

Air Force MARS General Information

IMPORTANT NOTE: Save the AFMARS application to your desktop prior to filling it out. Once completed, send the completed Adobe Fillable PDF as an attachment to an email. **Do not send it in any other file format. It must be received as a PDF, or it will be returned.**

FAQs

What is the mission of Air Force MARS? This is a question that comes up quite frequently. Very simply, MARS is a DOD recognized Auxiliary, charged by DODI 4650.02 "(to provide) high frequency (HF) radio communications support to DOD through the use of Federal Communications Commission (FCC) licensed, volunteer radio operators, as directed by the Services and coordinated within the DOD."

Below are some brief descriptions of what we do and requirements to participate in the program. Please read the information carefully to be sure you can dedicate the time required for initial training and meet the continuing hours requirement. Please know that by signing the application you are certifying the accuracy and truthfulness of the information on the forms only. You are accepted into Air Force MARS for training when you receive your training call sign. Once you successfully complete all the training requirements you will be moved out of "training" status into full member status.

Prospective Air Force MARS members must meet these requirements for membership prior to submitting their applications:

- US Citizenship or Legal Resident Alien status
- Age 18 or older
- FCC issued amateur radio license (any class)
- An operational HF radio and antenna capable of operations from 2.0 - 30 MHz. This generally requires a modification to the radio. The radio must be capable of 100 W PEP SSB minimum output. Most operations occur between the 40-to-80-meter band.
- Windows 10 or 11 PC.
- Capability to transmit and receive digital modes. Currently VOX keying is still supported, however, all members are being encouraged to move to hardware / CAT keying.
- Internet service is necessary for many AFMARS interactions, and for access to programs and instructions.

You have **up to 270 days** from receipt of your training call sign to finish training. Training includes practical exercises and tasks that require on-air NET participation to successfully complete.

Please return the completed application along with a reference copy of your FCC License to the [\[HQCCC.AFMARS@US.AF.MIL\]](mailto:HQCCC.AFMARS@US.AF.MIL) email . Your application will be reviewed and then sent to your Wing / Group Commander who will contact you for a personal interview and answer any further questions you may have.

Additional points to consider before you commit to Air Force MARS:

1. We are a DOD Military auxiliary, tasked by the military chain of command.
2. On-air operations occur mainly on HF nets, and exercises.
3. Nets are conducted on Upper Sideband (USB), using Military frequencies are outside of the normal Amateur frequency allocations. Your radio and antenna **MUST** be capable of meeting this requirement.
4. Message traffic is handled using M110A digital protocol. Your station must be capable of sending and receiving digital modes.

5. Air Force MARS will not provide or perform modifications to your radio equipment. We highly recommend you seek out the services of a reputable service center to perform the modification if you are not able to perform the mod yourself. Your training license will verify your membership in the program, should the service center or retail outlet require proof.
6. Air Force MARS is a DOD Auxiliary. We do not support ARES, RACES or other agencies as MARS unless we are specifically tasked.

Training:

To qualify for full membership in AFMARS, you must complete all training requirements within **270 days** of the date your AFMARS license was issued. Your training will be administered by your Wing Training Officer.

1. During your training, you will be required to serve as the Net Control Station (NCS) during a net. The NCS training requirement is considered a CORE TRAINING TASK and must be completed.
2. You will be required to compose, send and receive digital messages to demonstrate your understanding and ability to use the software.
3. An open-book test will be given at the conclusion of the course.
4. Additional Computer Based Training (CBT) courses are required and are repeated every two years.
5. You will receive training in proper protocol and procedure while operating on Military frequencies. Strict adherence to military operating procedures is required.

The estimated time per week to complete the training within the 270-day requirement is four to five hours per week.

Participation Requirements:

To remain qualified, you must be operational in your primary assignment, generally your Wing Traffic Net, for 18 hours per calendar quarter and you must participate in two quarterly communications exercises we conduct each year. You must also remain current in your recurring computer-based training requirements.

AFMARS Software Package:

The AFMARS message handling application (Network Operations Software System - NOSS) is furnished to you, as is our software modem and our offline encryption/decryption application. Software update and backup operations coordination are handled via internet contact.

I think that you'll enjoy serving in AFMARS and I know that our country will be better with you on our team.

Website link

<https://afmars.com/>

Wide band Antenna link

<https://hflink.com/antenna/>

FCC License link

<https://wireless2.fcc.gov/UlsApp/UlsSearch/searchLicense.jsp>