



State of Texas Communications Unit
Qualifications and Credentialing Program



Contents

1. Scope.....	4
2. Purpose	4
3. Objectives.....	4
4. Background	4
5. NIMS Incident Communications Positions.....	4
6. Guidance	5
7. Categories for Response	5
8. Successful Completion of Training Course.....	5
9. Following Completion of Training Course.....	5
10. Request for State Credentialing.....	6
11. Review and Approval Process	6
12. Change in Status or No longer State Credentialed	7
13. Re-Credentialing Process	8
14. Appeals.....	9
15. Administration and Record Retention.....	9
Appendix A: Position-Specific NIMS Incident Communications Training Prerequisites	10
Appendix B: Qualification Application	111



1. Scope

This Policy applies to those individuals who meet the recommended U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) guidelines for eligibility, training and experience for All-Hazards NIMS Incident Communications positions, and are requesting qualification within the State of Texas. This document references all NIMS Incident Communications positions which qualify as a single resource within NIMS.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to describe the process for an individual requesting credentialing for position-specific roles within NIMS Incident Communications in Texas. This document defines and develops the Texas qualifications for human resources to fill a NIMS Incident Communications positions in reference to Position Task Books (PTBs).

3. Objectives

1. Establish minimum training and qualification standards for NIMS Incident Communications personnel seeking Texas State Credentialing.
2. Define criteria to obtain and maintain qualification status for position-specific roles within the Texas Communication Unit program.

4. Background

The National Incident Management System (NIMS) is a comprehensive, nationwide approach to incident management that provides a template to effectively and efficiently prepare for, prevent, respond to, and recover from domestic incidents, regardless of cause, size, or complexity. It is applicable across functional disciplines at all jurisdictional levels.

A key feature of NIMS, the Incident Command System (ICS), is a standardized, on-scene, all-hazards incident management approach that represents organizational best practices and has become the standard for emergency management across the country. Within the NIMS ICS organizational structure, Incident Communications plays a critical role and is responsible for:

- Developing plans for the use of Incident Communications personnel, equipment and facilities
- Coordinating, installing and testing communications equipment
- Supervision of Incident Communications personnel
- Operation, distribution, maintenance, repair, demobilization and recovery of Incident Communications equipment

5. NIMS Incident Communications Positions

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS)/Emergency Communications Division (ECD) and FEMA/ Emergency Management Institute (EMI) have established national all-hazards training curriculum and Position Task Book for each of the positions within the ICS Incident Communications framework. The most common communications positions within NIMS are listed below. New positions are constantly in development and will be incorporated into this process as they become available.

- Communications Unit Leader (COML)
- Incident Communications Center Manager (INCM)
- Radio Operator (RADO)
- Incident Tactical Dispatcher (INTD)
- Incident Communications Technician (COMT)
- Information Technology Service Unit Leader (ITSL)



- Auxiliary Communicator (AUXC)
- Technical Specialist (THSP)

6. Guidance

The standards established are the minimum to be met by participating agencies, organizations, and individuals that choose to participate in the NIMS Incident Communications Program. Candidates must be approved to participate in the qualification process by their Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ).

Candidates applying for qualifications under these guidelines must have a governmental entity or a State recognized Non-governmental Organization (NGO) as a sponsor.

7. Categories for Response – Statewide

The Texas Department of Public Safety or Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM) can request NIMS Communication Unit personnel in support of any agency within the state.

8. Successful Completion of Training Course

Candidates must complete all required prerequisite training courses for the position they are pursuing. See Appendix A. Candidates that successfully complete any all-hazards position-specific classroom training will receive a certificate of completion from FEMA for a COML and COML TtT Course and DHS for all the other communications unit courses.

- Course candidates must have completed any version of all prerequisite courses
- Train-the-Trainer candidates must have completed the latest version of all prerequisite courses

9. Following Completion of Training Course

The primary criterion for qualification is individual performance as verified by a qualified evaluator using nationally-recognized standards. In a performance-based system, qualification is based upon demonstrated performance as measured on incidents, events, normal job activities, or during training/exercises. The Position Task Book (PTB) serves as the instrument used to demonstrate the ability to perform the duties and responsibilities of the desired Incident Communications position.

PTB Completion:

The candidate must initiate their PTB in accordance with the instructions in the PTB. The PTB contains tasks designed to demonstrate proficiency and the ability to perform the roles and responsibilities required of the position.

- a. Once a COMU course is completed, the PTB is initiated. The candidate has three (3) years to complete and submit their PTB and supporting documentation. The applicant may provide historical documentation for up to three (3) years prior to the date of initiation.
- b. Successful completion of training courses, position tasks, and submission of the PTB to the committee does not guarantee an individual will be qualified.



