

2024 Ham Class Overview

Technician Class License and/or Morse Code

Santa Fe Trail ARC

Thank you for your interest in the Santa Fe Trail Amateur Radio Club's (SFTARC) 2024 ham radio classes. Two separate classes will be taught in 2024; students may attend one or both classes:

- **Technician Class Licenses**, which is ham radio's entry-level license
- **Morse code** taught at a beginning level

Our club has been teaching ham classes for over 30 years. The 2024 classes will be held in person at the Salvation Army Building, 420 E Santa Fe, Olathe KS 66061. In the event of winter storms that would make travel to Olathe unsafe, we are providing for the use of Zoom as a back-up plan for that class. We look forward to sharing with you our appreciation of and excitement for ham radio.

Classes run each Saturday morning from Jan 6 to Feb 24, 2024. A Morse code class will begin at 8:15 am followed by the Technician class at 9:30 am, ending approximately 12:30 pm. Our goal is to present the material in a manner whereby students who do not have a technical background can gain an understanding of regulations, operating practices and the technology.

Technician License The entry level license into amateur radio is called the Technician Class License. Classes taught by the SFTARC are designed to give the student an understanding of the basic principles of electronics and radio communications, along with a knowledge of the FCC regulations and practical operating techniques. These classes are taught with the assumption that students have little or no prior understanding of radio or electronics. After the eight weeks of classroom learning and associated self-study, students will be given the opportunity to take the FCC exam in early March. This class can also be used by those who already have a license but wish to improve their understanding of the subject matter.

Morse code While no longer required to obtain an amateur radio license, communication using the Morse code continues to hold an allure for many ham radio operators. This is the most basic and time-proven form of radio communication. SFTARC classes provide the student with a structured plan to learn the Morse code and teaches techniques for using the code for communications. Assuming that the student has no prior knowledge of the code, this class strives to bring the student up to a 5 word-per-minute rate by the end of the eight classes. Daily practice is important in learning the Morse code (also referred to as CW). Hams who have previously learned the code but have become very rusty may want to use this class as a refresher.

Let's look at some things students may want to know:

- The book that we use for teaching the Technician class is the Fifth Edition of the ARRL's *Ham Radio License Manual* (ISBN: 978-1-62595-155-7). This manual contains a wealth of information. In the classes, we will walk through the material and help students focus on the more important concepts.
- Technician Students can have the SFTARC provide the spiral-bound version of the manual as part of the \$45 enrolment fee, or they can purchase the manual themselves and pay only a \$25 enrolment fee. That choice can be indicated on the online enrolment form. For those wishing to purchase the book through the SFTARC, we plan to distribute the books at our first class on January 6. For students age 16 and under, the enrollment and book fee is only \$15. Payment will be collected at the first class.
- The key to learning the Morse code is daily practice, typically 15 – 25 minutes a day. Morse code students will be asked to download a free CW_Player program written by F6DQM. The SFTARC will make practice files available that work with the CW_Player program to support the students' daily practice sessions. While there is no book that is used to support the Morse code class, the ARRL does offer an audio CD, *Your Introduction to Morse Code* (ISBN: 978-0-87259-831-7) that some students may find helpful. The Enrolment fee for the Morse class is \$10, payable at the first class.
- A Morse code teaching method referred to as the Farnsworth method is employed, where individual characters are sent at about 14 wpm, but spaced out to yield an oval 5-wpm rate. This method helps students learn each letter as a unique sound and is consistent with the method used in ARRL code-practice resources.
- Registration needs to be completed by Dec 26, 2023, for anyone wanting the SFTARC to supply the Technician manual. The class size will be limited to the first 20 students to register online or by email.
- In the event that we have to fall back to conducting one or more classes via Zoom, the Zoom meeting would open a bit before 8:15 am to give everyone time to work out technical bugs. The 8:15 Morse class would then roll into the 9:30 Technician class. Using a computer with a larger screen is advantageous to improve the Zoom viewing experience. A computer with a live camera that shows the students face is beneficial, but not required. Zoom can be downloaded for FREE from the web at this address.
<https://zoom.us/>

- The Technician class presentations will utilize Microsoft PowerPoint slides that the instructors will present in class (or over Zoom). The instructor will make a pdf copy of the presentation available online prior to the class time if the class is conducted over Zoom, and after the class if the class is conducted in person. In the event any student would experience difficulty getting into Zoom via the computer, the student could participate in the audio portion of the class over the telephone and follow along with the pdf copy of the presentation for the visual aspect. Additionally, any student that is unable to attend a particular class would be able to use the PowerPoint slides for self-study.
- A syllabus will provide visibility of what information will be covered in any particular class for either the Morse or Technician classes, and the designated instructor for each class.
- Questions and discussions are encouraged during the class. Students who may have questions outside of class time may contact the respective instructor. Contact information for the instructors is provided in the syllabus.
- Many classes will include some type of a fun-FYI presentation, providing the instructors and students with an opportunity to share some of their favorite aspects of ham radio.
- A Technician-Class exam session is planned for the first Saturday in March, where we bring in a team of Volunteer Examiners to administer the exam. After the completion of the exams, we provide a Practical-Information presentation that focuses on setting up your amateur radio station.

Thanks again for your interest and we look forward to seeing you in one or both of the SFTARC 2024 classes.