Montana
All-Hazard
Resource Qualifications System
Guide

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MAINTENANCE

The preparation and revision of this Montana All-Hazards Resource Qualifications System (MTRQS) Guide will be the responsibility of the Montana Intrastate Mutual Aid Committee (IMAC), in conjunction with the State Qualifications Review Committee (SQRC) and the MTDES Training, Education & Exercise (TEE) Section. The document will be updated following the method and schedule outlined in the MTDES Plan Development and Maintenance Policy. As part of routine maintenance of this document, any reviews and changes must be verified to conform to the current, approved Emergency Management Accreditation Program (EMAP) standards.

Revision Date	Revised Section
October 24, 2024	Complete revision of the previous M*ontana All Hazard Incident Resource Management Plan (2021*) into this document to better meet the NQS guidance.
8/22/2025	Updated formatting and PTB requirements
9/17/2026	Updated formatting and minor edits; Added Division Administrator to signature block
9/22/2026	Fixed some text and grammar inconsistencies and hyperlink references. BCL.

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I. Overview

Authority

The development and administration of programs to provide Typed resources, Incident Management and Emergency Management Support or Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Support are critical to Montana's preparedness to respond to and recover from disasters. Montana law and executive order clearly outline the authority and responsibility to develop, implement, and administer these programs.

Montana Code Annotated (MCA) 10-3-105 tasks the Montana Division of Disaster and Emergency Services (DES) with responsibility to direct[1] emergency response and disaster preparedness activities and establish all-hazards incident management assistance teams[2]. MT DES supports this through coordination of mobilizing emergency management resources, the implementation of continuous training, and the creation and administration of programs to facilitate the preparedness for, response to, and recovery from emergencies and disasters. MT DES has also been tasked with serving on and appointing members of the Intrastate Mutual Aid Committee and overseeing the committee duties to support the Intrastate Mutual Aid System[3].

All State agencies, tribal and local governments are similarly encouraged to participate as part of the emergency management resources of the state and to support the emergency management program of the state by making available both material and personnel resources per MCA 10-3-2 and 10-3-9.

Montana adopted the National Incident Management System (NIMS) by Executive Order # 17-04 on November 9th, 2004. The adoption of the NIMS includes incorporating the principles of NIMS and the Incident Command System into the structure of emergency preparedness, response, and recovery plans and procedures.

Scope

This document shall be referred to as the ***Montana All-Hazards Resource Qualifications System (MTRQS) Guide***. The MTRQS Guide contains the processes and procedures that guide the state in building and maintaining a deployable workforce of qualified, certified, and credentialed personnel to manage and support incidents of all Types and sizes.

The MTRQS contains the processes and procedures to qualify, certify, and credential personnel for NIMS ICS, All-Hazard Incident Management Team personnel, EOC support staff, and Typed resources. It will also be used for the certification of NIMS Typed Resources that

[1] MCA 10-3-105(4)(j)
[2] MCA 10-3-105(4)(o)
[3] MCA 10-3-905

are seeking to deploy outside of Montana that have not already been certified under another nationally recognized standard such as the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG), USCG, USDOI, etc.

At this point in time, the MTRQS is primarily focused on Type 3 qualifications. As the qualifications process, curriculum, and guidance are expanded to include Type 2 and Type 1 qualifications, the MTRQS will be updated to reflect those changes.

Standards

Montana's qualifications and credentialing process is consistent with the concepts and principles found in the most recently published edition of the National Incident Management System (NIMS) National Qualification System (NQS) Guide. By adopting this process, DES ensures responders within Montana are prepared to perform the responsibilities associated with their specific incident-related positions. Adherence to and consistency with the NQS are achieved by following the concepts and principles found in the National Incident Management System *Guideline for the National Qualification System* November 2017 edition.

Those concepts and principles are further refined in the most recently published *All-Hazards Incident Management Teams Association (AHIMTA) Interstate Incident Management Qualifications System (IIMQS) (Oct 2018)*. **The FEMA NQS and the AHIMTA IIMQS share common processes, procedures, and language and are considered functionally equivalent**. The primary differences are the additional direction and details in IIMQS process and procedures that assist entities in developing a qualification guide.

In 2022, the US Fire Administration (USFA) utilized the NQS and AHIMTA guidance to develop the *Model Qualifications System (MQS)* package to aid jurisdictions in developing, implementing and operating an "all hazards" qualifications program. This Guide was developed using the tools and guidance in the MQS package.

MTRQS relies on standards from several sources.

- FEMA's Resource Typing Library Tool (RTLT) and other NQS guidance
- Position Task Books for EOC Personnel created based on the tasks defined in the EOC Skillsets
- Positions adopted from other nationally recognized qualification systems, such as NWCG and the All-Hazards Incident Management Team Association
- Positions developed independently and approved by MT DES

1. Recognition of Other Qualifications Systems

The MTRQS recognizes that some departments and/or entities[4] are using established qualifications standards, such as the PMS 310-1 Wildland Fire Qualification System Guide used by the NWCG or other national recognized qualification systems or standards.

