

US Amateur Radio Numbers Continue to Soar

Amateur Radio is alive and well! Growth in the US continued in 2015, with a record 735,405 licensees in the FCC's Universal Licensing System ([ULS](#)) database by the end of the year. That's up 9130 over December 2014, a 1.2 percent rise, continuing a steady increase in the US Amateur Radio population in every year since 2007. In 2014, the ranks grew by a net 8149 licensees. The [figures](#), compiled by ARRL Pacific Section Manager-elect Joe Speroni, AH0A, on his FCC Amateur Radio Statistics web pages, exclude expired licenses within the 2-year grace period and club station licenses. Over the past 10 years, the Amateur Radio population in the US has expanded by 72,805 licensees -- or nearly 11 percent.



The trend was onward and upward in 2015 for Amateur Radio numbers in the US.

As expected, the biggest growth by license class was in Technician licensees, which rose by 6570 in 2015. Technician licensees still comprise a little less than one-half of the US Amateur Radio population.

General ranks increased by 3079, and Amateur Extra numbers went up by 3496.

The 2015 overall numbers faltered a little in April, before rebounding in July. The introduction of a new General class

question pool on July 1 appeared to have only a slight effect on month-to-month numbers in that license class. ARRL VEC Manager Maria Somma, AB1FM, said 2015 was another banner year for ARRL VEC-sponsored test sessions.

"For the second year in a row, we have conducted more than 7000 Amateur Radio exam sessions in a year, an important milestone for the

ARRL VEC," she said. "A total of 7358 ARRL-sponsored exam sessions were administered in 2015, compared to 7216 in 2014. The number of exam applicants was down slightly in 2015, compared to the previous year, and the number of examination elements administered also dipped slightly, she noted.

"Since 2014 was a record-setting year, the numbers of 2015 examinees didn't drop so much as return to more typical levels," Somma explained.

As of December 31, some 47,850 Advanced and 10,800 Novice licensees remained in the FCC database. The FCC no longer issues Advanced and Novice licenses, and their numbers continue to decline.



ARRL VEC Manager Maria Somma, AB1FM. [Rick Lindquist, WW1ME, photo]