

Chemical Operations Support Specialist (COSS)

COSS provide technical expertise to state, local, tribal, and territorial (SLTT) jurisdictions as chemical and emergency response experts.

A COSS is a chemical incident subject matter expert (SME) that acts as a state and local resource to assist emergency managers and first responders in navigating the unique challenges of chemical incidents and emergencies. By supporting response and planning at the local level, the COSS program strengthens SLTT capabilities as well as national chemical incident preparedness and response. Qualified through the National Qualification System, COSS are trained to integrate into the Incident Command System (ICS) and understand federal tools and software to support state and local responders, emergency managers, and decision-makers.

COSS Capabilities

Assists chemical and HAZMAT teams with preparedness and response efforts

Gathers, synthesizes, and explains technical incident information

Interprets data products and assists with relevant recommendations

Provides knowledge of federal assets, such as the Interagency Modeling & Atmospheric Center (IMAAC) and CBRNResponder

Who Can be a COSS?

Candidates for the COSS program are individuals with education, training or experience in industrial hygiene, toxicology, chemical services or hazardous materials.

Specific requirements are outlined by the FEMA National Qualification System (NQS) 509. The 509 describes Type 1, Type 2, Type 3 and Type 4 COSS, including education, training, experience, physical/medical fitness, currency, and professional/technical licenses/certifications requirements.

Becoming a COSS benefits your community through enhanced ability to integrate into SLTT and regional planning and preparedness activities. It also benefits your career in emergency planning and management.

If you're interested in becoming a COSS, working with a COSS, incorporating COSS into an exercise or training, or additional information on the COSS program, please reach out to oet@fema.dhs.gov



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