Departments or entities that currently use standards established by other qualifications entities should, when practical, transition to the use of MTRQS for all-hazards credentialing. Departments that must continue to use either PMS 310-1 qualification standards or other discipline-developed qualifications standards should use them in conjunction with the MTRQS.

Minimum Standards

a) The MTRQS represents Montana's minimum personnel qualifications established for inter-state (e.g. Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC)), intrastate (e.g. Intrastate Mutual Aid System (IMAS)) requests, and national mobilization purposes under the NIMS.

b) Personnel mobilized by the state should meet the established credentialing standards in this Guide. During the implementation of the MTRQS, provisional or conditional credentials may be issued.

c) The standards established in the MTRQS are the minimum acceptable qualification standards for any jurisdiction participating in the MTRQS. Participating jurisdictions may require more stringent standards but shall not remove or diminish any requirements established in the MTRQS. Participating jurisdictions may not impose more stringent standards on another jurisdiction within Montana unless by mutual agreement.

d) By adopting the latest published NQS guidelines for use within Montana, DES and the local jurisdictions understand that the MTRQS may add to or augment the minimum standards or require more restrictive standards for incident personnel to meet specific needs within the state. However, DES and other local jurisdictions should not require those additional or more restrictive standards when requesting assistance from other states, unless actual or anticipated conditions at the scene of an incident or event require a higher level of physical fitness, qualification, or an endorsement for a particular position.

Principles of MTRQS

The following principles guide the implementation and ongoing management of the MTRQS:

[4] The terms "entity" and "entities" are all-encompassing terms to describe the various types of political subdivisions (Local, State, Tribal, territorial, insular area, territories, provinces, parishes, and Federal Government) or non-governmental and private-sector companies.

1. Evaluation of an individual's performance of the PTB competencies is to be rigorously applied – whether through traditional trainee assignments or through the Recognized Prior Learning (RPL) process.
2. PTBs must conform with the standards established by the NQS. If a PTB for a desired position does not exist in the FEMA Resource Typing Library Tool (RTLT) or other FEMA NQS resources, then the SQRC will decide on an appropriate replacement until an approved PTB has been developed.
3. The criteria outlined in the MTRQS Position Qualification Requirements (PQRs) are considered the minimum personnel qualifications for the position included. For positions not included in the MTRQS PQRs, FEMA PQRs in the FEMA Resource Typing Library Tool (RTLT) should be used.
4. Personnel who are qualified in a position before the implementation of a MTRQS revision may retain their certification. The IMAC has the authority to modify certification requirements of positions and to require currently certified individuals to complete additional training or experience if there are significant circumstances that would justify such an addition.
5. Being credentialed for identity and qualification is **not** authority for any person to self-deploy. Generally, persons that self-deploy without authorization should expect to be turned away from the incident scene. Public safety personnel tasked with controlling access are responsible for denying access to unsafe or controlled areas by persons who are not credentialed or do not have proper authorization to deploy.

II. MTRQS Implementation Strategy

The implementation of MTRQS is designed to accomplish multiple tasks that will enhance the readiness of our state. This will be accomplished by:

- increasing standardization and cross functionality of personnel and resources both intrastate and interstate;
- creating a mechanism for the formal qualification and credentialing of incident personnel;
- establishing standards for incident personnel in Montana that will prepare them to face the challenges of supporting and managing an incident;

Implementation of MTRQS also satisfies FEMA's requirement for jurisdictions receiving preparedness grant funds to implement the National Qualification System (NQS) and NIMS. MTRQS meets the standards set forth by FEMA's NQS.

Staged Implementation

Montana is implementing MTRQS in 2 stages.

1. Stage 1 – Adoption of Qualification System and Initial Implementation

In stage 1 the state of Montana will adopt the MTRQS, begin issuing PTBs, and initiate RPL and Reciprocity reviews by the SQRC. At this point the state and all preparedness grant funded jurisdictions will have formally adopted MTRQS and will satisfy the FEMA grant requirement.

The Historical Recognition (RPL/Reciprocity) standards will be in effect for all positions. This will enable Montana to develop a base of qualified personnel.

2. Stage 2 – Full Implementation of MTRQS

Stage 2 is the full implementation of MTRQS in accordance with the NQS. Historical Recognition standards will remain in effect.

III. Components of the Qualifications System

This section describes the primary components of the Position Qualification Requirements (PQRs) and how they form the basis for the overall qualification system. The PQRs describe the minimum criteria that personnel serving in specific incident-related positions must attain to achieve and maintain ICS, EOC, or other Typed resource qualifications.

During initial implementation of the MTRQS or the introduction of a newly recognized position into the MTRQS, an alternative to strict adherence to all PQR components may be available for individuals who have gained relevant knowledge, skills, and abilities through training and experience in other qualification systems or through response experience.

Training

Training is instruction and/or activities that enhance an individual's core knowledge, increase their skill set and proficiency, and strengthen abilities to perform tasks identified in the Position Task Book (PTB). This Guide recognizes that instructive training, combined with hands-on practice, is an important component of adequate development of personnel to perform the duties of Incident Management positions competently. Coursework is a primary means by which personnel can adequately prepare for successful position performance evaluation. Types of coursework and training includes:

NIMS Core Curriculum: These training courses are a requirement for all NIMS positions. The NIMS Core Curriculum is progressive, adding courses as the individual assumes a higher degree of leadership and responsibility. For all responders, the IS-100 and IS-700 courses are required; for incident personnel with leadership responsibilities, the IS-200 and IS-800 courses are added; for incident personnel designated as leaders or supervisors, the ICS-300 and ICS-400, and other courses identified within the document, are required.

