Public Safety Communications Advisory Commission

Standard Operating Procedure

Arizona Regional All-Hazards Communications Unit Recognition Procedure

Effective Date: 09/18/2012

APPROVAL DRAFT

Distribution Statement: This is a public document. The Point of Contact (POC) for this document is the Public Safety Interoperable Communications (PSIC) Office in the Arizona Department of Administration – Arizona Strategic Enterprise Technology Office (ADOA-ASET). Current contact information for the PSIC Office can be found at www.azpsic.gov.

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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 PSCC, and the appropriate PSIC Office Contact.

Change No.	Date	Description	PSIC Office Contact
0	7/20/2010	Initial Approval by the PSCC	Emilie Sundie
1	9/20/2011	Approved by the PSCC	Suesan Nordman
		Title change to include "All-Hazards"; Content revision and update for consistency with DHS terminology and program requirements	
2	9/18/2012	Approved by the PSCC	Suesan Nordman
		Title change to replace "COML" with "Communications Unit"; Format update; Content revision to reflect the expansion of the recognition program scope to incorporate other Communications Unit positions	

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

The National Incident Management System (NIMS) is 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 include:

- Communications Unit Leader (COML)
- Communications Unit Technician (COMT)
- Incident Communications Center Manager (INCM)
- Radio Operator (RADO)
- Technical Specialist (THSP)
- Message Runner

The Federal government has empowered each state to develop its own All-Hazards Communications Unit recognition and training program. Arizona has developed a formal program, of which this procedure is a part. Additional information and resources are available on the State's Public Safety Interoperable Communications (PSIC) Office website at: www.azpsic.gov/library/coml.

1.2 Purpose

The purpose of this document is to describe the process for requesting Arizona Regional recognition for Communications Unit positions that have an associated Federal Department of Homeland Security (DHS) approved curriculum and All-Hazards Position Taskbook. Instructions for submitting applications for Arizona Regional recognition or renewal of recognition and the associated forms are included in this document and are available on the PSIC website at: www.azpsic.gov/library/coml.

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1.3 Scope

This procedure applies to those individuals who meet the recommended DHS guidelines for eligibility, training and experience for All-Hazards Communications Unit positions and are requesting Arizona Regional recognition in such positions. Individuals interested in serving only at the local Agency level are not obligated to adhere to these procedures, unless required by their Agency.

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

"Arizona Agency" is defined as "any Arizona police, fire, Emergency Medical Service (EMS), municipal, county, 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. Examples include: Agency Heads, Chiefs, and Division/Department Directors.]

1.5 References

This document references the NIMS Communications Unit Workgroup Policies and Procedures ("NIMS-CU Workgroup Policies and Procedures"), available online at: www.azpsic.gov/library/standards/default.htm.

1.6 Administration

Arizona's PSIC Office, with guidance from the Statewide Interoperability Executive Committee (SIEC) and the Public Safety Communications Advisory Commission (PSCC), is responsible for administering this procedure.

1.7 Document Terminology

The terms "shall," "must," "will," and "required" are used throughout this document to indicate required parameters and to differentiate from recommended parameters. Recommendations are identified by the words "should," "desirably" and "preferably."

1.8 Updates & Revisions

This document will be reviewed annually and updated as needed. Those wishing to suggest revisions or additions to this document should send their feedback electronically to psic@azpsic.gov or in writing to the PSIC Office, c/o Arizona Strategic Enterprise Technology (ASET) Office at 100 N 15th Avenue, Suite 400, Phoenix, AZ 85007.

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Revisions to this document will be reviewed by the National Incident Management System-Communications Unit (NIMS-CU) Workgroup, which will recommend appropriate changes to the SIEC. The SIEC must then approve all such changes and submit them for approval to the PSCC. Revised versions of this document will be effective once approved by the PSCC.

Individuals requesting Arizona Regional recognition for a position within the All-Hazards Communications Unit are responsible for checking the PSIC website (www.azpsic.gov) to obtain the current release of this document.

2 National Certification Process Overview

All-Hazards Communications Unit personnel are trained communications professionals that work to achieve interoperability through the ICS and among all responding agencies. Certification 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.

DHS has identified requirements for certification for All-Hazards Communications Unit personnel. At a minimum, these individuals must:

- Meet the federally required All-Hazards Training course prerequisites for the position
- Complete the 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 Taskbook (see Section 3.2)

2.1 Required Training

The DHS Office of Emergency Communications (OEC) 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 emergency responders to serve in specific positions during all-hazards emergency operations.

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

At the conclusion of each training course, DHS, or their designee, will log each student who successfully completed the course into a national database and mail a Certificate of Completion to each student.

