



FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

MANUAL

FOREWORD

FEMA is committed to providing our partners throughout the country with a professional cadre or readily deployable, trained, and competent leaders to manage all levels of disasters. The most important and highly visible of these positions is the Federal Coordinating Officer (FCO). Recent Congressional legislation authorized the establishment of a FCO Professional Cadre (FCOPC) to manage disasters and emergencies. This legislation in conjunction with the attached Credentialing Plan will provide consistency in disaster response operations and is necessary for optimizing Federal support to the states.

This Credentialing Plan establishes rigorous requirements involving training, experience, evaluation of demonstrated knowledge, skills & abilities and professional development. The intent of the plan is to have FCOs progress through a series of challenging requirements to prepare them for their critical role in various levels of disasters.

The Credentialing Plan will be updated and published annually. It will be provided to cadre members and Regional Directors. FEMA may change the policies, procedures, and plan at any time with or without notice. Cadre members should consult with the Office of the FCO Cadre Program Director for information on changes and for current listings of scheduled training.

Comments related to this document should be directed in writing to: FEMA, FCO Program Director, Response & Recovery Directorate, 500 C Street SW, Washington DC 20472.

James L. Witt
Director

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FCO Cadre Members

Table of Contents

Foreword Contents

Purpose.....	1
Overview.....	1
Assumptions.....	2
Credentialing Levels.....	2
Awarding of Credentials.....	3
Credentialing Criteria.....	3
Experience.....	3
Required Formal Training.....	4
Required Self Study Courses.....	5
Evaluation.....	5
Professional Development.....	5
Summary.....	6

Appendices

- Appendix A- Disaster Levels
- Appendix B- FCO Level 1 Credentialing Matrix
- Appendix C- FCO Level 2 Credentialing Matrix
- Appendix D- FCO Level 3 Credentialing Matrix
- Appendix E- FCO Level 4 Credentialing Matrix

Purpose

Establish an Agency-wide, standardized credentialing program for the Federal Coordinating Officer Professional Cadre (FCOPC) that will lead to a consistent management approach in the delivery of essential disaster services.

Introduction

This plan explains how FEMA will ensure and track the performance and capabilities of the FCOPC members. We will build a team of professional FCOs (Federal Coordinating Officers) to manage disaster operations in an efficient and nationally consistent manner to ensure the high level of service expected of FEMA. Credentials will capture both managers' formal training and their on-the-job experiences.

Overview

- Director's Policy Statement No. 2-99, dated March 22, 1999, establishes a permanent Federal Coordinating Officer Professional Cadre (FCOPC) Program and directs the establishment of a credentialing program under the guidelines set in the April 1998 Disaster Workforce Readiness Management Proposal.
- Credentialing is a necessity for optimizing national level disaster response, evidenced in the April 1998, Disaster Workforce Readiness Management Proposal.
- The FCOPC Program Director, in coordination with Regional Directors, will manage the FEMA-wide effort for FCO credentialing standards. He/She will coordinate the training and deployment of FCOs, and will coordinate the management of the program with Regional and Associate Directors.
- The FCOPC credentialing program will serve as the model for credentialing of the national FCO cadre in the future. FEMA will set guidelines for cadre functions with national standards for training, performance, and deployment that will govern both the FCOPC and Regional FCO staff.
- Following specialized training, practical application of disaster management practices, and senior management assessment, credentialed staff will be given responsibility and accountability for assignment as FCOs within FEMA's scope of operations.

Assumptions

- Credentialing establishes core performance standards and proficiency levels that are prerequisite for FCOs.
- Extensive use of the Automated Deployment Database (ADD) system as a tracking function will ensure documentation of training and deployment.
- Additional training attendance not covered by ADD will be documented.
- Training will be conducted at a GS-15 management level.
- FCO Credentialing involves a “whole person concept” of training, successful performance evaluations, deployed practical experience, and professional development.
- Program focus includes preparation for all hazards including terrorism and weapons of mass destruction.
- FCOPC personnel will have appropriate security clearances to perform all-hazards assignments.

Credentialing Levels

The ADD system requires individuals to be entered into the system at a minimum of Level 1 regardless of training or credentialing. However, FCOs will only be fully credentialed at each level when they have completed the mandatory requirements.