Position-Specific Training: These are required to prepare candidates sufficiently for incident management positions. Training meeting equivalency may be considered.

Incident Management Training: This is generally required for Types 3, 2, and 1 Command and General Staff positions.

Emergency Operations Center – ICS Interface Training: All-Hazards Incident Management Team members must understand the role of the Emergency Operations Center (EOC), and vice versa, and be effective in their interactions with that coordination entity.

Recommended Training: The knowledge and skills necessary for successful completion of the tasks in a PTB are provided in the identified courses but may also be acquired in a variety of ways, including on-the-job training, work experience, and identified formal training as determined by one's own agency. It is the responsibility of the individual agency to ensure that each trainee has the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary for

position performance. Sponsoring agencies may contact MTDES for support in providing necessary training or exercises.

Leadership Training: Leadership skills are essential to the safe and effective management of incidents and events. Each PTB contains leadership tasks. Leadership training, although not specifically mentioned in every PQR, is strongly recommended to fully prepare an individual for any position performance assignments.

Equivalent Training: The act of awarding course equivalency is a Montana-specific responsibility carried out through a cooperative effort of the IMAC, SQRC, and DES and other agencies. For questions about course equivalency, contact the MT DES Training, Education & Exercise Section (TEES). The equivalency determination may be granted after a comprehensive review by the TEES, considering factors such as training delivery format, course objectives, and alignment with PTBs.

This Guide and the PQRs identify required and/or recommended training for position qualification and are listed in **Appendix B**, *Position Qualification Requirements*.

Experience

In the context of the PQRs, experience is defined as the activities a Position Candidate must accomplish, generally within the context of an actual or simulated incident or event, to prepare for and demonstrate proficiency at the tasks identified in a PTB.

The MTRQS uses the evaluation of a Position Candidate's competency by an individual who is qualified in the target position as the measure of readiness for qualification and credentialing. The PTB contains the identified competencies, behaviors, and tasks required to demonstrate the individual has become qualified for an ICS position. Standardized qualifications systems ensure all qualified personnel meet or exceed a minimum performance standard.

Physical/Medical Fitness

Physical Fitness refers to the fitness levels responders are required to meet to be considered sufficiently physically fit to deploy to incidents and events.

Physical and medical considerations, when applied, help to ensure safe performance in potentially hazardous environments. The employing/sponsoring organization will determine the method of evaluating the physical fitness level of their personnel. When a fitness test is deemed to be appropriate, the testing method should be a measurable evaluation process able to withstand the scrutiny of challenges to its applicability to actual, expected, incident conditions for the specific position. A more detailed explanation of Physical Fitness can be found in *Section VIII-Physical Fitness Review and Approval*.

Currency

In MTRQS, currency is defined as successful performance on a qualifying incident, event, or exercise in a position or associated position for which an individual is qualified, at least once within the Currency Interval indicated in the Position Qualification Requirements.

The process for recertifying in a case where qualification is lost due to lack of currency is discussed in Section VII, *Maintenance, Loss of Certification, Decertification, and Recertification*.

IV. Committee Structures and Responsibilities

This section describes the committees, their roles and responsibilities, membership, and the protocols that initiate and manage the qualifications process. A full description of the roles and functions of each committee can be found in their respective charters.

Montana Intrastate Mutual Aid Committee

The Montana Intrastate Mutual Aid Committee (IMAC) Charter establishes that body as the de facto All-Hazards Incident Management Governance Committee (GC).

The IMAC is composed of representatives from a variety of agencies and is chartered[5] to provide overall direction for Montana's Mutual Aid System (IMAS) as well as the All-Hazards Incident Management program, including the development and maintenance of Montana's National Incident Management System (NIMS), Incident Command System (ICS), qualifications program guidance, and supporting documents for All-Hazards Incident Management personnel.

The mission of the IMAC is to provide a coordinated, multidisciplined approach to the management of minor, major, or catastrophic disasters and large-scale or complex incidents and preplanned events that will improve the ability of State and Local emergency management personnel to prepare and implement emergency management plans and programs.

1. Membership

In addition to Division staff, the IMAC will be composed of primary representatives from each of the following agencies and/or associations:

- Montana DNRC Fire Protection Bureau
- Montana State Fire Chiefs' Association
- Montana Sheriffs and Peace Officers Association
- Montana Emergency Management Association
- Montana Department of Environmental Quality
- Montana Department of Public Health & Human Services
- County-level Disaster and Emergency Services
- Each All-Hazard Incident Management Team

[5] MCA 10-3-904

State Qualifications Review Committee

The State Qualifications Review Committee (SQRC) is responsible for the establishment and management of the processes to ensure personnel meet nationally accepted standards for NIMS ICS, EOC or single resource positions.

