



**Homeland Security
and Emergency Services**

**Interoperable and
Emergency Communications**

New York State

Type-III, All Hazards

COMMUNICATIONS UNIT (COMU)

POSITION CREDENTIALING POLICY

**NYS Division of Homeland Security and
Emergency Services**

**Office of Interoperable and
Emergency Communications**

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Executive Summary

This document establishes the credentialing policy for the Type-III, All Hazards Communications Unit (COMU) positions; Communications Unit Leader (COML) and the Communications Unit Technician (COMT) positions, for use in the State of New York.

This policy was established by the Office of Interoperable and Emergency Communications with assistance and input from local and state peers, subject matter experts and members of the State Communications Interoperability Working Group.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	NYS Communications Unit Policy Information	5
1.1	Background	5
1.2	Authority	5
1.3	National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) Position Credential	5
1.4	Updates and Revisions	5
1.5	Definitions and Acronyms	6
2	NYS COMU Credentialing Process	6
2.1	Credential Period	7
3	COMU Position Credentialing Training Requirements	7
3.1	NIMS/ICS Prerequisites	7
3.2	Classroom Course	8
3.2.1	COML Course	8
3.2.2	COMT Course	8
4	COMU Position Task Book	8
4.1	Agency Certification	8
4.2	Prior Experience Credit (Historical Recognition)	8
4.3	PTB Completion Time Frame	9
4.4	Authorized Evaluators	9
4.5	PTB Documentation	9
4.6	PTB Document Version	9
5	Credentialing Application	9
5.1	Required Documentation	9
5.2	Applications	10
5.2.1	Recognition of Prior Learning	10
5.2.2	Initial Application (First time applying for a credential)	10
6	Application Approval Process	10
6.1	Staff Review	10
6.2	Qualification Review Committee	10
6.3	Recommendation For Credentialing	11
6.4	Recommendation For Denial Of Credentialing	11
7	Credential Renewal, Proficiency and Performance	11
7.1	Credentialing Renewal Proficiency Requirements	11
7.2	Renewal Period	11
7.3	Application For Renewal Of Credential	11
7.4	Failure To Meet Renewal Requirements	11
8	Agency Affiliation Changes	11
APPENDICES:		
Appendix A: COMU Position Application		
Appendix B: Agency Certification		
Appendix C: Performance-Proficiency Documentation		
Appendix D: Position Task Book (PTB), COML		
Appendix E: Position Task Book (PTB), COMT		

1 NYS Communications Unit Policy Information

1.1 Background

During all-hazards emergency response operations, communications among multiple jurisdictions and disciplines—including emergency medical, fire, and law enforcement services — is essential. Unfortunately, the absence of on-scene communications coordination has often compromised critical operations. To close this capability gap, the United States Department of Homeland Security’s Office of Emergency Communications (OEC) in partnership with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and practitioners from across the country developed performance and training standards for the All Hazards Type III Communications Unit Leader (COML), and for the Communications Unit Technician (COMT) positions.

Under the National Incident Management System (NIMS)-Incident Command System (ICS) structure, the COML serves as the position that plans, manages and leads the technical and operational aspects of the communication unit, during incidents, events and exercises. The COMT serves as the support staff position, to implement various solutions developed by the COML, to meet the communications needs of an incident.

1.2 Authority

Authority for the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services (DHSES), Office of Interoperable and Emergency Communications (OIEC) to develop this policy was established pursuant to the provisions provided in NYS Executive Law; Section 717. The Statewide Interoperable and Emergency Communications Coordinator (SWIC), in consultation with the COMU Peer-Review Committee will review, approve, and re-certify all COMU credentialing.

1.3 National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) Position Credential

This policy meets the position specific guidance developed by DHS-OEC and FEMA. Those seeking credentialing in similarly titled positions administered by the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG), will need to complete additional requirements beyond the scope of this policy.

1.4 Updates and Revisions

This document will be reviewed periodically or in conjunction with updates of the NYS Statewide Communications Interoperability Plan. Revisions to this policy will be reviewed by the SWIC and the Peer-Review Committee. Comments, suggested revisions or additions to this policy should be submitted via email to: DHSES.OIEC@dhses.ny.gov

Individuals requesting New York State credentialing for a communications position are responsible for checking the state website www.dhses.ny.gov to obtain the current version of this document.

