Ham 30 – Why General or Extra
Dr. Marc & Rosemary © 220904

1. You have just earned your Technician license. Out of curiosity, you may have tried the General test, after successfully passing Tech. Elmers, who are General or Extra class, encourage you to get your General ticket. Why would you want to?


Icom 2730 VHF/UHF

2. Because you can!
3. The Tech ticket is the entry platform and allows you some awesome abilities. Even if you are still building your first station or your dream station, the General moves your training, education, and experience along. Extra gives you all privileges
4. In our world, "braggin' rights" are encouraged, mostly because it encourages your confidence in your capabilities.
5. Second, the license makes you an Elmer, because you have experience to share and to reassure others.


Icom 7300, HF SDR

6. Administration of ham exams is by General or Extra class licensees. Get your General. Contact ARRL to take the open-book Volunteer Examiner (VE) quiz. Then you are qualified to administer exams to Techs, which helps others into our fold. Extra can administer all exams.
7. The General exam looks just like the Tech, but with a different set of questions. The pool is about 400 questions and your exam is 35 of those, one from each category. Sound familiar? Since you passed the Tech, we know with certainty that you can pass the General, even if you only managed 5 correct on the curiosity exam after the Tech.
8. We have prepared a General License Study Guide which follows the proven and effective Technician License format.
9. The Technician license, because of frequency allowances and nature's impact, makes it a local communication vehicle, although a critical one during emergencies.
10. The General opens the high-frequency (HF) bands, allowing the famous around-the-world communication ability for which hams are legendary. You can operate on radio frequencies from near DC to daylight.
11. Where Technician class activity is pretty well-defined in terms of radios, antennas, and equipment, the General opens-up the role of creativity. No two antenna installations are the same.


Elecraft KX3

12. Elecraft, TenTec, and FlexRadio are top-flight radios designed and manufactured with USA technology. The same international vendors that make VHF/UHF make HF. Unlike VHF/UHF, new radio designs still come along, thanks to Software Defined Radio (SDR) technology. Digital and computers play a significant role in modern HF ham communication.
13. My HF rig is an Icom 7300, compact, software defined, touch-screen, waterfall, premium audio, *most sold HF-transceiver in the history* of ham radio. It is near the low-end price. It is very nice. No, it is excellent.
14. But, when there is three-times the money in the bank, I would love an Elecraft KX3, ultra-compact, 160–2 meter take-anywhere transceiver, weighing in at 18 ounces and the size of a 7½" long 2x4. Dreaming is cool and can be very expensive.


Ciro Mazzoni Magnetic Loop

15. You can build a software defined receiver with a Raspberry Pi, a dongle, and on-line software. Oh, the options that await you.
16. Meteorology, weather, and ionosphere play a key role in successful contacts. So, terms like sun-spots and meteor-showers take on new significance.
17. Let's go, General.
18. Life is good. Enjoy.