

Amateur “Ham” Radio Info **In the St Charles, MO Area**

Hello from the St Charles Amateur Radio Club. We want to encourage you to learn about and pursue a fascinating and engaging hobby - Amateur Radio!

What is Amateur Radio?

Amateur or “Ham” Radio has many facets - it's actually 1000 hobbies in one! One can dive deeply into electronics, antennas, digital communications, emergency preparedness, competitive operating, weather-spotting, world-wide “DX-ing”, or just use ham radio as a personal communications tool. Some hams focus on just one or a few topics while others try to experience it all.

Many people want to know what “Ham” means. The truth is, no one knows the definitive answer but it was most likely a self-effacing term describing one’s “Amateur” status amongst professionals in the early days of radio. Most hams are actually very professional in assembling and operating their stations!

Our national organization, the American Radio Relay League (ARRL) has an extensive Web site at www.ARRL.org, including an introduction to Amateur Radio at www.arrl.org/get-involved. You will also find lots of information, discussion forums, practice exams, etc on www.QRZ.com and www.AC6V.com. A good introductory book about Amateur Radio is “Ham Radio for Dummies” available wherever “for Dummies” titles are sold.

What About Amateur Radio in St Charles?

The St Charles Amateur Radio Club (SCARC) maintains a Web site, www.wb0hsi.org. (Our radio club’s call sign is WBØHSI...the Ø is a zero.) We meet on the fourth Monday of every month as well as informally for breakfast every Saturday morning. (Directions to both are on the web site.) The web site has news and information for anyone with an interest in ham radio. The St Charles and St Louis County Libraries have copies of the ham radio licensing guides and study aides to help you get your first (Technician) license.

How Can I Get A License and Get Started?

You no longer need to know Morse Code to get an amateur radio license, just pass a multiple-choice written exam. The test costs \$15 and the license is good for 10 years. There are three classes of amateur license in order of increasing skill and privileges; Technician (the entry-level class), General, and Extra.

The Technician class license exam consists of just 35 questions about basic electrical and radio concepts and safety, rules & regulations, and some operating topics. A score of 26 passes! You can study for the test yourself or sometimes we hold classes. Watch the club’s web site for details and class announcements or send an email to our training leader, Rick Crockett WØPC at w0pc@arrl.net. There are also classes and regular exam sessions – there is information about them on the club’s web site.

Where Can I Listen to Amateur Radio?

There is plenty of action on VHF and UHF frequencies. An inexpensive programmable "scanner" will pick up ham radio communications, along with Police, Fire, Aircraft and other interesting radio “traffic”. The most-

used frequencies in the St Charles area are the FM voice channels on 145.33 and 146.67 MHz. To find other “ham” communications, tune above and below these frequencies in 10 kHz steps.

On Tuesday evenings, tune in to 145.330 MHz at 7:00 PM for an on-the-air meeting of St Charles county hams, called a “net”, short for “network”. The local hams meet to exchange news and greetings and check out their radio equipment.

You may already have a “Shortwave” receiver with a “CW, SSB or BFO” switch that will tune in voice signals below 30 MHz. Regionally, SSB transmissions can be heard between 3.800 and 4.000 MHz and from 7.125 to 7.300 LSB most any time and you’ll find lots of ham contacts on USB between 14.150 and 14.350 MHz. To hear hams from around the world, listen to 14.150-14.350, 18.100-18.168, and 21.200-21.450 MHz using USB during the day.

Join the Fun and Learn More!!

We’d love it if you could visit a club meeting or join us for breakfast - you don’t need to be a ham! The every-Saturday breakfasts are informal gatherings beginning at 7:30 AM at the Golden Corral on Zumbahl Road. The hams usually grab a long table to the right of the cashiers.

Please let us know if there is anything else we can do to help! You can contact the club at SCARCinfo@gmail.com for more information.