- The SQRC functions as the NQS recommended ***Qualifications Review Board/Committee*** for the MTRQS.
- The SQRC also functions as the ***Recognition of Prior Learning Peer Review Committee*** during the RPL process to review and recommend that an individual has completed the necessary training and experience and qualifies to be certified in a specific ICS position.

The SQRC is charged with reviewing the qualifications of all-hazards personnel in Montana who may be deployed to support disaster response and/or recovery efforts.

Membership

The SQRC is an established group comprised of MT DES Response and Preparedness staff along with DNRC Fire Protection Bureau staff convened as needed to review individual applications for credentialing. The subcommittee may be augmented by additional subject matter experts on an as-needed basis. The group is led by an appointed Chair and Vice-Chair and composed of five to nine individuals with both ICS and incident response experience. The Montana DES State Training Officer (or designee) serves as the Chair. The Montana DNRC State Training Officer serves as the Vice-Chair. The Chairs are responsible for providing direction, convening meetings, monitoring progress and providing the final recommendations to the IMAC.

Recognized Prior Learning Peer Review Committee (RPL Committee)

The SQRC fills the role of RPL Committee and may defer to SMEs to assist in executing its responsibilities.

The Committee reviews RPL application packages and determines whether an individual has or has not completed the necessary training and experience through sufficient documentation and qualifies to be certified in a specific ICS position through the RPL process.

**NOTE: *The RPL Committee may request an in-person interview with the individual if they have questions or need more clarification on the applicant's training and/or experience*.

MTDES Training, Education & Exercise Section (TEES)

The MTDES Training, Education & Exercise Section (TEES) is responsible for the creation and implementation of training standards and standardization of membership, recruitment,

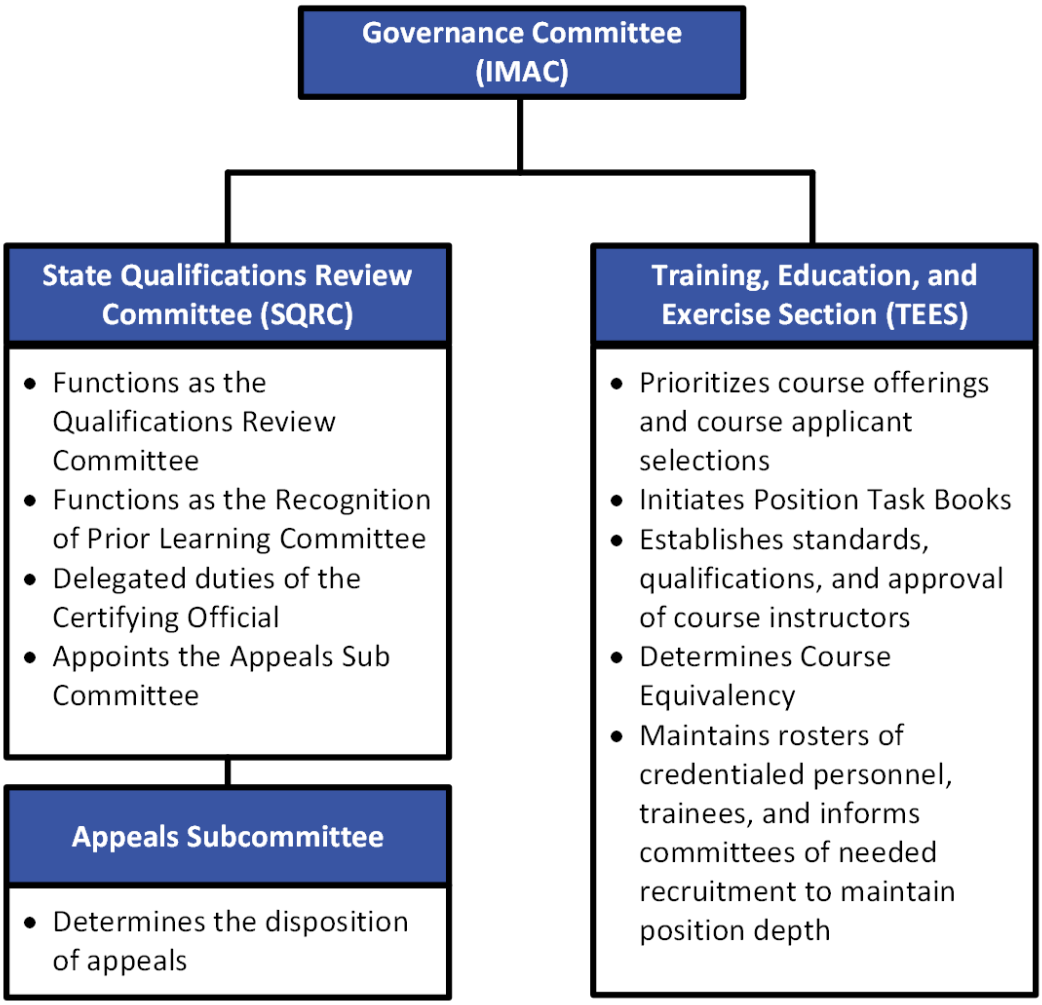
retention, and the continuing education requirements of Incident Management personnel in support of the overall program. The TEES is responsible for:

- Developing prioritization criteria for course rostering.
- Establishing standards, qualifications, and approval of emergency management course instructors.
- Initiating all-hazards PTBs.
- Maintaining rosters of personnel credentialed in each position, the trainees and their status, and informing the other committees of any recruitment needed to maintain depth in ICS positions.
- Determining course equivalency as needed.
- Reviewing submitted credential applications for completeness and forwarding on to the SQRC.