2.2 Position Taskbook

Position Taskbooks (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

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be evaluated against written guidelines. Trainees must demonstrate or perform successfully all tasks listed in the PTB to become certified 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 three (3) years prior to the completion of the training course. Further, candidates have three (3) years following completion of training course to complete the PTB.

Evaluation and confirmation of the individual's performance of all the tasks may involve more than one evaluator and can 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 certified in that position.

2.3 Agency Certification

A key component of the certification process is the evaluation by the Agency Certifying Official of an individual's capability to perform in the position. Individuals seeking certification 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 inside the front cover of the PTB.

3 Arizona Regional Recognition

Individuals who have completed the nationally recommended certification process described in Section 2 for an All-Hazards Communications Unit position may seek Arizona Regional recognition. In order to be considered, individuals must be certified by an Arizona Agency in the position and are required to submit evidence to the PSIC Office confirming their certification, as described in further detail below.

3.1 Application Requirements

Individuals wishing to be recognized at the Arizona Regional level must provide the following application materials:

- One (1) signed copy of the Arizona Regional All-Hazards Communications Unit Recognition Submission Checklist Form including personal contact and Agency Affiliation information (see Appendix A)
- Written confirmation 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 Position Taskbook (as described in Section 3.2)

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

All required application materials must be submitted either electronically to psic@azpsic.gov or by mail or in person to the PSIC Office, c/o Arizona Strategic Enterprise Technology (ASET) Office, 100 N 15th Avenue, Suite 400, Phoenix, AZ 85007.

3.2 Taskbook Requirements

To be considered for Arizona Regional Recognition, 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. [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 at the back of the PTB.

   Appropriate evaluators for All-Hazards PTB tasks include individuals who are qualified and proficient in the position being evaluated, or in a higher position, such as: Incident Commanders; Logistics and Operations Section Chiefs; NIMS-trained COMLs; 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 Arizona Agency Certifying Official, confirming that the candidate has met all requirements for qualification in the position and that the qualification has been issued. Additionally, if a PTB contains an Agency Certification by an Agency that is not an Arizona Agency, as defined in Section 1.4, the candidate must submit a separate Agency Certification using the Arizona Regional All-Hazards Communications Unit Recognition Agency Certification Form (see Appendix B, Revision of Agency Certification section) with certification by an Arizona Agency.

A complete and separate PTB must be submitted for each position for which an individual desires consideration for recognition.

3.3 Review Process

Application materials received by the PSIC Office will be reviewed in accordance with the processes specified in the NIMS-CU Workgroup Policies and Procedures. The Workgroup will review each candidate's submitted application materials and may make additional inquiries if more information is needed from the candidate, incident/event personnel, and/or the candidate's Agency.

Approximately two (2) weeks prior to each scheduled meeting of the SIEC, the Workgroup will conduct an Application Review Meeting. During the meeting, the Workgroup will individually

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discuss 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.

3.4 Initial Recognition

Candidates granted recognition by the NIMS-CU Workgroup will be issued a document confirming their designation and will be added to the Arizona Regional All-Hazards Communications Unit Resource List. The Resource List will be posted on the PSIC website at: www.azpsic.gov/library/coml.

The designation will remain current for three (3) years after the date the individual is recognized by the NIMS-CU Workgroup, unless terminated or renewed.

If a candidate is not granted recognition, a document will be sent to the candidate with the Workgroup's recommendations for additional training and/or experience needed for the candidate to be re-considered for recognition at a later date. The Workgroup may also provide the candidate's Agency with any observations the Workgroup feels are relevant to the individual's ability to meet State or nationally established All-Hazards Communications Unit position standards.

3.5 Recognition Renewal

The Arizona Regional designation is effective for three (3) years from the date recognition is granted by the NIMS-CU Workgroup. Prior to the end of each three (3) year period following initial recognition, individuals seeking renewal of their Arizona Regional designation must request renewal by providing the following renewal application materials to the PSIC Office:

- One (1) copy of the Arizona Regional All-Hazards Communications Unit Recognition Agency Certification Form (see Appendix B, Revision of Agency Certification section) with certification by an Arizona 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 recognized individual has not moved to another Agency.]
- Demonstration and documentation of experience in formalized and recognized communications training, exercises (full-scale or functional), incidents and/or events within the three (3) year recognition period. Examples of acceptable documents include: Incident Action Plans, Organizational Charts, Communications Plans, Agency Certifying Official verification letter, and communications training Certificates of Completion. [Note: Incident/event documentation should indicate that the individual served in the recognized position.]

Individuals who fail to provide the required renewal request documentation prior to the expiration of the three (3) year term will be removed from the Arizona Regional All-Hazards Communications Unit Resource List. If they wish to be considered for recognition at a future date, all initial application materials must be re-submitted to the PSIC Office for consideration.