The credentialing program establishes four levels of FCO expertise and performance levels:

- **Trainee** (ADD Level 1): Initial assignments as Chief of Staff, Special Assistant, or Deputy FCO followed by assignment as an FCO in a Level III disaster. Optimally should include at least a month-long assignment as Chief of Staff or Deputy FCO in a Level III disaster, waivable at the discretion of the Program Director. Requires core training and familiarization with FEMA operations. Frequently will shadow or be mentored by an experienced FCO. As a prerequisite for qualification to move to ADD Level 2, a FCO cadre member must demonstrate the ability to manage Level III disasters.
- **Basically Qualified** (ADD Level 2): Assignment as FCO in Level III disasters without shadowing a more experienced FCO. As a prerequisite for qualification at Level 3 proficiency, a FCO cadre member must demonstrate the ability to manage a Level II disaster.

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2

- **Fully Qualified** (ADD Level 3): Able to manage Level II disaster operations without a mentor. Serves as an FCO on Level II disasters and as a DFCO, Chief of Staff, or Special Assistant on Level I disasters. Able to train and teach subordinates.
- **Expert** (ADD Level 4): Able to manage Level I catastrophic, high visibility and politically sensitive disaster responses as FCO. Serves as a senior mentor to other FCOs.

Awarding of Credentials

The basis for credentialing is on the “whole person” concept, i.e. FEMA and other disaster-related training, experience in disaster management operations, and field, headquarters, and Regional Director’s evaluations. Credentialing can result from self-assessment or through management certification depending upon the level involved.

FCO credentialing levels are cumulative; that is, all the steps necessary to credential at Level 1 need to be complete in order to progress to Level 2. FCO personnel can self-assess at Levels 1 and 2 by completing and documenting mandatory requirements in coordination with the Regional Director and the FCO Program Director.

The Executive Associate Director, Response and Recovery Directorate may award Level 3 following a recommendation from a national panel composed of representatives from the Emergency Response Team-National (ERT-N) FCOs and Deputy FCOs. The Director, FEMA, may award Level 4 upon the recommendation of the Executive Associate Director, Response and Recovery Directorate, following a recommendation by the national panel.

The credentialing program should allow FCOPC credentialing through Level 2 within two years of assignment. Credentialing above that level will be a function of the availability of assignments and will have no definitive timeline.

Credentialing Criteria

Credentialing requirements take into consideration experience, training, evaluation of demonstrated knowledge, skills, and abilities, and professional development.

- **Experience**

Newly appointed FCOs will initially be given non-FCO assignments to acquaint them with Disaster Field Office structure and organization. Those with prior experience may be assigned as FCOs directly. Credentialing requirements are as follows:

Level 1- successful performance evaluation in key disaster management position, i.e., DFCO, Chief of Staff, or Special Assistant to the FCO followed by successful performance evaluation as an FCO in at least one (1) level III disaster.

Level 2- successful performance evaluation as an FCO on a minimum of three (3) Level III disasters and one (1) Level II disaster.

Level 3- successful performance evaluation as an FCO on a minimum of three (3) Level II disasters. Successful performance evaluation in key disaster management position, i.e. DFCO, Chief of Staff, or Special Assistant to the FCO on a Level I disaster.

Level 4- successful performance evaluation as an FCO on a minimum of two (2) Level I disasters.

- **Required Formal Training**

The following are the established core training courses for FCOs to be completed for crediting at Level 1:

- Response Operations
- Media Affairs
- Stafford Act
- Disaster Field Operations
- NEMIS for Managers
- Human Services Management
- Public Assistance Operations
- FCO Standards
- Congressional Relations
- Mitigation for Managers
- Information and Planning
- Ethics
- Customer Service
- Equal Rights
- Debris Management
- Leadership Training (i.e., FEMA Leadership Excellence Program, OPM or FEI executive management training courses)
- Financial Management for Disaster Recovery Managers (DRMs)
- Mission Assignment for Managers

The FCOPC Program Director has the authority to waive attendance at these courses on a case by case basis according to the background and previous training of selected FCOs. All required training will be documented and kept in the credentialing packet of each FCO at Headquarters.

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- **Required self-study courses (available on-line)**

Level 1:

- IS-1 Emergency Program Manager: An Orientation to the Position
- IS-7 A Citizen's Guide to Disaster Assistance
- IS-195 Basic Incident Command System
- IS-275 The EOC's Role in Community Preparedness, Response and Recovery Activities
- IS-324 Community Hurricane Preparedness
- IS-393 Introduction to Mitigation

Level 2:

- IS-2 Emergency Preparedness, USA
- IS-3 Radiological Emergency Management
- IS-120 An Orientation to Community Disaster Exercises
- IS-288 Role of Volunteer Agencies in Emergency Management
- IS-301 Radiological Emergency Response

Upon completion of a self-study course, FCOs will be required to send a copy of the course completion certificate to the FCO Program office for inclusion into the credentialing packet, which will be maintained at the Office of the Program Director.

