New York State

Type-III, All Hazards COMMUNICATIONS UNIT (COMU)

POSITION CREDENTIALING POLICY

**NYS Division of Homeland Security
and Emergency Services
(NYSDHSES)**

**Office of Interoperable &
Emergency Communications
(OIEC)**

* * * REVISED FINAL 06/01/2018* * *

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.

Record of Changes

This Record of Changes is used to record revisions to this document, including a brief description of the changes made, the date the changes went into effect by approval of the New York State Statewide Interoperability Coordinator (SWIC).

Change Number	Change Date	Summary of Revision	Authorization/Approval
1	10/15/2014	Initial document	SWIC
2	11/29/2017	6.2 Application Approval Process	SWIC
3	1/5/2018	Section 2: NYS COMU Credentialing Process	SWIC
4	1/5/2018	Section 2.1: Credential Period	SWIC
5	1/5/2018	Section 4: COMU Position Task Book	SWIC
6	1/5/2018	Section 4.4: Authorized Evaluators	SWIC
7	1/5/2018	Section 4.6: PTB Document Version	SWIC
8	1/5/2018	Section 5.1: Required Documentation	SWIC
9	1/5/2018	Section 6.2: Qualification Review Committee	SWIC
10	1/5/2018	Section 7.1: Credentialing Renewal Proficiency Requirements	SWIC
11	1/5/2018	Section 7.2: Renewal Period	SWIC
12	1/5/2018	Section 8: Agency Affiliation Changes	SWIC
13	1/5/2018	Added Section 9: Revocation of Credentials	SWIC
14	4/20/2018	Section 1.4: Updates and Revisions	SWIC
15	4/20/2018	Section 2: NYS COMU Credentialing Process	SWIC
16	4/20/2018	Section 3: COMU Position Credentialing Training Requirements	SWIC
17	4/20/2018	Section 3.1: NIMS/ICS Prerequisites	SWIC
18	4/20/2018	Section 3.2.1: COML Course	SWIC
19	4/20/2018	Section 4: COMU Position Task Book	SWIC
20	4/20/2018	Section 4.6: PTB Document Version	SWIC
21	4/20/2018	Section 5.1: Required Documentation	SWIC
22	4/20/2018	Section 6.1: Credentialing Approval	SWIC
23	5/7/2018	Section 7: Communications Assets Survey and Mapping (CASM) **(NEW)**	SWIC
24	5/7/2018	Section 8.1: Continuing Education Requirements	SWIC
25	5/7/2018	Section 8.2: Application for Renewal of Credentials	SWIC
26	5/7/2018	Section 8.3: Review of Renewal Paperwork	SWIC
27	5/7/2018	APPENDIX F: Credential Renewal Form **(NEW)**	SWIC

TABLE OF CONTENTS

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
Appendix F: Credentialing Renewal Form (COML and/or 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 semi-annually 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 New York State website http://www.dhses.ny.gov/oiec/training-exercises/ 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
COML TtT:	Communications Unit Leader – Train the Trainer
COMT:	Communications Unit Technician
COMT TtT:	Communications Unit Technician – Train the Trainer
COMU:	Communications Unit
COMU Office:	NYSDHSES-OIEC is the designated COMU Office in NY State
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 these positions. Personnel who are regularly assigned to functional, support, unit leader positions, may apply for credentialing. They should have supervisory and personnel management skills, in addition, be able to demonstrate knowledge of local communications systems, and communications capabilities.

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 credentialing requires six (6) steps to attain credentials in New York.

Step 1:   Completion of prerequisite NIMS/ICS courses (Most Recent)
Step 2:   Completion of COML and/or COMT Classroom Course
Step 3:   Completion of Position Task Book
Step 4:   Completed & Approved NYS COMU application for position credentialing
Step 5:   Completion of Agency sign-off
Step 6:   Sign-off by New York State COMU Office and SWIC

2.1 Credential Period

The credential will remain valid for three (3) years after the date of issuance.

3 COMU Position Credentialing Training Requirements

In order, for an individual to participate in the COMU credentialing process, 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.c, National Response Framework (NRF).

<u>Recommended, but not required</u>:
ICS-400, Advanced Incident Command System (ICS), Command & General Staff;
IS-704, NIMS Communications and Information Management;
IS-802, Emergency Support Functions Communications.

3.2 Classroom Course

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.

<u>Note: This is subject to change with any FEMA, DHS or OIEC certification changes, and all certifications must be current at the time of renewal.</u>

3.2.1 COML Course

The COML applicant shall successfully complete the current version of the national training courses, and the NIMS ICS All Hazards Communications Unit Leader Course.

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.

4 COMU Position Task Book

The Position Task Book (PTB) is the 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 to qualify for credentialing under this policy.

- The COMU position specific tasks must be performed at multi-agency or multi-jurisdictional and include 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
- Approving signatory must provide contact information for verification, if necessary
- 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
- An 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

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[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.)

