

GMRS RADIO

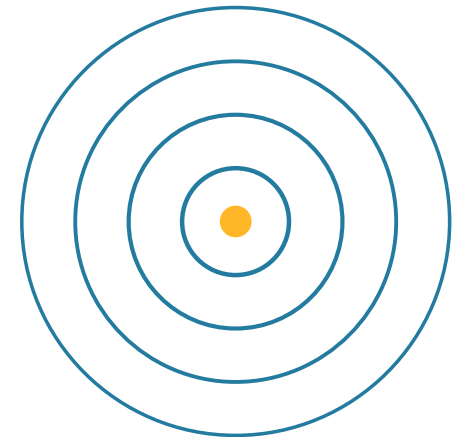
General Mobile Radio Service

History • FCC Rules • Frequencies • How It Compares



What Is GMRS?

- A licensed, land-mobile UHF radio service regulated by the FCC
- Operates in the 462–467 MHz band
- Built for short-to-medium range voice communication among family and groups
- Sits in the middle ground: more capable than FRS walkie-talkies, far simpler than Amateur (Ham) radio



UHF • 462–467 MHz

FCC Part 95, Subpart E

A Brief History

1945–49



FCC establishes the Citizens Radio Services for short-range personal use

1960s



“Class A Citizens Radio Service” rolls out on UHF, tube-type sets up to 60W

1976



FCC renames Class A service to General Mobile Radio Service (GMRS)

2017



Rules modernized: 10-year license term, data/text apps, added channels

Today



A go-to service for families, overlanding, and emergency preparedness

FCC Rules & Licensing

47 C.F.R. Part 95, Subpart E



The License

\$35 covers a full 10-year term — no exam required



Who Qualifies

Applicants must be 18+, and not a representative of a foreign government



Family Coverage

One license covers the applicant's immediate family, regardless of age



Certified Equipment Only

Radios must be FCC-certified for Part 95E — modified Ham or CB gear is not legal



Station ID

Identify with your call sign at the end of transmissions, and at least every 15 minutes on long ones



Personal Use

Reserved for family and group activities — not general commercial/business traffic

Operating Frequencies & Power

8

462 MHz Main Channels

Simplex or repeater output — up to 50W mobile/base

8

467 MHz Main Channels

Repeater input only — paired with 462 MHz outputs

7

462 MHz Interstitial

Shared with FRS — handheld/mobile/base use, up to 5W

7

467 MHz Interstitial

Shared with FRS — handheld use, up to 5W

30 total channels • 25 kHz / 20 kHz / 12.5 kHz bandwidth • Analog FM only • Max power 50W

GMRS vs. FRS

Family Radio Service is GMRS's license-free cousin

FRS

- No license needed — walk in and use it
- Power capped at 2W on most channels
- No repeater access
- Great for a campsite, playground, or short-range chatter
- Con: limited range, congested channels

GMRS

- License required: \$35 for a 10-year term
- Up to 50W — far more range than FRS
- Repeater access can extend range for miles
- Better suited to road trips, off-roading, larger properties, and emergencies
- Con: upfront cost and paperwork

GMRS vs. Ham Radio

Amateur radio trades simplicity for capability

GMRS

- No exam — pay the fee and register
- One license, \$35, covers the whole family
- Limited to the UHF 462–467 MHz band
- Power capped at 50W; certified equipment only
- Fast to get on the air

Ham Radio

- Requires passing an FCC exam (\$15)
- \$35 individual license — not family-wide
- Broad privileges across many HF/VHF/UHF bands
- Power up to 1,500W on some bands; can build/modify gear
- Steeper learning curve, far more flexibility

At a Glance

Feature	FRS	GMRS	Ham Radio
License required	No	Yes — \$35 / 10 yrs Whole family	Yes — \$35, exam required Individual only
Max power	2W	50W	Up to 1,500W
Repeater access	No	Yes	Yes
Frequency range	UHF (shared)	462–467 MHz	Many HF/VHF/UHF bands
Digital data	No	Location or brief text only	Extensive



<https://a.co/d/0b9CN9DG>



<https://a.co/d/05EFSpnY>



The Bottom Line



- GMRS is the practical middle ground — more power and range than FRS, far less complexity than Ham radio
- Ideal for families, off-roading, overlanding, and emergency preparedness
- \$35 buys ten years of legal, reliable communication for your entire household

Apply for a license: fcc.gov/wireless/universal-licensing-system