



Iowa All-Hazards Communications Unit Credentialing Procedure

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Current contact information for the SWIC Office can be found at www.isicb.iowa.gov .

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Table of Contents

i. Acronyms	5
1 Introduction	5
1.1 Background.....	5
1.2 Purpose.....	6
1.3 Scope	6
1.4 Definitions	6
1.5 References.....	7
1.6 Administration.....	7
1.7 Updates & Revisions.....	7
2 Credentialing Process Overview	7
2.1 Required Training	8
2.2 Position Task Book	8
2.3 Agency Certification	8
3 Iowa Credentialing.....	9
3.1 Application Requirements.....	9
3.2 Task Book Requirements.....	9
3.3 Review Process.....	10
3.4 Initial Credentialing	10
3.5 Credentialing Renewal	11
3.6 Agency Certification Changes.....	11
3.7 Removal of Credentialing.....	12
3.8 Appeals.....	12
3.9 Records.....	12

i. Acronyms

AUXCOMM	Auxiliary Communicator
CASM	Communications Assets Survey and Mapping Tool
COML	Communications Unit Leader
COMT	Communications Unit Technician
COMU	Communications Unit
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
ECD	Emergency Communications Division
ICC	Incident Communications Center
ICS	Incident Command System
INCM	Incident Communications Center Manager
INTD	Incident Tactical Dispatcher
ISICSB	Iowa Statewide Interoperable Communications System Board
NIMS	National Incident Management System
NWCG	National Wildfire Coordinating Group
PTB	Position Task Book
RADO	Radio Operator
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
SWIC	Statewide Interoperability Coordinator
THSP	Technical Specialist
TICP	Tactical Interoperable Communications Plan

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

The State of Iowa and the Iowa Statewide Interoperable Communications System Board (ISICSB) recognizes the National Incident Management System (NIMS) as a comprehensive, national 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, the Communications Unit plays a critical role and is responsible for: developing plans for the use of incident communications equipment and facilities; coordinating, installing and testing communications equipment; supervision and operation of the Incident Communications Center (ICC); and the distribution, maintenance, repair and recovery of incident communications equipment.

Positions within the Communications Unit (COMU) may include:

- Communications Unit Leader (COML)
- Communications Unit Technician (COMT)
- Incident Communications Center Manager (INCM)
- Radio Operator (RADO)
- Technical Specialist (THSP)
- Information Technology Service Unit Leader (ITSL)
- Incident Tactical Dispatcher (INTD)
- Auxiliary Communicator (AUXCOMM)

Additional information and resources regarding the COMU are available on the ISICSB website at: www.isicsb.iowa.gov.

1.2 Purpose

The purpose of this document is to describe the process for granting Iowa credentialing for Communications Unit (COMU) positions. Instructions for submitting applications for Iowa credentialing or renewal of credentials, and the associated forms, are available at: www.isicsb.iowa.gov.

1.3 Scope

This procedure applies to those individuals who meet the recommended guidelines for eligibility, training and experience for All-Hazards Communications Unit positions and are requesting Iowa credentialing in such positions.

This document references positions within the Communications Unit (e.g., COML, COMT) as they pertain to All-Hazards emergency response classifications; such references are not intended to reflect Red Card positions, as recognized under National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) guidelines.

1.4 Definitions

“Iowa Agency” is defined as “any Iowa law enforcement, fire, Emergency Medical Service (EMS), municipal, county, and State, Tribal, or Federal Agency, or Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) performing public safety or public service activities.”

“Certifying Official” refers to an Agency’s executive or the Agency executive’s designee. [Note: This will vary depending on the Agency and the version of the Position Task Book (PTB) issued during training. Examples include: Agency Heads, Chiefs, and Division/Department Directors.

1.5 References

This document references the authority of the ISICSB as contained in Iowa Code 80.28 and 80.29.

1.6 Administration

The Statewide Interoperability Coordinator (SWIC), with guidance from the ISICSB is responsible for administering this procedure.

1.7 Updates & Revisions

This document will be reviewed every three years and updated as needed. Those wishing to suggest revisions or additions to this document should send their feedback electronically to [the SWIC whose email address will be available on the ISICSB website \(www.isicsb.iowa.gov\)](mailto:swic@isicsb.iowa.gov) or in writing to the Iowa Statewide Interoperable Communications System Board, Attn: SWIC, 215 E. 7th St., Suite 450, Des Moines, IA 50319-1902.

Revisions to this document will be reviewed by the SWIC and Training and Education Committee, who will recommend appropriate changes to the ISICSB. The ISICSB must then approve all such changes. Revised versions of this document will be effective once approved by the ISICSB.

Individuals requesting Iowa credentialing for a communications position within the All-Hazards Communications Unit are responsible for checking the ISICSB website www.isicsb.iowa.gov to obtain the current release of this document.