1.5 Definitions and Acronyms

AHIMT:	All Hazards Incident Management Team
Applicant:	Individual seeking to obtain a COMU position credential
Certifying Official:	Refers to an Agency's executive or the Agency executive's designee. 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.
CIWG:	Communications Interoperability Working Group
COML:	Communications Unit Leader
COMT:	Communications Unit Technician
COMU:	Communications Unit
COMEX:	Communications Unit Exercise
COMLEX:	Communications Unit Leader Exercise
DHSES:	New York State - Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services
DHS-OEC:	United States - Department of Homeland Security-Office of Emergency Communications
FEMA:	Federal Emergency Management Agency
Final Evaluator:	The person qualified to evaluate subordinate positions
HSEEP:	Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program
ICS:	Incident Command System
IMT/AHIMT:	Incident Management Team/All Hazards
NIC:	FEMA, National Integration Center
NIMS:	National Incident Management System
OIEC:	New York State - Office of Interoperable and Emergency Communications
PTB:	Position Task Book
SCIP:	Statewide Communications Interoperability Plan
SIEC:	State Interoperable and Emergency Communication Board
STO:	State Training Officer
SWIC:	Statewide Interoperability Coordinator
Trainee:	An individual, approved by their employing/sponsoring organization, who is preparing to qualify for an ICS position, is credentialed as a Trainee in that position once prerequisites are met and the PTB has been initiated. A Trainee is eligible for formal, on-the-job training.

2 NYS COMU Credentialing Process

The NIMS ICS All-Hazards positions require candidates that serve in the COMU positions, to currently serve in a public safety communications role. A public safety communications background with exposure to field operations is critical in the performance of the positions. Personnel who are regularly assigned to functional,

support, unit leader positions, or by those persons, who desire to seek qualifications in those positions, may apply for credentialing. They should have supervisory and personnel management skills and knowledge of local communications systems and communications capabilities.

Candidates must demonstrate knowledge of the local, regional and state communications plans, local topography, system site locations and knowledge of communications technologies.

NIMS provides a consistent, nationwide approach for agencies to manage emergency response operations. COMU training is recognized by the FEMA/NIC as supporting NIMS.

All-Hazards Type III COMU certification requires four (4) steps to attain certification in New York.

- Step 1: Completion of prerequisite NIMS/ICS courses
- Step 2: Completion of COML and/or COMT Federal Classroom Course
- Step 3: Completion of Position Task Book
- Step 4: Completed NYS COMU application for position credentialing

2.1 Credential Period

The credential will remain valid for five (5) years after the date of issuance.

3 COMU Position Credentialing Training Requirements

In order for an individual to participate in the COMU credentialing policy, all local, state and federal prerequisite requirements must be met prior to applying for participation in the classroom training course.

3.1 NIMS/ICS Prerequisites

Applicants must meet the ICS training course prerequisites prior to attending the COMU position training course.

Required prerequisites:

- IS-100.b, Introduction to the Incident Command System (ICS), ICS-100;
- IS-200.b or ICS-200, Incident Command System (ICS) for Single Resources and Initial Action Incidents
- ICS-300, Intermediate Incident Command System (ICS) for Expanding Incidents
- IS-700.a, National Incident Management System (NIMS), An Introduction.
- IS-800.b, National Response Framework (NRF)

Recommended, but not required:

- ICS-400, Advanced Incident Command System (ICS), Command and General Staff
- IS-704, NIMS Communications and Information Management
- IS-802, Emergency Support Functions Communications

3.2 Classroom Course

The course attended must be approved by the NYS State Training Officer (STO) and registered by the STO with FEMA. The course must be taught by FEMA recognized instructors. A Federally approved classroom course, taken in another state, is valid in meeting the New York State COMU credentialing requirements.

3.2.1 COML Course

The COML applicant shall successfully complete the current version of the national training course; E-969 or L-969, NIMS ICS All Hazards Communications Unit Leader.

3.2.2 COMT Course

The COMT applicant shall successfully complete the current version of the national training course; NIMS ICS All Hazards Communications Unit Technician Course. (TRG-COMT)

4 COMU Position Task Book

The Position Task Book (PTB) is the nationwide, standardized means of documenting the performance of the trainee in the designated COMU position. The books contain a variety of requirements that must all be successfully performed in order to qualify for credentialing under this policy.

- The COMU position specific tasks must be performed at multi-agency/multi-jurisdictional/multi-service (EMS, Fire, Police) functional or full-scale exercises, (COMLEX and COMEX are acceptable) planned events or actual emergency incidents
- The person signing off on the tasks performed, must be present at the event and personally witness the trainee performing the tasks
- It is not necessary to complete all tasks during a single event. Trainees may participate in multiple events until all tasks have been completed.

4.1 Agency Certification

The trainee's agency Certifying Official is responsible to attest that the trainee has complied with the New York State credentialing requirements, by signing the applicant's Position Task Book.

4.2 Prior Experience Credit (Historical Recognition)

COMU position activities that were performed within two (2) years prior to the completion of the training course will be admissible as credit for performance. Performance must be documented in a PTB.

4.3 PTB Completion Time Frame

The trainee will have up to three (3) years to complete a PTB, once the specific COMU training course has been completed and a Position Task Book initiated.