4.6 PTB Document Version

The most current Position Task Book (PTB) can be found on the DHSES-OIEC website ([COML](#)) and/or ([COMT](#)), however, if necessary, a current copy can be obtained by contacting DHSES-OIEC at the following address:

Office of Interoperable & Emergency Communications (OIEC)
State Office Campus, Building 7A, Suite 102
1220 Washington Avenue
Albany, NY 12242
Attn: SWIC

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 and Submission Checklist (Appendix A)
- Copies of all ICS related training certificates
- Copy of the specific COMU course certificate
- Completed (Original) 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.

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 credentialing)

First time applicants will have from the completion of the specific COMU training, up to three (3) years to complete all credentialing requirements.

6 Application Approval Process

6.1 Credentialing Approval

Applicants final paperwork must be submitted with the following two (2) completed documents, to start the final approval process:

- Home Agency Certification (Appendix B)
- Performance-Proficiency Documentation (Appendix C)

6.2 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.

6.3 Qualification Review Committee

A Qualification Review Committee will be comprised of four (4) 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 (4)

All four (4) 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

6.4 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.

6.5 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 Communication Assets Survey and Mapping (CASM)

All credentialed COML and/or COMT personnel will be required to have and maintain a Communications Assets Survey and Mapping (CASM) user account.

In addition, they will also be required to ensure that their agency information is always kept current in the CASM system.

8 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 on a Credential Renewal Form.

The New York Credentialed COML and/or COMT will maintain a continuing education program, based on the requirements below.

The New York SWIC may renew New York COML and/or COMT if all requirements are met.

If requirements are not met, the New York COML and/or COMT's credentials will expire after three (3) years.

8.1 Continuing Education Requirements

For a Credentialed COML and/or COMT to maintain a current and consistent skill-set, New York State Credentialed COML and/or COMT's will be required to complete a continuing education program during their three (3) year credentialed period.

Continuing Education Unit (CEU) Credits

Credentialed COML and/or COMT's will be required to complete thirty-six (36) hours of CEU, prior to their expiration date, in the following six (6) categories:

- Job Duties as it relates to communications systems (voice, data, IOP planning) *(4 Hours Minimum)*
- Establish a communications system to meet incidents operational needs *(4 hours minimum)*
- Workshops and/or Seminars *(6 Hour Minimum)*
- Exercises (Functional or Full Scale) *(12 Hours Minimum)*
- Communications/ICS Related Training Programs *(6 Hour Minimum)*
- Communications Presentations/Teaching *(4 Hour Minimum)*

New York State COML and/or COMT's may participate in an approved classroom or online training, exercise (Communications Exercise, Functional or Full-Scale), planned event, or actual incident to receive credit for continuing education. Participation in an exercise, planned event or actual incident must be in the role of COML and/or COMT to qualify for this credit. Completion of verified continuing education will serve as adequate for renewal of COML and/or COMT credentialing.

DHSES-OIEC reserves the right to contact certifying agents to verify authenticity.

It is the individual COML and/or COMT's responsibility to communicate this information to the SWIC in a timely fashion, once all requirement have been completed.

8.2 Application for Renewal of Credentials

Individuals seeking renewal of their COML and/or COMT credentials, must submit a completed packet containing the below documents, prior to their expiration date, to the New York State SWIC.

Appendix B: Agency Certification
Appendix F: Credentialing Renewal Form (COML and/or COMT)
Additional: Updated certifications and/or diplomas received after initial credentialing process

Note: This is subject to change with any FEMA, DHS or OIEC certification changes, and all certifications must be current at the time of renewal.

8.3 Review of Renewal Paperwork

Completed renewal packets will be evaluated by the Peer Review Committee. Candidates, whose credentials are renewed, will be notified by the SWIC.

COML and/or COMT's will be notified in writing and provided an updated Credentialing Certificate and ID Card.

8.4 Failure to Meet Renewal Requirements

If the New York State SWIC has not received a completed renewal package from a COML and/or COMT prior to their expiration date, the credentials will automatically expire, the COML and/or COMT will be removed from the active COMU list, CASM, and will be considered ineligible for deployment by New York State.

9   Agency Affiliation Changes

Individuals issued credentials in a COMU position by DHSES-OIEC, shall notify OIEC, within thirty (30) days, of any change in agency affiliation, contact information, employment status or deployment status.   Failure to do so may result in loss of credentials.

10 Revocation of Credentials

The SWIC reserves the right to revoke an individual's credentials, and will provide thirty (30) days' notice, in writing, at which time an individual has five (5) business days to return credentials.

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Office of Interoperable & Emergency Communications (OIEC)
State Office Campus, Building 7A, Suite 102
1220 Washington Avenue
Albany, NY 12242
Attn: SWIC

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