- c. Successful completion of all required tasks of the position, as determined by qualified evaluators, will be the basis for the candidate's application. Personnel assigned to equal or superior ICS positions may evaluate the trainee.
- d. The PTB contains space to list four (4) qualified evaluators. It is routine to include more than four evaluations, so additional evaluator pages may be added to the PTB. Each qualified evaluator listed in the candidate's PTB must fully complete their Evaluator section, to include their recommendations.
- e. The PTB is considered complete when:
 - All tasks have been observed and signed off by appropriate personnel
 - Final Evaluator completes the final evaluator section

10. Request for State Credentialing

Application Process

Prior to requesting recognition, candidates are responsible for ensuring they have completed the necessary requirements and have all appropriate documentation. A separate application package is required for each NIMS Incident Communications position. Eligible candidates desiring recognition must submit the following documents to the Office of the Texas SWIC, email; TXSWIC@dps.texas.gov

- a. Appendix B: Recognition of Qualification Application
- b. Certificate(s) which confirms completion of all-hazards position-specific training, including proof of prerequisites
- c. Fully completed PTB with all required signatures, and recommendations that the candidate has successfully performed all tasks for the position and should be considered for recognition.

Candidate Application Review

The Texas SWIC Office is the initial recipient of the candidate's application package. The SWIC Office provides administrative support to the Texas COMU Committee in performing a Quality Assurance (QA) review of the candidate's documentation, training records, PTB, qualifications, and other information to ensure the application package is complete and in compliance with this policy, and to confirm the candidate is eligible for state credentialing. The SWIC Office will forward complete applications to the Texas COMU Committee for review.

11. Review and Approval Process

Texas COMU Committee

All COMU position task books are reviewed by the Texas COMU Committee. The Texas COMU Committee is composed of multi-disciplinary and multi-jurisdictional subject matter experts (SMEs) which are active state credentialed COMU personnel and COMU Instructors. This five member committee is comprised of both state and local personnel from Texas.

The Texas COMU Committee will review the candidate's application package to consider approval for the desired NIMS Incident Communications position. The candidate should actively participate in a combination of activities, such as exercises, planned events and other deployments. The candidate should also have experience assisting with at least one real world incident and/or unscheduled events.



This program includes establishing and maintaining a viable, effective and consistent recognition process that will serve to enhance the professional credibility of the NIMS Incident Communications positions within Texas.

The Texas COMU Committee shall:

- Make a determination on whether an individual meets the requirements for qualification
- Review all documents that establish that the position Trainee has completed all the position qualification criteria. Such documents include course records, certificates, PTBs, resumes, experience documentation, and incident personnel performance ratings
- Forward the application package with their recommendation to the Texas SWIC
- Make recommendations for NIMS Incident Communications training opportunities
- Work with the SWIC to develop continuing educational processes and programs

Position Task Book Evaluation Results (PTB)

Each submitted PTB will receive one of the following evaluation ratings:

- a. **Approved:** Candidate is recommended for State Credentialing, for the requested Incident Communications position. The Texas COMU Committee shall forward the approved task book to the Statewide Interoperability Coordinator (SWIC), for final approval and signature.
- b. **Additional Information Required:** The candidate must provide the Texas COMU Committee with additional documentation or information as specified in correspondence. The candidate will be given a timeframe within which the requested information or documentation must be provided. If the candidate fails to provide the requested information, the application package will be disapproved.
- c. **Disapproved:** The candidate will be informed of the reason for disapproval in writing, and if applicable, a list of actions necessary if the candidate wishes to be reconsidered at a future date by the Texas COMU Committee and the SWIC.

Approved Status

The SWIC Office will complete the following actions for approved candidates:

- a. Issue a certificate reflecting State of Texas credentialed status for the applicable Incident Communications position.
- b. Notify the candidate's home agency of the qualification status in the applicable Incident Communications position.
- c. Enter the qualification status into Communications Assets Survey & Mapping (CASM).

12. Change in Status or Removal of State Credential

Change in status

Individuals should provide written notification any changes in address or contact information to the Office of the Texas SWIC, email; TXSWIC@dps.texas.gov



Volunteer/Retired COMU Personnel:

Personnel that no longer work full time with their agency of record, and would like to continue their State of Texas credentials in order to respond to incidents/events and/or teach COMU courses must present a letter from a public safety agency that authorizes their participation and provides liability coverage during the event/class.

Removal of State Credential

The Texas SWIC and/or the Agency Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) are responsible for determination for removal of an individual from the State Credentialed list. The AHJ revoking an individual’s position qualifications will notify the SWIC of the change of status. An individual may lose his or her qualification by voluntarily withdrawing, or for other reasons the AHJ deems appropriate. The Texas SWIC or AHJ may consider decertification when an individual:

- Takes actions that lead to unsafe conditions on an incident;
- Misrepresents incident qualifications;
- Fails to follow delegation of authority;
- Disregards identified safe practices; or
- Receives one or more “unacceptable” or equivalent performance rating(s). An official complaint shall be filed with the SWIC for review.

13. Re-Credentialing

In order to maintain current credentialing, all credentialed COMU personnel shall apply for Re-Credentialing, every three years for each position or multiple positions below.