4.4 Authorized Evaluators

Persons authorized to document performance of tasks in a PTB are:

- An individual credentialed in a NYS COMU position or certified from another state⁽¹⁾ or from NWCG; commensurate with the position being evaluated; OR
- A qualified Logistics Sections Chief (LSC) for the exercise, event or actual incident; OR
- A qualified Incident Commander (IC) for the exercise, event or actual incident

4.5 PTB Documentation

The PTB documentation must be clear and legible and include the following elements:

- Contact information for each evaluator
- Each numbered task must be initialed by a qualified evaluator
- Final Evaluator's Verification, attesting all tasks were performed by the trainee
- Agency Certification, signed by an agency Certifying Official, confirming that the candidate has met all requirements for qualifications for the position

4.6 PTB Document Version

Previous versions used to document activity performed prior to October 1, 2014 will be admissible. Trainees whom INITIATE a PTB after October 1, 2014, must use the version posted on the DHSES-OIEC Website.

5 Credentialing Application

The trainee shall submit the required documentation to the SWIC to request credentialing in a COMU position.

5.1 Required Documentation

- A completed COMU position credentialing application (Appendix A)
- Copies of all ICS related training certificates
- Copy of the specific COMU course certificate
- Completed COMU Position Task Book(s), specific to the position (Appendix D, E)
- Back-up documentation for PTB. This shall include but not limited to; Incident Action Plans, Organizational Charts, and Communications Plans; ICS204, ICS205, ICS217A, or other forms. This documentation must clearly identify the actual position that the applicant served in during the event.

¹ A certified COMU position from another state may sign off as long as they have met that states' certification requirements. (Note: The NYS-SWIC has access to the national database of qualified COMU positions for each state.)

5.2 Applications

5.2.1 Recognition of Prior Learning

For application requirements completed PRIOR to the effective date of issue of this policy, the age of the documentation shall not exceed ten (10) years.

5.2.2 Initial Application (First time applying for a credential)

For applicants that have NOT completed all requirements, PRIOR to the effective date of this policy, the period of time from the completion of the specific COMU training course until the submission of the application, shall not exceed three (3) years.

6 Application Approval Process

6.1 Staff Review

All applications submitted will be reviewed by OIEC staff to insure compliance with the credentialing requirements before being reviewed by the Peer Review Committee. Applications not meeting the requirements will be returned to the applicant for further action.

6.2 Qualification Review Committee

A Qualification Review Committee (Peer review) comprised of five (5) subject matter experts, will review all applications and make recommendations to the SWIC to either approve or reject an application.

Membership shall include:

- OIEC staff
- State Training Officer or designee with qualified "IMT" responsibility
- Member of the CIWG
- Member of the CIWG
- Member of the CIWG

A minimum of three (3) members must participate in each review. Review may be conducted either in person, via teleconference call, video conference or other form of electronic communication. Committee members unable to attend may provide their comments and recommendations to the committee.

The Committee:

- Must abstain from acting on their own application or where there may be a potential conflict of interest
- Will consider each candidate's application on its own merits
- May request additional information or clarification be provided by candidate

6.3 Recommendation for Credentialing

Final determination for the issuance of a credential will reside with the SWIC. Candidates granted credentials will be issued documentation and will be added to the state and national databases of credentialed COMU personnel.

6.4 Recommendation for Denial of Credentialing

Applicants denied credentialing will be informed and provided with an explanation of the denial. Recommendations will be provided for any additional training and/or experience that is required before the candidate may re-apply for credentialing.

7 Credential Renewal, Proficiency and Performance

To maintain currency for the credentialed position and to be eligible for renewal of the credential, the individual holding the credential must demonstrate successful performance of activities required in this section and document those activities in a PTB.

7.1 Credentialing Renewal Proficiency Requirements

- Participation in any two (2) activities or a combination of any two (2); actual incidents, planned events or functions, full-scale exercises in the COMU position.
- All events must be multi-agency/multi-jurisdictional/multi-service (EMS, Fire, Police) and shall be conducted under the HSEEP evaluation process. Single-service/single agency events, drills, exercises or actual incidents, shall not be considered eligible.

7.2 Renewal Period

Individuals seeking renewal of their credential must initiate the renewal process by submitting application documents to the SWIC as required in Section 5.1 of this policy.

7.3 Application for Renewal of Credential

Renewal applications will be evaluated by the Peer Review Committee. Candidates, whose credentials are renewed, will be notified by the SWIC.

7.4 Failure to Meet Renewal Requirements

When credentials have expired the holder will be considered ineligible for deployment by New York State. Once renewed, the credential holder will be eligible for deployment.

8 Agency Affiliation Changes

Individuals issued credentials in a COMU position by DHSES-OIEC, shall notify OIEC of any change in agency affiliation, contact information, employment status or deployment status.