- **Evaluation**

The Director's Policy Statement, No. 2-99, FCOPC Program outlines the performance rating requirements for deployed FCOs. The Program Director will seek formal input from RDs for all Disaster Field Office deployments as well as non-disaster assignments prior to preparing the rating. Ratings may also include input from the FEMA Director and/or Deputy Director, Associate Directors, RDs, Program Director, or any other person directly supervising the cadre member. For DFO deployments it is critical that the person providing the evaluation focus on the knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSA) specifically designated in the credentialing matrix in Appendix B-E. Copies of all FCO evaluations, disaster and non-disaster, will be furnished to the FCO Program Director for inclusion into the FCO's credentialing packet.

- **Professional Development**

To achieve the various levels of credentialing FCOs will be required to enroll in and complete the requirements for **Certified Emergency Manager® (CEM®)** certification. This program was created to raise and maintain professional standards and to certify achievements within the profession. FEMA, the National Emergency Management Association (NEMA),

and other allied organizations have supported development of this program. Certification is a peer review process administered through the International Association of Emergency

5

Managers (IAEM). All costs associated with the certification process will be paid by FEMA. The FCO Program Office in coordination with IAEM will manage enrollment. CEM® certification will be granted upon successful completion of the following areas:

Emergency Management Experience- Comprehensive experience must include participation in an actual disaster or full-scale exercise within three years of the date of application.

Three References- Including FCO Program Director.

Education- Any 4-year baccalaureate degree. However, emergency management experience may be substituted to satisfy this requirement; 2 years of full-time work in the emergency management field per 30 college credits up to the 120 credits comprising most baccalaureates (8 years work experience would meet the educational requirement).

Training- 100 classroom hours in emergency management and 100 hours in general management. (Note: no more than 25% of hours can be in any one topic.)

Contributions to the Profession- Six separate contributions in areas such as professional membership, speaking, publishing articles, serving on volunteer boards or committees and other areas beyond the scope of the Emergency Management job requirements.

Management Essay- Real life scenarios are provided and response must demonstrate knowledge, skills, and abilities as listed in the essay instructions.

Multiple Choice Examination- Candidates may sit for the 100-question examination after their initial application and the other requirements are satisfied. A pamphlet will be made available further describing format and sources.

Summary

The credentialing plan for the Federal Coordinating Officer Professional Cadre is an essential tool to further the aims of the Agency in providing our partners throughout the country with a cadre of readily deployable, trained, and competent leaders. The intent of the plan is to have FCOs progress through a series of challenging but realistic requirements to prepare them to succeed in their critical role in various levels of disasters. This plan will be updated as necessary to reflect changes in policies and guidance from the Director.

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Appendix A- Disaster Levels

The levels of disasters referred to in the experience portion of the credentialing matrix are based on operational levels of response, referred to as Level I, Level II and Level III. These levels are found in Federal Emergency Management Agency, "The Federal Disaster Operations System Overview," 9000.1 VW dated September 1997 (Draft Copy); pages 12-13 and have been validated by the Emergency Support Function Leaders Group (ESFLG) community.

Level III - Minor to average levels and breadth of damage which may result in a Presidential declaration of emergency or major disaster. State and local jurisdictions may request some Federal involvement, and existing Federal regional resources will meet the request. However, Federal assistance may be limited to activation of only one or two Emergency Support Function (ESF) primary agencies with special technical capabilities, along with FEMA support in providing access to individual assistance and public assistance/hazard mitigation programs.

Level II - Moderate levels and breadth of damage which will likely result in a Presidential declaration, with moderate Federal assistance. This assistance will include not only FEMA individual assistance and public assistance/hazard mitigation programs, but also some level of interagency Federal assistance in emergency services and other response actions. A Regional Operations Center (ROC) will be activated and some ESF primary agencies will be called upon to provide representation on the ROC and Emergency Response Team staffs. Federal regional resources will be fully engaged, and possibly other Federal regional offices outside the affected area may be called upon to contribute resources. If Federal national-level support is required, it will probably include activation of an Emergency Support Team (EST) and deployment of initial response resources.

Level I - Massive levels and breadth of damage, with severe impact or multi-State scope. This level of event will result in a Presidential declaration, with major Federal involvement and full engagement of Federal regional and national resources. A full ROC staff will be activated at the Federal regional level, and a full EST will be activated at the Federal national level. Federal assistance will include FEMA individual assistance and public assistance/hazard mitigation programs, and full interagency assistance in emergency services, human services, infrastructure support, and other response operations. A complete ERT, with all ESF primary agencies represented will be activated, supplemented by an ERT-N if truly catastrophic conditions prevail.

