 177 licences have been issued however, majority are not active due to the fact that most of the licensees are foreigners. Some Amateur Radio Licences were issued in the 70s by the then National Frequency Allocation Board.

25.Are there other licence types apart from the beginner's licence?

Yes, when one qualifies for the beginner's licence he/she can subsequently apply for an intermediate and advanced licences respectively.

26.If I have a related certificate can I be granted a licence without having to sit for the beginner's exam?

Yes, the regulations permit the Authority to issue licences to people who possess the requisite qualifications prescribed for the purpose of Amateur Radio.

27.Can I operate an Amateur radio with my Licence in another country or I have to re-write in every different country?

You are required to apply for the Licence in every country before you will be permitted to operate the Service. The examination may be waived depending on the reciprocal agreement between Ghana and that country.

28.What is the difference between Amateur Radio and Campus Radio?

Amateur Radio is not for FM Broadcasting and Campus Radio is an FM radio broadcasting station for educational institutions.

29.What are the Amateur Radio Frequency Bands?

The amateur bands includes: 1.81MHz -1.85MHz, 3.5MHz -3.8MHz, 28MHz-29.7MHz and 144MHz-146MHz. Refer to topic 1.3 in the Amateur Beginner's Syllabus for the various frequency allocations of other services.

30.Does Amateur Radio Equipment brought into the country need to be approved and certified before using?

Yes. You need the Authority's permission before you bring in any communications equipment to Ghana.

31.Who do I contact if I have any questions regarding amateur radio licensing?

For general questions on Amateur Radio, please contact the National Communications Authority on info@nca.org.gh or 0302 771701.