



**Homeland  
Security**

# Fact Sheet

## **TYPE III COMMUNICATIONS UNIT LEADER TRAINING**

### **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 Department of Homeland Security’s (DHS) Office of Emergency Communications (OEC) in partnership with the Office for Interoperability and Compatibility (OIC), the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), National Integration Center (NIC), and practitioners from across the country developed performance and training standards for the All Hazards Type III Communications Unit Leader (COML) as well as formulated a curriculum and comprehensive All-Hazards Type III COML Course.

### **Type III COML Training**

The Type III COML course trains emergency responders to be communications unit leaders during all-hazards emergency operations, significantly improving communications across the multiple disciplines and jurisdictions responding to an incident. This COML training will qualify emergency responders to lead ICS communications units if they possess the necessary prerequisites, including knowledge of the following: local communications; communications systems; and regional, State, and local communications plans. COML responsibilities include developing plans for the effective use of incident communications equipment and facilities, managing the distribution of communications equipment to incident personnel, and coordinating the installation and testing of communications equipment. Meeting the prerequisites outlined below, and upon completion of formal classroom training, students must complete and have signed off on a comprehensive position-specific All-Hazards COML Task Book before they can be certified as a Type III COML.

### **Incident Scale**

Incident response is categorized into five types, according to incident magnitude and complexity. The type of response operation needed for an incident is determined by the level of resources required to address the incident as well as its duration (e.g., one hour, several weeks). As the most complex incident, a Type I response necessitates a multi-discipline, multi-jurisdiction response for a significant duration, such as recent large-scale natural disasters. As

the least complex incident, a Type V response requires limited resources and time, such as a small fire or routine traffic stop. A Type III event includes:

- Activation of some or all of the Command and General Staff positions, as well as Division/Group Supervisor and/or Unit Leader-level positions.
- A Type III Incident Management Team (IMT) or incident command organization managing initial action incidents with a significant number of resources, an extended attack incident until containment/control is achieved, or an expanding incident until transition to a Type I or II team.
- Extension into multiple operational periods.
- Typically, a written Incident Action Plan (IAP) for each operational period.

### **Required COML Course Prerequisites**

1. A public safety communications background with exposure to field operations; this experience should be validated by the authority who supervised the student.

2. Fundamental public safety communications technology, supervisory, and personnel management skills. These include, but are not limited to:

- Knowledge of local communications and communications systems
- Frequencies and spectrum
- Technologies
- Knowledge of local topography
- Knowledge of system site locations; regional, State, and local communications plans; and regional and local Tactical Interoperable Communications Plans, if available
- Communications and resource contacts

3. Completion of the following training courses:

- **IS-700**  
Explains the purpose, principles, key components, and benefits of NIMS. The course also contains Planning Activity screens, allowing participants to complete planning tasks during this course.
- **IS-800b**  
Introduces participants to concepts and principles of the National Response Framework.
- **ICS-100**  
Introduces ICS; provides the foundation for higher-level ICS training; describes ICS history, features, principles, and organizational structure; and the relationship between ICS and NIMS.
- **ICS-200**  
Provides training on, and resources for, personnel who are likely to assume a supervisory position within ICS.
- **ICS-300**  
Provides training on, and resources for, personnel who are required to implement advanced application of the ICS.

### **NIMS Compliant**

The National Incident Management System (NIMS) provides a consistent, nationwide approach for agencies to manage emergency response operations. Recognized by the FEMA/NIC as supporting NIMS, the Type III COML course is being made available to States and localities.

**Next Steps**

OEC is currently working on a plan to provide COML training throughout the country in late 2008. Please contact [comltraining@hq.dhs.gov](mailto:comltraining@hq.dhs.gov) if you would like to be added to any distribution lists regarding the dates and locations of any training.

The Homeland Security Grant Program and the Interoperable Emergency Communications Grant Program may be used by States to fund and/or attend COML training.

For additional information on COML efforts, including the Type III COML course, visit the SAFECOM website at [www.safecomprogram.gov/SAFECOM/currentprojects/comltraining/comltraining.htm](http://www.safecomprogram.gov/SAFECOM/currentprojects/comltraining/comltraining.htm)