



The status of CARES Licensure

A Value Proposition

PRESENT CONDITIONS

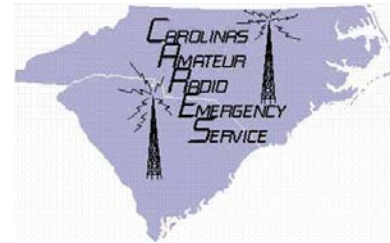
The hospitals of CCHA in Southeastern North Carolina and North Eastern South Carolina are affiliated with CARES, the Carolinas Amateur Radio Emergency Service. Operators of the amateur radio equipment at each hospital must be licensed by the FCC and hold at least a technician level HAM license. Due to obligations to other organizations; local HAM operators may not be available for hospitals if disaster strikes. Many CCHA facilities do not have a sufficient number of employees licensed to make proper use of CARES in an emergency. In order for the system's capabilities to be effective, a sufficient number of hospital employees must become licensed.

PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

As part of each hospital's emergency plan, qualified staff persons should be required to obtain licensure. In order to be licensed, individuals must pass the FCC licensure examination. Self-directed, online, online-directed, and classroom training for the examination is available. Information on these various training means is available through CCHA.

EXPECTED RESULTS

The full benefit of the CARES radio network can be realized with sufficient licensed hospital staff to serve as operators of the system as needed.



How to obtain FCC Licensure to Operate a CARES radio

There are three classes of amateur radio licenses. The entry level license is a "Technician" level license. Obtaining a technician level license will allow those interested to be able to operate the CARES equipment. Also, technician level licensees will be able to operate on the 144 MHz (2 Meters) and 440 MHz (70 cm) radio bands. These are the bands most used for local emergency communications.

In order to become licensed you must pass the FCC licensure examination. The current cost for amateur radio license testing is \$14.00. Payment in cash is made at the test session and there are some personal identification requirements for the test session. Go to <http://www.ac4rc.org/> and click on "VE Testing" for more details. Licenses are usually issued within a couple of weeks and the term on the license is ten years.

There are several ways to prepare for the licensure examination. One of the most convenient is through on-line self directed study. CCHA has developed a partnership with hamtestonline.com to provide on-line preparation for the licensure examination. Through this online self directed study course, hospital personnel and others with busy schedules will be able to study for the exam anywhere a computer with internet access is available for a small fee.

If an on-line self directed study course is not ideal; self directed study is available by purchasing any of the many test preparation texts, and/or by attending directed classroom study courses. Directed study courses can be completed in one all day course or in two, two weekend, half day courses. For those interested in classroom style study, classes can be held at request. However, since those teaching the classes are doing so voluntarily, those who sign up for directed classroom study are strongly encouraged to attend.

For more information on setting up on-line or classroom style study courses contact Doug Yarbrough of CCHA at (910) 332-8013 or dyarbrough@coastalalliance.org.

For more information on HAM radio licensure, go to:

<http://www.arrl.org/arrlvec/license-requirements.html>.