Materials to include in the applicant’s renewal packet:

- Appendix B: Application Form, check Re-Credentialing box
- Submit current updated version of position task book, which include COMU activities from the previous 3 years. The candidate should actively participate in a combination of activities, such as exercises, planned events and other deployments. The candidate should also have experience assisting with at least one real world incident and/or unscheduled event. Although, re-credentialing does not require the same amount of events as becoming credentialed, the overall activities and participation should validate their experience in the COMU position.
- Multiple COMU positions; If a person is re-credentialed in one specific COMU position, they would be eligible to be re-credentialed in another lower level COMU position.
 - Re-credentialing as a COML would also re-credential for ITSL, INCM or AUXC
 - Re-credentialing as an ITSL would also re-credential for COML
 - Re-credentialing as a COMT would also re-credential for AUXC
 - Re-credentialing as a INTD would also re-credential for RADO
- COMU Instructors must instruct or assist with instruction of each specific COMU course, once every 3 years.

To request a renewal, please submit an electronic copy of all renewal materials to the SWIC Office at: TXSWIC@dps.texas.gov



14. Appeals

In circumstances where an individual feels the qualifying authority made an error in evaluating their qualifications, or an individual receives notice of impending de-credentialing, the Office of the Texas SWIC has an appeals process. The State reserves the right to review each appeal on a case by case basis. Submit Appendix B; Application Form, check Appeal box.

Appeal Process

- a. If an individual intends to appeal, they must notify the Office of the Texas SWIC, by email; TXSWIC@dps.texas.gov, within 30 days of being informed of results or impending de-credentialing.
- b. The individual should provide a narrative and examples explaining the appeal. It is the responsibility of the individual to provide all documentation which would help clarify the appeal.
- c. The Office of the Texas SWIC, will review and consider all documentation provided. They will also contact other personnel that would have knowledge of the situation(s).
- d. The Office of the Texas SWIC, will notify the person within 30 days of the findings and email the final decision of their status.
- e. The decision of the SWIC is final and not subject to further appeal

15. Administration and Record Retention

Each submission to the Texas COMU committee should contain all applicable documents:

- All Applications: Appendix B: Application Form (appropriate action box checked)
- New Applications: Copies of Certificate(s) which confirms completion of all-hazards position-specific training, including proof of prerequisites listed in Appendix A.
- New Applications: Scanned copy of fully completed PTB with all required signatures and recommendations
- Re-Credentialing: Scanned copy of updated, current Position Task Book, with all required signatures and recommendations

Applicants should keep the original copies of all application documents for their personal files.

Please send electronic copies of all materials to the SWIC Office at: TXSWIC@dps.texas.gov



Appendix A: Position-Specific NIMS Incident Communications Training

Prerequisites

Candidates wishing to complete all-hazards position-specific training must meet the prerequisites listed in the table below prior to attending the desired course(s). Ensure to complete the current, latest version of ICS course(s).

R = REQUIRED	COML	INCM	RADO/INTD	COMT	AUXCOMM	ITSL
O = OPTIONAL, RECOMMENDED						
PREREQUISITE COURSES¹:						
IS-100	R	R	R	R	R	R
IS-200	R	R	R	R	R	R
ICS-300	R	O	O	O		R
ICS-400	O					
IS-700	R	R	R	R	R	R
IS-800	R	R	R	R	R	R
IS-1200	O	R	O	O	O	
PREREQUISITE DOCUMENTATION, EXPERIENCE:						
Complete and submit FEMA Form 119-25-1 – General Admissions Application	R					
Obtain FEMA Student ID (SID)	R					
Public safety background with experience in field operations	R	R	O/R	R		
Basic knowledge of communications systems, frequencies and spectrum, technologies, and topographical influences.	O			O		
Public safety background with experience in field operations and / or experience providing information technology solutions to support public safety operations						R
Public safety awareness with technical experience in field communications (radio, telephone, data, SATCOM, etc.)				R		
Awareness of fundamental public safety broadband and wireless communications technology						R
Active Amateur Radio License (issued by the FCC)					R	
The most current version of the Federal Virtual Training Environment (FedVTE) Network Layer 1 & 2 Troubleshooting: https://fedvte.usalearning.gov/						O



Appendix B: Qualification Application

- Include a current photo (agency photo, Texas ID/DL, passport, etc.)
• A separate application must be submitted for each position applied for

Initial Application [] Re-Credentialing [] Change in Status [] Appeal []

POSITION FOR WHICH YOU ARE APPLYING _____

NAME _____

AGENCY _____

COUNTY _____

AGENCY ADDRESS _____

CONTACT PHONE NUMBER _____ 24/7 PHONE _____

CONTACT EMAIL ADDRESS _____

APPLICANT'S RANK/TITLE _____

APPLICANT'S SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____

I approve the applicant's participation in the Texas NIMS Incident Communications Program in the following response areas: STATEWIDE []

AGENCY HEAD OR DESIGNEE SIGNATURE AND TITLE _____ DATE _____

AGENCY HEAD OR DESIGNEE NAME (printed) _____ AGENCY _____

Texas SWIC Office Only:

Application Resolution: Approved [] Additional Information Required [] Disapproved []

Effective Date: _____ Re-Credentialing Due Date: _____