Appeals Subcommittee

The Appeals Subcommittee is a three-member subcommittee that may be appointed by the IMAC chair for the purpose of reviewing appeals. The subcommittee should include at least one individual who is qualified in the position being appealed. See *Section VII, Appeals*, for committee protocols and process.

Committee Hierarchy



V. The Credentialing Process

Overview

Individuals seeking qualification through the MTRQS program must follow one of three pathways, depending on their experience, training, and current credentials.

1. **Position Task Book** (*Traditional*): This includes a position task book (PTB), education, and experience via the application process to gain certification.
2. **Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)**: Sometimes called "*Historical Recognition*", RPL is a performance-based evaluation process that reviews an individual's formal and non-formal learning through training and experience to determine the extent to which that individual has already acquired and performed the required competencies of a position.
3. **Reciprocity**: This path is for those already possessing certification from an entity like NWCG, USCG, USDOI, or other recognized entities.

The performance-based approach of MTRQS focuses on a candidate's performance of specific tasks identified within the Position Task Book (PTB) for that position. Reciprocity adheres to this approach by recognizing individuals who have already completed a PTB/certification in another system while the RPL process does so by evaluating an individual's lifelong learning and experience in the context of PTB tasks.

Regardless of which pathway is selected, the applicant will need to fill out the appropriate application forms and provide documentation validating required training and experience. The applicant will submit their completed application packet to MTDES, preferably electronically to the mtdesprep@mt.gov email. MTDES staff will review the packet for completeness, and if it is complete, will then forward to the *State Qualifications Review Committee* (SQRC) for review. If the packet is incomplete, it will be sent back to the applicant with an explanation of what is needed.

Position Task Books

Position Task Book (PTB) Process Overview

The Position Task Book (PTB) contains the identified competencies, behaviors, and tasks required to become qualified for a position. The PTB provides a method to document satisfactory completion of tasks during appropriate qualifying incidents, events, repetitive job activities, qualifying exercises, and/or classroom activities as permitted within the PTB documentation. At least five qualifying all-hazards incidents, events, job activities, or qualifying exercises must be shown in the evaluation documentation.

The PTB will be initiated by the MT DES State Training Officer. Once initiated, PTBs will be entered into the Incident Qualification System (IQS) via MT DES TEES, or their designee.

An individual pursuing credentialing in a certain position is called a "Trainee." A trainee has met all prerequisite qualification requirements, is pursuing qualification in the target position, and has a PTB initiated or validated under the MTRQS guidelines.

- A Position Candidate will not be assigned as a trainee on an interstate or inter-regional incident or event unless the individual has been identified as a trainee with an initiated PTB.

Once the PTB is issued, trainees are required to complete the PTB **within five years**.

After the PTB is issued, the trainee works with coaches to apply the knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform the tasks required for the position through real-world experience or exercises. Evaluators review and sign off on successful completion of PTB tasks. In some jurisdictions and agencies, there may not always be qualified evaluators for every position. Therefore, the trainee's supervisor during a qualifying incident or event may evaluate the completion of PTB tasks. For example, a Planning Section Chief has the authority to sign off PTB tasks for a Documentation Unit trainee.

Once a trainee completes a PTB, the **Final Evaluator** signs it, indicating the trainee has met all of the PTB requirements for the position. While it is preferable to have separate evaluators from the final evaluator, it is understood that this may not always be possible. Once the final evaluator has signed the PTB, the PTB packet and copies of all required training courses and other supporting documentation is forwarded to MTDES TEES for administrative review.

The completed PTB should be routed to the trainee's agency or department head for signature as the **Certifying Official**. Additionally, it should be signed by the jurisdiction's Emergency Manager or DES Coordinator.

If trainees have questions on evaluators for PTBs, they should contact the MT DES Training & Exercise Section at mtdesprep@mt.gov.

The PTB serves as the official record documenting evaluation of the trainees' performance. Successful completion, as determined by qualified evaluator(s), of all tasks required of a position is the basis for the final evaluation and recommendation for credentialing the trainee.

Adoption and Use

The MTRQS adopted the NQS Position Task Books (PTBs) for use in its qualifications system. The MTRQS-adopted PTBs and the evaluation criteria and processes all meet or exceed FEMA NQS guidelines. The PTBs are available by request through MT DES

Positions Lacking an NQS PTB

If the MTRQS adopts a position that has no published NQS PTB, the IMAC will task the SQRC to either modify an existing or related PTB from a nationally recognized system (e.g., FEMA, AHIMTA, USCG, NWCG) or create one using an approved template and recognized qualifying standards.