2 Credentialing Process Overview

All-Hazards Communications Unit personnel are trained communications professionals that work to achieve operability and interoperability through the ICS and among all responding agencies. Credentialing of these individuals entails the process of authoritatively attesting that individuals meet professional standards for the training, experience, and performance required for key incident management functions.

Requirements for credentialing for All-Hazards Communications Unit personnel must, at a minimum:

- Meet the federally required All-Hazards Training course prerequisites for the position

- Complete the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) approved, NIMS-compliant, position-specific All-Hazards training course (see Section 3.1)
- Complete and be signed off by an Agency Certifying Official on the comprehensive All-Hazards Position Task Book (PTB) (see Section 3.2)
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2.1 Required Training

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) Emergency Communications Division (ECD) has worked with emergency responders to develop a series of federally recommended training courses for All-Hazards Communications Unit positions. The training courses are led by federally recognized instructors and provide NIMS compliant instruction to establish core competencies and train qualified personnel to serve in specific positions during all-hazards emergency operations.

Information about the All-Hazards Communications Unit training courses available and the required prerequisites related to public safety communications background, skills, knowledge, experience and ICS training are available on the ISICSB website at: www.isicsb.iowa.gov.

At the conclusion of each training course, DHS, or their designee, will log each student who successfully completed the course into ECD managed Communications Assets Survey and Mapping Tool (CASM) database and mail a Certificate of Completion to each student.

2.2 Position Task Book

PTBs are an integral part of the "performance based" system Federal agencies have adopted for emergency response training. Each All-Hazards PTB lists the performance requirements (tasks) for the specific position in a format that allows a trainee to be evaluated against written guidelines. Trainees must demonstrate or perform successfully all tasks listed in the PTB to become credentialed in the ICS position to which they aspire.

The PTB may only be initiated once the student has completed the All-Hazards formal classroom training; however, a trainee may include experience within the parameters set in the most current PTB prior to the completion of the training course. Further, candidates must complete the PTB within the guidelines set forth in the most current PTB of the training course. Evaluation and confirmation of the individual's performance of all the tasks may involve more than one evaluator and may occur on incidents, in classroom simulations, and in other work situations, such as planned events and exercises. Successful performance of all tasks, as observed and recorded by one or more qualified evaluators, will result in a recommendation that the trainee be credentialed in that position.

2.3 Agency Certification

A key component of the credentialing process is the evaluation by the Agency Certifying Official of an individual's capability to perform in the position. Individuals seeking credentialing in an All-Hazards Communications Unit position should follow the certification process established by their Agency. In relation to the PTB, the trainee's Agency Certifying Official is responsible for assuring that documentation is proper and complete. The Agency Certifying Official will then indicate qualification for the position by signing the PTB.

3 Iowa Credentialing

Individuals who have completed the certification process described in Section 2 for an All-Hazards Communications Unit position may seek Iowa credentialing. In order to be considered, individuals must be certified by an Iowa Agency in the position and are required to submit documentation to the SWIC confirming their certification, as described in further detail below.

3.1 Application Requirements

Individuals wishing to be credentialed must provide the following application materials:

- One (1) signed copy of the Iowa All-Hazards Communications Unit Credentialing Submission Checklist Form including personal contact and Agency Affiliation information (see Appendix A)
- Supporting documentation, as identified in the application checklist, that all prerequisite training for the All-Hazards position training course has been completed
- One (1) copy of the Certificate of Completion from the DHS approved All-Hazards position training course
- One (1) copy of the completed All-Hazards PTB (as described in Section 3.2)

Separate application materials (i.e., Submission Checklist, complete PTB, etc.) must be submitted for each position for which an individual desires consideration for credentialing.

All required application materials must be submitted either electronically to the Iowa SWIC at SWIC@iowa.gov or by mail, fax or in person to the ISICSB, Attn: SWIC, Oran Pape Building, 215 E. 7th St., Suite 450, Des Moines, IA 50319-1902.

3.2 Task Book Requirements

To be considered for Iowa credentialing, the All-Hazards PTB must be legible and include the following completed elements:

- A. Each numbered task in the PTB must be initialed by a qualified evaluator who was present at the incident/event/qualifying exercise. Qualified experience that occurred in the three (3) years previous to application can be submitted for consideration for approval. [**Note:** Separate initials are not required for each bulleted sub-task.]
- B. Contact information for each evaluator must be provided in the evaluator information section of the PTB.

Appropriate evaluators for All-Hazards PTB tasks include individuals who are credentialed in the position being evaluated, or in a higher position, such as: Incident Commanders; Logistics and Operations Section Chiefs; and supervisory personnel or other individuals with relevant experience who are qualified to evaluate the task being reviewed for approval.

- C. Final Evaluator's Verification: Signed verification by a qualified evaluator that all tasks in the PTB have been performed and are appropriately documented, and that the candidate has performed as a trainee.
- D. Agency Certification: Signed certification by an Iowa Agency Certifying Official, confirming that the candidate has met all requirements for qualification in the position. A complete and separate PTB must be submitted for each position for which an individual desires consideration for credentialing.

