



Office of Emergency Communications Information Bulletin

No. 294 October 21, 2008

TO: All State Administrative Agency Points of Contact
All Statewide Interoperability Coordinators
All SCIP Points of Contact

FROM: Office of Emergency Communications

SUBJECT: National Incident Management System-Compliant All-Hazards Type III Communications Unit Leader Training

In response to the immediate need for trained All-Hazards Communications Unit Leaders (COMLs), the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Office of Emergency Communications (OEC) is utilizing a newly-developed curriculum to offer National Incident Management System (NIMS)-compliant COML instruction throughout the United States. For the past 36 months, State and local government emergency response representatives worked to develop a formal All-Hazards Type III COML training program. During the past year, with support from OEC and the Office for Interoperability and Compatibility (OIC), the COML curriculum was completed and initial training classes offered. On April 18, 2008, the COML course was certified as NIMS-compliant.

The goal is for every State¹ to have a cadre of trained personnel to coordinate on-scene emergency communications during a multi-jurisdictional response. The COML course is based on a three-day, 24-hour curriculum. Two trained instructors will lead each class and OEC will provide a Certificate of Completion to each student, also sending a copy to the State Administrative Agency (SAA) in the student's State of employment. SAAs can then catalogue according to the State's process.

Each State will be responsible for the following:

- a) *Identifying suitable COML student candidates.* SAAs are encouraged to immediately begin identifying suitable COML student candidates for OEC-sponsored regional training. Classes are being planned for the remainder of 2008. SAAs are asked to give priority to students from their Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) regions or designated Metropolitan Areas (for non-UASI States) since COML candidates have already been identified in their Tactical Interoperable Communications Plans (TICPs).

To ensure that students participating in OEC-sponsored COML training classes have the critical task- and skill-related competencies required by a COML, the student candidate's will be required to certify completion of prerequisites upon application. This certification may be provided by the

¹ State refers to State and Territory

SAA, designated State agency, or candidate's parent agency (as determined by the State). Prerequisites for the COML class are identified in the All-Hazards Type III Task Book described below, except specific experience serving as a COML.

- b) *Identifying suitable COML trainer candidates.* SAAs are encouraged to immediately begin identifying suitable COML student candidates for OEC-sponsored COML Train the Trainer classes being planned to help States grow their own COML development programs. These classes will begin in early 2009.
- c) *Developing a process for COML credentialing.* SAAs may choose to credential individuals as All-Hazards Type III COMLs. OEC will certify successful completion of training, but will not credential individuals to perform in the role. State credentialing should minimally be based on completion of OEC-approved training and a Task Book with appropriate signatures certifying prerequisite training and experience. The SAA or State designee will determine the authorizing agency(ies) for final sign-off and retention of the completed credentials.

An All-Hazards Type III COML Task Book has been created for this purpose and made available at www.safecomprogram.gov, under the Current Projects page.

The first 13 classes will be held between August 1, 2008 and October 31, 2008. The remaining training dates and sites are as follows:

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| • Chicago, IL, October 14-16, 2008 | • Jackson, MS, October 20-22, 2008 |
| • Denver, CO, October 14-16, 2008 | • Salem, OR, October 28-30, 2008 |
| • Landover MD, October 14-16, 2008 | • Hartford, CT, October 28-30, 2008 |
| • Albany, NY, October 20-22, 2008 | |

Plus, ten additional COML classes to be held across the nation will be scheduled soon between November 2008 and February 2009.

OEC will provide the instructors, training materials, and training locations for the nationwide series of COML training classes. Travel costs will be the responsibility of the individual State or local agency. However, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Grant Programs Directorate confirmed that Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP) funds and Interoperable Emergency Communications Grant Program (IECGP) funds may be used for COML training travel, overtime, and backfill expenses, as well as to develop and administer the credentialing processes. Students view the class prerequisites at www.safecomprogram.gov. Thirty seats will be available in each class. Each hosting State will receive at least 10 of the 30 seats. The remainder of the seats will be on a first-come, first-served basis.

There has been a long-standing requirement for NIMS-certified COML instruction. OEC is committed to working closely with States throughout this process to make the training as accessible and as beneficial as possible. Accordingly, OEC encourages States to send questions, comments, or suggestions to comltraining@hq.dhs.gov.