In some instances, an NWCG PTB may include discipline-focused tasks that pertain only to wildfire environment. Wildland-fire-oriented tasks should be modified to incorporate All-Hazards performance opportunities or, if necessary, may be removed from the modified PTB. In addition, other recognized qualifications systems' PTBs may have non-All-Hazards tasks embedded within them that must be modified to incorporate All-Hazards opportunities.

Certification

Certification means that an individual has met the established criteria and is qualified for a specific position. It is distinct from professional certifications and licenses.

The State Qualifications Review Committee (SQRC) serves as the **certifying body** for this system. The SQRC reviews the application packet and either certifies that the individual has successfully completed all requirements for a specific position or determines the individual has not met the requirements.

PTB Sequential Steps and Responsibilities

The following steps outline the process for an individual selecting the PTB process.

1) Position Candidate applies for, attends, and completes prerequisite training and attains any prerequisite qualifications. The Position Candidate completes NIMS Core Curriculum specific to their level and attains any prerequisite experience and/or qualification criteria for the position as identified in the appropriate PQR.
2) Once the Position Candidate starts their required training, a PTB for the target position may be initiated and the individual becomes a "trainee." **The MT DES State Training Officer is the designated point-of-contact for initiating all-hazards PTBs**.
3) Trainee gains experience and completes PTB and required training. Performance is evaluated while completing the initiated PTB. Completed PTBs must have a minimum of five qualifying incidents, events, or qualifying exercises. Two of the five must be actual incidents meeting the requirements listed in Section VI.
4) The Final Evaluator should ensure the PTB is completely signed off on and the appropriate documentation in the PTB is completed.
5) PTB should be signed by Certifying Agency- the trainee's agency or department head in addition to the jurisdiction Emergency Manager/DES Coordinator.
6) The Position Candidate assembles their application, incident and event records, and documentation as directed in the application instructions, and other materials needed. The Position Candidate should retain the original for their records.
7) The PTB Application Form and package are sent to the MT DES TEES for the review process.
8) The MT DES TEES ensures the packet is complete. If the PTB, application, and supporting documentation is sufficient and no clarifying questions exist, the MT DES State Training Officer/Credentialing Official will review and recommend the position

be approved for all-hazards qualification and move to step number 10 below. However, if the application or supporting documentation is not sufficient or questions arise, the State Training Officer forwards the application on to other members of the SQRC.

9) The SQRC, with assistance from SMEs if needed, reviews and evaluates the application and supporting documents to determine that the applicant has completed all the position qualification criteria delineated in the PQR and is eligible for the new position.
    a. Documents may include training course records and certificates, PTBs, resumes, experience documentation, incident personnel performance ratings, and other materials the SQRC deems necessary to establish eligibility.
    b. If the documentation is sufficient, the SQRC recommends the applicant be qualified and documents this on the checklist.
    c. If the documentation is not sufficient or if questions arise, the SQRC documents the reason(s) and returns the application package to the applicant.
10) Recommendation for certification is sent to IMAC Chair for concurrence. If questions arise or additional review is deemed necessary, the SQRC may be convened or consulted.
11) If no questions arise, the Chair of the SQRC, as the Credentialing Official, signs the credential, notifies the applicant, and issues the applicant a new/revised Qualifications Card.
12) MT DES TEES files/stores the application package for archiving and compliance and updates the credential in IQS.

MTRQS Standards

1. The evaluation process shall remain free from bias and shall not give preferential or discriminatory treatment to any organization or individual.
2. A completed PTB generally should have at least **five** qualifying incidents, events, or exercises. Two of the five must be actual incidents meeting the requirements listed in Section VI.
3. For those ICS positions with multiple complexity levels (Types), the individual must qualify at the lowest complexity level before pursuing the next-highest complexity level. For example, before seeking qualification for a Type 1 position, an individual must first qualify at the Type 3 level, then at the Type 2 level.
4. An individual cannot use the same PTB they completed for qualification at one complexity level (e.g., for a Type 3 position) in place of completing a new PTB for the next-highest complexity level (e.g., a Type 2 position).
5. Except when the RPL or Reciprocity processes are used, individuals must complete PTBs for each new position.

6. Successful completion, as determined by a qualified Evaluator, of all tasks required of a position is the basis for the final evaluation and the recommendation that the relevant Certifying Official qualify the trainee.
7. The amount of experience needed and the performance of tasks required to complete a PTB and receive a final evaluation by a qualified Evaluator are directly related to a position's role in managing safe operations and level of involvement with major management decisions. For example, it's likely that a Status Check-In Recorder Trainee can complete the associated PTB with less incident experience and performance than an Incident Commander Type 3 Trainee will take to complete their PTB.
8. There may be several bulleted statements listed under a task. The bulleted statements are guidelines or examples for the Evaluator to consider to ensure the intent of the task has been completed. Not all bulleted statements for a task are required to be completed if the overall intent of the task has been satisfied.
9. The PTB evaluation factors should include provisions to ensure that effective Incident Management personnel possess some combination of the following attributes:
    a. "Critical soundness" – where the individual is able to keep themselves and their subordinates effective, efficient, and safe in time-pressured, high-consequence situations.
    b. "Management soundness" – where the individual is effective at planning and other Incident Management processes and functions of longer-duration situations that include proceeding through the Planning P and producing a formal written plan.
10. Proficiency in some tasks may be sufficiently demonstrated in one-operational period situations without the need for a written Incident Action Plan; however, many management skill tasks must be performed in situations that incorporate multiple operational periods and require a written Incident Action Plan (IAP).