3.3 Review Process

Application materials received by the SWIC will be reviewed by the Communications Unit (COMU) Committee of the ISICSB in accordance with this SOP, as specified by the ISICSB. The ISICSB's COMU Committee will review each candidate's submitted application materials and may make additional inquiries if more information is needed from the candidate, incident/event/qualifying exercise personnel, and/or the candidate's Agency to ensure completion. COMU Committee members must abstain from any processing of their own application materials or where they may be a conflict of interest.

As needed, the COMU Committee will conduct application reviews to consider each candidate's application on its own merits, and submitted documentation of training, exercises, incidents and/or events will be evaluated based on number, depth and complexity.

A minimum of three (3) COMU Committee members must actively participate in each candidate-related action. COMU Committee members unable to attend may provide their recommendations regarding specific candidates to the SWIC and request the SWIC, another COMU Committee member, or an ISICSB member speak on their behalf at the meeting; however, this will not be considered active participation.

The ISICSB has final authority to approve/deny all applications.

3.4 Initial Credentialing

Candidates granted credentials by the ISICSB will be issued a document by the ISICSB confirming their designation and will be added to the CASM database.

The designation will remain current for five (5) years after the date the individual is credentialed by the ISICSB, unless terminated or renewed.

If a candidate is not granted credentials, a document will be sent to the candidate with the COMU Committee's recommendations for additional training and/or experience needed for the candidate to be re-considered for credentialing at a later date.

3.5 Credentialing Renewal

The Iowa designation is effective for five (5) years from the date credentials are granted by the ISICSB. Within ninety (90) days prior to the end of each five (5) year period following initial credentialing, individuals seeking renewal of their Iowa designation must request renewal by providing the following renewal application materials to the SWIC:

- One (1) copy of the Iowa All-Hazards Communications Unit Credentialing Agency Certification Form (see Appendix B, Renewal of Agency Certification section) with certification by an Iowa Agency affirming that they continue to meet all requirements for qualification in the All-Hazards position and that such qualification has been issued [**Note:** This is required, even if the credentialed individual has not moved to another Agency.]
- Documentation of experience in formalized and recognized communications training, or a qualifying exercise, incident or event within the five (5) year credentialing period to demonstrate active participation in an ICS Communications Unit Position Specific Role. Proof of these trainings must accompany the request. Examples of acceptable documents and continuing education include: Incident Action Plans, Organizational Charts, Communications Plans, Agency Certifying Official verification letter, communications training Certificates of Completion, development of a Tactical Interoperable Communications Plan (TICP), and Communications Assets and Survey Mapping Tool (CASM). [**Note:** Incident/event/qualifying exercise documentation should indicate that the individual served in the credentialed position.]

The credentials of those individuals who fail to provide the required renewal request documentation prior to the expiration of the five (5) year term will be considered expired and their status noted in the Public Safety Tools database. The ISICSB may grant a limited extension. If they wish to be considered for credentialing at a future date, the applicant must submit a new PTB with tasks completed within the past three (3) years and follow the initial application process.

Individuals who submit renewal request documentation prior to the expiration of the five (5) year term will remain credentialed until their renewal application is acted upon by the ISICSB. Renewal applications will be evaluated by the COMU Committee as noted in Section 3.3. Candidates whose credentials are renewed by the ISICSB will be issued a document confirming their continued Iowa designation for an additional five (5) year term. Candidates whose credentials are not renewed will be sent a document with the review committee's explanation. Consideration for minor variances will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

3.6 Agency Certification Changes

Credentialing status is dependent upon continued affiliation with an appropriate Iowa Agency, and the Agency's concurrence that the individual continues to be qualified in the All-Hazards position.

An Iowa Agency Certifying Official may withdraw certification of an individual by formal written notice of such withdrawal using the Iowa All-Hazards Communications Unit Credentialing Agency Certification Form.

If a credentialed individual moves to a different Agency, he/she must provide Agency Certification from the new Agency using the Iowa All-Hazards Communications Unit Credentialing Agency Certification Form. When received, the change of affiliation will be reviewed and records updated accordingly, but the credentialing renewal date will remain unchanged.

3.7 Removal of Credentialing

The ISICSB is ultimately responsible for de-recognition — (revoking an individual's position recognition and credentials). An individual may lose his or her qualification for currency reasons, by voluntarily withdrawing, or for other reasons the ISICSB deems appropriate. The ISICSB may consider de-recognition 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 ISICSB for review.

3.8 Appeals

In circumstances where a trainee feels the qualifying authority made an error in evaluating his or her qualifications, or an individual receives notice of impending de-recognition, the ISICSB may establish an appeals process. The qualifying authority reserves the right to review each appeal on a case by case basis.

3.9 Records

Centralized record keeping for the Iowa All-Hazards Communications Unit Program will be provided by the SWIC in compliance with Iowa state document retention requirements.