



OFFICE OF STATE FIRE MARSHAL
INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAMS
STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES

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SUBJECT: Training and qualifications of new Communications Unit members

OBJECTIVE: Provide guidance to Communications Unit members regarding required training and qualifications – from COMT trainee to COML

I. SCOPE

This SOG will be followed by all new Communications Unit members. The requirements outlined will also be followed when existing Communications Unit members wish to change positions within the Unit or join a team.

II. COMMUNICATIONS UNIT TECHNICIAN

COMT Trainee is the entry-level position within the Communications Unit. Verifiable minimum requirements to apply for the position of COMT Trainee are:

- ICS-700, 800, 100, and 200
- S-190 Introduction to Wildland Fire Behavior

COMT Trainees must also exhibit the following characteristics:

- Interest in and exposure to emergency communications
- Aptitude for learning and using communications and network technologies
- Ability to annually pass the physical requirements of a Walk Test

COMT Trainees must have completed the following in order to become fully-qualified COMTs:

- Obtain an Amateur Radio Technician Class license
- RT-130 Annual Fireline Safety Refresher Training
- Complete NWCG COMT task book or FEMA Type III COMT task book and class

COMT Trainees must have demonstrated proficiency to qualified team members in the following areas in order to become fully-qualified COMTs:

- OSFM IMT rules, policies and procedures
- Current radio systems, (type, setup and deployment, programming, maintenance, and demobilization)
- Repeater systems, (type, locating, setup and deployment, programming, maintenance, and demobilization)
- ACU-1000 Gateway system, (locating, setup and deployment, programming, maintenance, and demobilization)
- Internet systems, (satellite, network, VoIP)
- Equipment accountability system
- ICS and mobilization forms, (ICS-205, 213, 214, 217, and 308, radio T-cards, FSP01-a and reimbursement)
- The ability to read and assimilate information contained in the IAP, briefings and radio system diagrams from the COML or Assistant COML
- Trailer setup
- Proper operation of generators
- Repeaters, (setup, programming, testing, deployment, troubleshooting, and maintenance)
- Handheld radios, (setup, programming, testing, deployment, troubleshooting, and maintenance)
- Operational testing of communications systems
- Ability to accomplish minor field repair including soldering coax connectors
- Ability to work effectively as a member of a team, (conduct oneself in a professional manner, demonstrate respect and courtesy, show respect for equipment as well as public and private property, establish and maintain positive interpersonal and interagency working relationships, and follow the chain of command).
- Commitment to safety over expedience, (communicate potentially hazardous or inappropriate work situations).
- Personal preparation, (personal communications information resource kit, contact phone list, 72-hour personal deployment kit, and PPE).

III. COMMUNICATIONS UNIT LEADER

COML is the upper-level position within the Communications Unit. A fully-qualified COMT will be eligible to apply for the COML position. Verifiable minimum requirements to apply for the position of COML are:

- Successful completion of the Communications Technician checklist
- NIMS ICS 300
- Completion of the Homeland Security FEMA Type III COML class and task book or completion of the NWCG Type II COML task book
- Ability to annually pass the physical requirements of a Walk Test
- Amateur Radio General Class License
- RT-130 Annual Fireline Safety Refresher Training

COMLs must also learn the following elements related to designing a communications system to meet the needs of a given incident:

- Determine location to base Communications Unit and assess resource needs
- Determine repeater model using radio system diagrams
- Identify locations for repeater deployment

COML applicants must have demonstrated proficiency to qualified team members in the following areas in order to be qualified for the position:

- Knowledge of the role of COML including successful establishment, management and demobilization of the Communications Unit
- Ability to assist Unit in check-in/demobilization as well as pay and reimbursement paperwork
- Ability to translate an Incident Action Plan into priorities, assignments and completed tasks
- Establishing and maintaining positive interpersonal and interagency working relationships
- Ability to work within the Incident Command System
- Proficiency in the job; both technically and as a leader
- Exhibit principles of integrity
- Ability to maintain a safe work environment
- Ability to supervise all aspects of the Communications Unit operations and staff
- Ability to lead the daily Communications Unit briefings and meetings

- Ability to supervise and maintain equipment accountability system
- Ability to analyze and identify communication equipment inventory needs and communicate those needs to the Logistics Section Chief
- Ability to supervise and maintain the documents generated by the Communications Unit
- Ability to properly document any emergency situations which the Unit is directly involved in
- Ability to prepare and review the ICS 205 Incident Radio Communications Plan with IMT or personnel as necessary or requested
- Ability to manage the ongoing maintenance of all Unit communications systems including issued radios, repeater systems, internet/network, VoIP phone systems, batteries, and other equipment as well as troubleshooting and managing any failed equipment
- Ability to coordinate the transfer of position duties when demobilizing or rotating staff
- Ability to anticipate staffing needs and request appropriate levels of staffing given the needs of the incident