PTB Evaluation Task Codes

For each of the tasks listed in the Position Task Book (PTB), there are one or more codes describing the circumstances in which the trainee can perform tasks related to the position. If a task has multiple codes listed, it means the Evaluator can assess the trainee on any of those circumstances, as opposed to evaluating the trainee on all of the listed codes.

Phases of the PTB Training Process

A trainee is typically involved in three phases of activities during the PTB process: training, coaching, and evaluation. When a trainee needs to learn a new knowledge, skill, or ability, the trainee should be paired with a Coach/Trainer. The Coach/Trainer instructs and trains the trainee to meet the performance qualification criteria for the position. When the trainee is ready, an Evaluator observes and assesses the trainee's performance.

The Coach/Trainer and the Evaluator have different functions, but often are the same individual. The individual who is evaluating the trainee when their PTB is completed is known as the Final Evaluator.

Coach/Evaluator and Final Evaluator Qualifications

The Coach is the individual who provides instruction to a trainee, whether in the classroom, on the job, in a planned event, or on an incident. Although many of the job responsibilities of the Coach are similar to those of an Evaluator, to preserve the integrity of the qualifications system the roles of coaching and evaluating should remain separate. When the trainee appears to have mastered the tasks, the Coach could employ another individual to act as the Evaluator or could transition into the role of an Evaluator and observe and record the performance of the task. The functions of coaching and evaluating must remain separate, as noted, and must be performed in sequence and not at the same time.

a) **Coach/Evaluator Qualifications**

To be qualified as a Coach or Evaluator for Task Code "I," or "R" in the PTB:

a) The individual must be qualified in the position being coached or evaluated; or the individual must be qualified in a position that, within the ICS organizational structure, supervises the position being coached or evaluated.

b) It is recommended that the Coach/Evaluator have previously performed successfully as a fully qualified individual on two separate Qualifying Incidents or Qualifying Exercises prior to serving as a Coach/Evaluator.

Other Task Codes in the PTB may be evaluated in other situations. Examples include full-scale or functional exercises, in a classroom by an instructor(s), usually qualified as described above, or during the course of daily work by a day-to-day supervisor.

a) **Final Evaluator Qualifications**

The Final Evaluator is the individual who evaluates the trainee during the final position performance assignment in which the last remaining tasks are evaluated and initialed. The Final Evaluator is then responsible for completing the Final Evaluator's Verification statement inside the front cover of the PTB.

A Final Evaluator is generally qualified in the same position under consideration. The qualifications are based on the increased responsibility of the Final Evaluator and the depth of knowledge and understanding of the position being evaluated that only a qualified individual may possess. If no local Final Evaluators are available, an outside entity may be contacted for assistance in supplying a Final Evaluator.

PTB Evaluation Documentation

A trainee must be evaluated on at least five qualifying experiences (incident, planned event, or exercise). Two of the five evaluations must occur on an actual incident that meets the criteria of a Type 3 incident. The qualifying incident must be of the same complexity or

higher complexity level (Type) for which the trainee is pursuing qualification.

Standards for Qualifying Incidents

a) The incident used as the qualifying incident must meet the requirements listed in Section VI.

b) There should be one fully completed incident Evaluation Record in the PTB with accompanying sign-offs completed by the trainee's immediate supervisor on relevant tasks for each trainee experience. If the trainee had multiple supervisors on an extended incident, evaluations from all supervisors are recommended.

c) It is highly recommended that the trainee's Evaluator complete an ICS 225, Incident Personnel Performance Rating, to document each qualifying incident, planned event, or exercise evaluated.

d) If a person receives one or more "unacceptable" ratings on the ICS 225, Incident Personnel Performance Rating, the Evaluator should provide a copy of the rating to either the Incident Commander—if on an incident—or the person responsible for supervising the Qualifying Exercise. The supervisor receiving the copy should send the evaluation to the MTDES TEES.

PTB Completion Timeframes

Individuals who have begun the process of qualifying for a NIMS ICS position under previous editions of MTRQS can continue to use those standards, providing they complete the process before any deadlines noted in the latest MTRQS revision pass.

Standards

a) Any individual who has begun the evaluation process is encouraged, but not required, to complete any newly required course(s) for that position.

b) To qualify in any other or subsequent position, the individual must meet the MTRQS standards identified in the current edition.

c) A PTB will be valid for **five (5) years from the day it is initiated.** Upon documentation of the first task in the PTB, the five-year time limit for completion is reset to the newer date.

d) If the PTB is not completed within five (5) years from the date of the PTB initiation or the first task being evaluated (whichever is more recent), the PTB expires. A new PTB may be initiated. Prior experience documented in the expired PTB may be considered in completion of the new PTB at the discretion of the SQRC. If a new PTB is initiated, the qualifications standards identified in the current MTRQS must be met.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

The RPL pathway is achieved by recognizing the previously existing qualifications and experience personnel already possess. The RPL process does not apply to the physical/medical fitness or currency qualification criteria.

