

How to Renew Your Amateur Radio (or GMRS) License:

Is it time to renew your amateur radio license? Amateur Radio licenses may not be renewed more than 90 days before the license expiration date, licenses may be renewed up to two years after the expiration date. *Note that after your license expires, even though there is a two year period you can still renew, you cannot operate during that two year period.*

Before the FCC started charging $35 to renew your amateur radio license, renewing your license was a simple procedure. In fact, you could even have done it by mail in the past. The process these days is not as simple, and it is good to do your homework before your renewal is due. If navigating the FCC system and paying your $35 to the FCC for your license renewal seems like too much of a hassle, you can pay W5YI Licensing Services to handle everything at a cost of $80 for everything and they pay the FCC fee. **Click here to visit the W5YI complete license renewal service if you're interested**.

Because of this process change, I have seen some hams coming to VE teams and seeing if they can help them get their license renewed. Although the VE team can submit a renewal, you still must go online and pay the FCC as the VE teams cannot process FCC payments. (Note: If a VE team submits your signed 605 electronically, it will save you the extra step #3 below). You'll still have to go online and make your payment, just like a new Technician class licensee would. The Laurel VEC has a detailed document on how to do that at **https://larc-vec.org/fee.php**. This assumes you have an awaiting payment for completion. If you don't, the extra step 3 below needs to be processed in the FCC License Manager to select the license for renewal and pending payment.

Amateur Radio operators whose licenses expire in the next few years may not have signed into CORES for some time. CORES stands for the COmmission REgistration System.

What you need to know is **the old "legacy" version of CORES was retired on July 15, 2022**. So, if it's been a while since you signed into your account at the FCC, you must register in the new version of CORES and associate your username to your FRN.

FRN, which stands for FCC Registration Number, is kind of like your social security number at the FCC. It stays the same for all of your radio licenses like GMRS, Amateur Radio, etc.. If you don't know what your FRN number is, use the licensing search tool by visiting **https://wireless2.fcc.gov/UlsApp/UlsSearch/searchLicense.jsp** .

So, here is what you need to know:

The **FCC no longer accepts paper checks or mail-in payments for most applications**, directing all payments to be processed online via CORES. While some older documentation might suggest mailing, the Federal Communications Commission (.gov) FCC has shifted towards an all-electronic system for processing fees and applications. The forms of payment accepted are credit cards, debit cards, wire transfer, and direct payment from a bank account.

Also note that according to the FCC, the FCC licensing and payment **web sites were NOT designed for mobile use**. Though it is possible to navigate the site and submit a payment using a mobile device, it is **NOT RECOMMENDED**. You will want to use a PC, Mac, or at least an iPad for this process. You should also know that during your online process with the FCC site that you should NOT use your web browser's back button and **ALWAYS use the "Go Back" link**. If you do not, you may end up having to log back into CORES. Also, be patient, some of these systems take time to respond.

1) Knowing all this, your first step, if you have not already done so, is to register in the CORES system. If you have an FRN but do not have a CORES username and password, you must register in the new CORES. Go to this website to register: **https://apps.fcc.gov/cores/userLogin.do** . Click on Register, complete the form and submit it. You will almost immediately receive and email from the FCC requesting you to verify your email address. After you have verified your email address, you can log into the CORES system.

2) Log into the CORES system at **https://apps.fcc.gov/cores/userLogin.do** with your username and password. Your username is your email address, and the password is the one you created when you registered. When you enter those, for security, you'll get a Request Security Code screen with a button "Send Code." Click the send code button and the system will send you a code to your email that you will enter in on the next screen and after entering in the code from your email, you will then click "Submit Code"

Now that you're into the CORES system, you need to now associate your FRN number to the new account you just set up. When you log into CORES you will see an option titled

"Associate Username to FRN." Click on that option and you will get a box where you will enter in your FRN number as well as comments in the window. **Make sure your FRN is entered correctly!** This is **VERY IMPORTANT** as you do not want an incorrect FRN associated to your username, else you will be contacting the FCC on the phone and have another problem to deal with. In the comment box you will enter in "**I am the owner of this FRN**."

So, after these two steps, if you were a new ham, whose new license application was processed by a VE team, you could simply log into the CORES system, selecting "Manage Existing FRNs – FRN Financial – Bills and Fees" then on to FRN Financial, and pay the fee. However, as a renewal, especially a license that has expired within the two year grace period, you may not find an "Awaiting Payment Completion" entry to pay. With that in mind, let's move onto step 3 and log onto the FCC License Manager.

3) Log into the FCC License Manager at **https://wireless2.fcc.gov/UlsEntry/licManager/login.jsp** as we need to go here to select the license we want to renew, select renew, which will then generate the awaiting payment in the CORES system that we will finish processing there.

Once logged in, select "Renew Licenses" on the left. If it is within 90 days of expiration, or has already expired and is within the two year grace period, you will see it available for renewal on the next screen. Select the license you want to renew, press the ADD button to the right of the box, and move it into the "Licenses to Renew" box. Then click continue on the lower right of the screen. At this point you will verify your info and click continue and complete the process to submit your license for renewal.

4) Now that you have submitted your license for renewal using the FCC License Manager, you can now go back into the CORES system at **https://apps.fcc.gov/cores/userLogin.do** and login.

Once logged in, select "Manage Existing FRNs – FRN Financial – Bills and Fees". After that, click on "FRN Financial". Now select View/Make Payments", then, select the "Awaiting Payment Completion" tab. Once there, select the "Make Payment" link on the far right and complete the process of making your payment to the FCC by choosing your method of payment and completing the transaction.

Congratulations, at this point, your license renewal is submitted, and the FCC will process it the next business day (generally).

In the end, if you do end up requiring further assistance, contact the FCC at 877-480-3201 (option 1) (Monday thru Friday, 8am-6pm ET). Also know that if you are really stumped, W5YI Licensing Services has a complete license renewal service available where they will handle the entire process. However, instead of handing the renewal yourself for $35, this

service will cost you $80 (and that includes W5YI paying the FCC licensing fee). They will even print both a official copy and a certificate copy on heavy paper, put then in a 9×12 envelope and USPS mail them to the address on the license. For some, this may be worth not dealing with the headache and know they won't have to deal with this process for ten more years.

Renewing your license presentation from the LWRA meeting 09APR26 (**click here to view/download**)