



Alexandria Radio Club, Inc.
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What's Next?

Congratulations! You've just earned a CSCE for passing one or more amateur radio examinations. What's next?

1. If you already have an *active* amateur radio license, simply get on the air with your current **callsign** and use your new privileges! Until your new license privileges appear in the ULS database at <https://www.fcc.gov/wireless/universal-licensing-system> just identify yourself as **callsign/AG** if you're a new General, or **callsign/AE** if you're a new Extra, when operating on a frequency/mode that requires your new license class. Once the upgrade appears in the ULS database you can drop the **/AG** or **/AE**. Just log on to ULS (create an account if you haven't already) and search for your **callsign** or FCC Registration Number (FRN) to see that the upgrade has been applied. Your FRN is printed in the center of your current license.
2. If you're *not* yet licensed, or once had a now-expired amateur radio license, you *must* wait until your new license/callsign appears in the ULS database. This can take up to a week for the ARRL® to process your Form 605 application and for the FCC to assign a new callsign to you at <https://www.fcc.gov/wireless/universal-licensing-system>. Your CSCE is *not* a license. You'll also need to pay a separate \$35 FCC application fee for your new license. See <http://www.arrl.org/fcc-application-fee> for details - this is time sensitive so don't delay. Search on your name/FRN to find your new callsign. If you had a now-expired amateur radio license you *may* be able to get the old callsign reassigned to you if desired, or a completely different callsign. This is done through the "vanity callsign" process outlined at <http://www.arrl.org/vanity-call-signs>. That process also requires a \$35 FCC application fee.
3. Be sure to log on to <https://www.fcc.gov/wireless/universal-licensing-system>, download, and print a PDF copy of your new license to proudly display in your "shack"! The ULS website is also where you can change your mailing address if you later move, or update your email address. *Always* have a current mailing address and email address on file with the FCC. Your license can be revoked if the FCC is unable to contact you for some reason.
4. Very important: join a ham radio club – any club – or several clubs! If you live in the Alexandria area we'd love to have you join us; details are at <https://w4hfh.org>. Otherwise find a club using <http://www.arrl.org/find-a-club>, or ask about clubs in your local area. This is really important because there is so much more to learn about ham radio and not everyone knows it all. As you've already discovered, this can be a very technical hobby. In a club you'll find a wide variety of interests *and* people eager to pass on their specific interests and knowledge. You can also get help upgrading to the next license class and learn to actually operate on the HF frequencies (yes, it's very different than pushing a button to talk on a VHF repeater). If you don't join a club then your new knowledge won't translate into skills you can apply and enjoy, and you'll soon be frustrated and lose interest. Those are just the facts born out of years of observation; don't let this happen to you.