For purposes of credentialing, the level of a specific disaster will be determined by Response and Recovery/ Operations and Planning at FEMA Headquarters.

Appendix B- FCO Level 1 Credentialing Matrix

Level	Experience	Proven KSAs	Training	Evaluation
<p>1. Trainee</p>	<p>Successful performance evaluation in key disaster management position, i.e. DFCO, Chief of Staff or Special Assistant to the FCO.</p> <p>Successful performance evaluation as an FCO in at least one (1) level III disaster.</p>	<p>Ability to lead and manage operations and personnel in disaster environments.</p> <p>Knowledge of legislative authorities governing emergency programs, policies, practices, and strategies and their relationships at federal, state and local level.</p> <p>Knowledge and experience with intergovernmental relations and the ability to facilitate, coordinate, and negotiate at all levels of government to achieve results.</p> <p>Ability to analyze information, make quick and appropriate decisions, and resolve problems.</p> <p>Ability to communicate clearly and concisely.</p> <p>Ability to identify unique customer needs, tailor plans and strategies, and implement within agency policy.</p>	<p>Formal: Response Operations Media Affairs Stafford Act Disaster Field Operations NEMIS for Managers Human Services Management Public Assistance Operations FCO Standards Congressional Relations Mitigation for Managers Information and Planning Ethics Customer Service Equal Rights Debris Management</p> <p>Self-study: IS-195 Basic Incident Command IS-393 Introduction to Mitigation IS-275 EOC Role in Community Preparedness IS-7 Citizen’s Guide to Disaster Assistance IS-324 Community Hurricane Preparedness IS-1 Emergency Program Manager</p> <p>Certified Emergency Manager (CEM) Program: Register and begin CEM requirements.</p>	<p>Credentialing documentation submitted to and approved by FCO Program Director.</p>

Appendix C- FCO Level 2 Credentialing Matrix

Level	Experience Required	Proven KSAs	Training Required	Certification Required
2. Basically Qualified	Successful performance evaluation as an FCO on a minimum of three (3) Level III disasters and one (1) Level II disaster.	Level 1 plus: Ability to lead and manage operations and personnel in level III disaster environments. Knowledge of the FEMA Public Assistance and Individual Assistance programs. Knowledge of the FEMA Mitigation program and its role throughout the life cycle of a disaster. Ability to use media skills in both a response and recovery environment. Demonstrates in-depth knowledge of FEMA organization, mission, and operation.	CEM: Complete at least 3 areas of CEM requirements. Self study: IS-2 Emergency Preparedness, USA IS-3 IS-120 Orientation to Community Disaster Exercises IS-288 Role of Voluntary Agencies in Emergency Management IS-301 Radiological Emergency Response	Credentialing documentation submitted to and approved by FCO Program Director.

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Appendix D- FCO Level 3 Credentialing Matrix

Level	Experience Required	Proven KSAs	Training Required	Certification Required
<p>3. Fully Qualified</p>	<p>Successful performance evaluation as an FCO on a minimum of three (3) Level II disasters.</p> <p>Successful performance evaluation in key disaster management position, i.e. DFCO, Chief of Staff or Special Assistant to the FCO on a Level I disaster.</p>	<p>Levels 1-2 plus:</p> <p>Ability to lead and manage operations and personnel in Level II disaster environments.</p> <p>Ability to train and coach subordinates.</p> <p>Ability to identify issues and recommend organizational changes to the Agency.</p>	<p>Complete at least 6 areas of CEM requirements</p>	<p>Credentialing documentation submitted to FCO Program Director and forwarded to HQ R&R credentialing panel.</p> <p>Executive Associate Director R&R will award credential at this level based on the recommendations of the Program Director and the panel.</p>

Appendix E- FCO Level 4 Credentialing Matrix

Level	Experience Required	Proven KSAs	Training Required	Certification Required
4. Expert	Successful performance evaluation as an FCO on a minimum of two (2) Level I disasters.	Levels 1-3 plus: Ability to lead and manage operations and personnel in Level I disaster environments. Ability to use knowledge and experience to mentor other FCOs. Ability to represent the Agency in politically sensitive environments.	Complete 100% of CEM requirements	Credentials awarded by Director, FEMA based on recommendation from EAD, R&R, credentialing panel and FCO Program Director.

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