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Individuals who submit renewal request documentation prior to the expiration of the three (3) year term will remain on the Arizona Regional All-Hazards Communications Unit Resource List until their renewal application is acted upon by the Workgroup.

Renewal applications will be evaluated by the Workgroup during an Application Review Meeting, as noted in Section 3.3. Candidates whose recognition is renewed by the NIMS-CU Workgroup will be issued a document confirming their continued Arizona Regional designation for an additional three (3) year term, and they will continue to be listed on the Arizona Regional All-Hazards Communications Unit Resource List.

Candidates whose recognition is not renewed will be sent a document with the Workgroup's explanation and request for additional documentation needed prior to the candidate being re-considered for recognition.

3.6 Agency Certification Changes

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

An Arizona Agency Certifying Official may withdraw certification of an individual by formal written notice of such withdrawal using the Arizona Regional All-Hazards Communications Unit Recognition Agency Certification Form (see Appendix B, Removal of Agency Certification section).

If a recognized individual moves to a different Agency, he/she must provide Agency Certification from the new Agency using the Arizona Regional All-Hazards Communications Unit Recognition Agency Certification Form (see Appendix B, Revision of Agency Certification section). Once submitted, the change of affiliation will be accepted and records updated accordingly, but the recognition renewal date will remain unchanged.

3.7 Continuing Education & Experience

Participation in continuing public safety communications education as a student or instructor is strongly recommended for all positions within the Communications Unit. In order to keep their skills current, individuals are encouraged to participate regularly in training, exercises, incidents and planned events in the roles in which they are recognized.

3.8 Records

Centralized record keeping for the Arizona Regional All-Hazards Communications Unit Recognition Program will be provided by the PSIC Office, including the Arizona Regional All-Hazards Communications Unit Resource List.

Tactical Interoperable Communications Plans (TICPs) and the Communication Assets Survey and Mapping Tool (CASM) may also refer to the Arizona Regional All-Hazards Communications Unit Resource List.

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Appendix A

Arizona Regional All-Hazards Communications Unit Recognition Submission Checklist

Name _____
First Name Middle Initial/Name Last Name

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Telephone Number _____ Email Address _____

Position for which you are applying for recognition _____

Rank and/or Working Title _____

Agency Name _____ 24/7 Phone Number _____

Agency Address _____

Agency City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Agency Contact Name _____ Title _____

Contact Phone Number _____ Email Address _____

- ☐ All-Hazards Course Prerequisite Training Completed (Attach Copies of Certificates of Completion or Training Record):
  - ☐ ICS 700
  - ☐ ICS 800
  - ☐ ICS 100
  - ☐ ICS 200
  - ☐ ICS 300 *(This course is only required for COML recognition)*
- ☐ Copy of Certificate of Completion from All-Hazards position training course
- ☐ Legible All-Hazards Position Taskbook, including the following completed elements:
  - ☐ All numbered tasks initialed by appropriate approval authorities
  - ☐ Contact information provided for each evaluator at the end of the Taskbook
  - ☐ Final Evaluator's Verification
  - ☐ Arizona Agency Certification

Applicant Signature _____ Date _____

Submission of Materials

Mail or In Person
PSIC Office, Arizona Strategic Enterprise Technology Office
100 N 15th Avenue, Suite 400
Phoenix, AZ 85007

Electronic
psic@azpsic.gov

For Questions, call (602) 364-4498

For PSIC Office Use:

_____ _____ _____
Received By *Title* *Date*

Appendix B

Arizona Regional All-Hazards Communications Unit Recognition Agency Certification

Name _____
First Name Middle Initial/Name Last Name

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Telephone Number _____ Email Address _____

Position for which you are applying for recognition _____

Rank and/or Working Title _____

[Note: Requirements for qualification are described in the Arizona Regional All-Hazards Communications Unit Recognition Procedure, available online at http://www.azpsic.gov/library/coml/.]

Revision of Agency Certification

I certify that the individual named above has met all requirements for qualification in the All-Hazards Communications Unit position specified and that such qualification has been issued.

Certifying Official's Signature _____ Date _____

Print Official's Name _____ Title _____

Phone Number _____ Email Address _____

Agency Name _____

Agency Address _____

Agency City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Removal of Agency Certification

Please remove our Agency's certification from the record of the individual named above.

Authorizing Official's Signature _____ Date _____

Print Official's Name _____ Title _____

Phone Number _____ Email Address _____

Agency Name _____

Agency Address _____

Agency City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Submission of Materials

Mail or In Person
PSIC Office, Arizona Strategic Enterprise Technology Office
100 N 15th Avenue, Suite 400
Phoenix, AZ 85007

Electronic
psic@azpsic.gov

For Questions, call (602) 364-4498

For PSIC Office Use:

_____ _____ _____
Received By *Title* *Date*