



## LOS ANGELES FIRE DEPARTMENT

# AUXILIARY COMMUNICATIONS SERVICE **LAFD ACS**



“When All Else Fails.... Amateur Radio”

## YOU CAN LISTEN TO ACS

The LAFD ACS operates two weekly Nets on amateur radio and invites visitors to listen in. Licensed Amateur operators may check in as a visitor. The Nets are Monday evenings at 7:30 pm and Thursday afternoons at 12:15 pm. Access our Nets either via our 2-meter repeater or our 1.25-meter remote base.

### 2-meter Repeater

**147.300, Plus Offset, PL Tone 110.9**

or

### 1.25-meter Remote Base

**224.68, Minus Offset, PL Tone 114.8**

### WHAT DOES THE LAFD ACS DO?

The LAFD ACS is the official amateur radio group for the City of Los Angeles. ACS is authorized by Cal OES, is part of the Los Angeles Emergency Management Department and is managed by the Los Angeles Fire Department.

In times of disaster trained ACS radio operators will be called-upon to bridge any gaps in traditional communications systems. Specifically, ACS radio operators will provide a communications link between the LAFD Department Operations Center, City Emergency Operations Center, and key locations throughout Los Angeles. ACS radio operators also provide communications to other City agencies as directed and to Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) members.

ACS Members provide communications for community events such as the Hollywood Christmas Parade and March of Dimes March for Babies and provide other services like Community Fire Patrol.

### HOW CAN YOU SUPPORT ACS?

The best way to support ACS is to join. We understand that not everyone has the interest or ability to join our organization. You can still support our mission by making a **tax-deductible donation** to ACS via the Los Angeles Fire Department Foundation. ACS receives virtually no financial support from the City of Los Angeles. The equipment we use is either purchased by our members, or through donations. Donations allow us to keep our equipment up-to-date and to incorporate new technologies that promise to improve our service to the City. **See [www.lafdacs.org](http://www.lafdacs.org) for donation information.**

### HOW CAN I JOIN ACS?\*

- Are you a licensed amateur radio operator or willing to earn your amateur radio license?
- Are you 18-years old or older?
- Do you live or work within the City of Los Angeles?
- Are you interested in Emergency Communications?
- Do you have reliable transportation?
- Are you able to provide between 5 and 15-hours of volunteer service each month?
- Do you own, or are you able to purchase a dual-band Amateur radio?

***If so, you are eligible to apply for ACS Membership***

***See [www.lafdacs.org](http://www.lafdacs.org) for a membership application\****

### NOT A HAM? - ACS CAN HELP

Earning your ham license is easy. It involves passing a 35 multiple-choice question exam. All potential questions are published, and online practice tests help you gauge your progress. In addition, ACS Members periodically provide mentoring sessions to aid community members in earning their ham license. We'll cover some of the more technical material, offer test-taking suggestions, and answer questions that come-up during self-study. In addition, there are a variety of classes available for those that do better in the structure of a formal program.

To learn more about the ACS mentoring program, send an email to: **[membership.lafdacs@gmail.com](mailto:membership.lafdacs@gmail.com)**.

**\*ACS Members are subject to a background check and must meet the qualifications of a Los Angeles City Volunteer under the Mayor's Office Volunteer Bureau. ACS Members must also qualify as Governor's Office of Emergency Service (OES) Disaster Service Workers.**

### IT'S EASY TO EARN YOUR AMATEUR RADIO LICENSE

The entry level amateur radio license is called the Technician License. The Technician License is really a license to learn. Earning your Technician License involves passing a 35-question, multiple-choice test. Although Morse code is still used by some hams, it is no longer part of the test. The test does involve some theory, some basic electronics, and some rules and regulations. Don't panic! The 35 questions are drawn from a pool of about 400 questions. Those 400 questions and answers are all published. The examiner must use the exact questions and answers as are published. They can only change the order of the possible answers. How you study depends on how you learn. There are in-person courses ranging from one-day learn the test courses to multi-week learn the material courses. There are a variety of online study aids ranging from online courses to practice tests where the computer selects 35-questions from the question pool and presents them on screen. Whichever method you choose, dedicate a bit of time every day to studying and taking the practice tests and you'll be ready before you know it!

#### HOW DO I TAKE THE TEST?

Many years ago, the FCC decided they didn't have the budget to provide amateur radio and other tests. That's where the Volunteer Examiner (V.E.) system was developed. In the V.E. system, the FCC authorizes Volunteer Examiner Coordinators (VECs) to administer the amateur radio tests. The VECs then appoint experienced amateur radio operators to become Volunteer Examiners to actually administer the tests. The tests are given at various locations around the Country, typically in community rooms. The VECs are allowed to charge only for administrative costs up to \$15. There is no FCC test or application fee.

To take the test, you'll likely need to provide two forms of I.D. (at least one government-issued I.D.). The I.D. name and address should match the information on your application. In addition to the I.D., you'll need the fee (exact change is always preferred) and one or more pens or pencils. If you want a calculator, bring a simple one and be prepared to show that the memories are empty. Many VECs will not allow you to use a smart phone as a calculator.

Arrive at the test site early, take a seat, and relax! Listen carefully to and follow the VEs instructions. If you've studied and taken the practice tests, you'll do just fine!

#### GET AN FRN NUMBER

Prior to taking the test, you should go to the FCC website and obtain a Federal Registration Number (FRN). Having an FRN in advance will expedite processing and avoid having to put your Social Security number on the test forms. <https://apps.fcc.gov/coresWeb/publicHome.do>

#### ONLINE STUDY RESOURCES

##### Study Guides:

ARRL or Gordon West Technician Study Guides - Available at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)

No-Nonsense Study Guide - Free download at <http://www.kb6nu.com/study-guides/>

##### Practice Tests:

QRZ.com - [www.qrz.com/hamtest/](http://www.qrz.com/hamtest/)

AA9PW - <http://aa9pw.com/radio>

ARRL - <http://arrlexamreview.appspot.com>

Eham - <http://www.eham.net/exams/>

##### Question Pool:

ARRL - <http://www.arrl.org/question-pools>

Ham Test Online - [https://www.hamradiolicenseexam.com/question\\_pools.htm](https://www.hamradiolicenseexam.com/question_pools.htm)

#### You've earned your ham license, now what do you do?

No matter which study technique you used to earn your license, you're license is just a license to learn and there's so much to learn. The best bet for new hams is to join a group. If you're interested in emergency communications, you can join a group such as LAFD's Auxiliary Communications Service, Amateur Radio Emergency Service, or Disaster Communications Service. If your interests are more general, join an amateur radio club such as San Fernando Valley Amateur Radio Club or Pasadena Radio Club. There, members can guide your radio adventure!