The MTRQS uses a performance-based RPL process to assess an individual's prior experiences and training to determine competency in a position if the candidate has already performed the job or performed in a position very similar to the one desired. The RPL process enables an individual to provide documentation of their experiences, training, and knowledge and, if necessary, is confirmed with an interview panel consisting of SMEs and/or credentialed individuals.

RPL Application Steps and Responsibilities

Process for Applicants:

1) Download the *RPL Candidate Handbook.* Then read it and follow instructions.
2) Follow the RPL Candidate Handbook to complete the application and gather all necessary documentation.
3) Submit the package to the SQRC as directed on the application form.
4) SQRC reviews the application for completeness and compliance.
    - The Chair returns incomplete or non-compliant applications to requestors.
5) The SQRC reviews application and the criteria for recognition of RPL from the employing or sponsoring entity, and other pertinent documentation provided.
6) Chair of the SQRC selects appropriate subject matter experts to the Evaluation/Interview Panel.
7) SQRC and Evaluation Panel may conduct an interview with the applicant to collect additional information and ask follow-up questions.
8) The SQRC and Evaluation Panel determines whether or not the applicant meets the criteria for RPL. An applicant may be deemed fully qualified, partially qualified, or not qualified. For partial qualification, a PTB will be initiated and documented tasks may be checked-off.
9) The SQRC Chair will forward the recommendation and application package to the IMAC Chair for final concurrence.
10) The IMAC Chair shall confirm that all recommendations for qualification have been received and any notes from the SQRC prior to providing final concurrence.
11) If the IMAC Chair does not concur with the recommendation of the SQRC, the chairs of the committees will discuss and resolve the issue.
12) On approval or denial, the IMAC Chair will return the packet to the SQRC for appropriate action and follow through.
13) As the Credentialing Official, the Chair of the SQRC, signs the applicant's credential and forwards new/updated credential to applicant with RPL official letter. For

applicants that are not granted RPL, a summary of recommendations is sent for next steps. An initiated PTB may also be sent.

14) The Credentialing Official, or designee, files all documentation and ensures the applicant's IQS record is updated.

Reciprocity

The Reciprocity pathway is for individuals who already possess a valid and current credential for an ICS/EOC or other NIMS-Typed position from another authorized entity. A Wildland Fire "Red Card" credential issued in accordance with NWCG standards is an example. Additional examples could be credentials issued by the USCG, USDOE, USDA, or other State Qualifications Review Committee (SQRC)-recognized entity (e.g. Utah DEM, WY SQRC).

Personnel who wish to receive reciprocal credentialing under the MTRQS must complete and submit an *Application for Reciprocity* form along with a copy of their current credential to the MTDES TEES.

The TEES will review the application, verify the credential, and if it qualifies, recommend to the State Credentialing Official (STO) and SQRC that a Montana Credential be issued. If the TEES has questions or is unable to verify that the qualifications needed for the applicant's credential meet or exceed those needed for a Montana credential, the TEES may elevate the application to the SQRC for further consideration and decision.

Due to the variety of existing credentials, Reciprocity is not guaranteed. Requests will be handled on a case-by-case basis and will be weighed against the criteria in the PTB for the requested position, along with the applicant's training and experience. Additional information to justify the request and support the credential as well as an interview with the SQRC may be requested.

While the goal of the Reciprocity pathway is to ease the process of gaining a Montana Credential for those who meet the qualifications, the State will first and foremost protect and preserve the integrity of the MTRQS program.

***NOTE**: Local jurisdiction or agency-issued credentials will usually not be recognized unless the local authority has a documented and approved program that complies with the MTRQS.*

VI. Qualifying Incident, Event, and Exercise Guidelines

General

A qualifying incident, event, and/or exercise provides a trainee either the opportunity to gain experience and demonstrate PTB performance and evaluation while filling an ICS or EOC position as a trainee, or the ability to maintain Currency in a position for which the individual is currently qualified.

Although the experience gained on qualifying events and/or exercises can help to strengthen a trainee's ability to perform in a position, a trainee must have satisfactorily completed at least **two position performance assignments on real-world incidents** to be certified and credentialed.

The tasks listed in the PTB for a given position are the same at different complexity levels.

Trainees must demonstrate their proficiency at performing the tasks of a position during incidents, events, and exercises that are Typed at the same level of complexity as the target positions the trainees are pursuing. In some cases, position performance assignments and experiences on higher-Typed incidents, events, or exercises can be used toward PTB completion for a lower-Typed position. However, that situation should generally be an exception and not the rule. For more information about complexity refer to **Appendix A**, *Incident Complexity*.

An individual who is in trainee status, regardless of other qualifications they may hold, should **not** be evaluating another trainee on the same incident, event, or exercise.

Qualifying Incident and Event Attributes

Qualifying incidents should be of sufficient length to provide adequate opportunities to demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to learn, practice, and eventually be evaluated on PTB tasks in question or practice. Characteristics of qualifying events may change as the response phase transitions to recovery and some criteria may not be applicable to recovery positions.

An event in which Incident Management trainees have tasks evaluated and initialed, or in which the event is used to maintain qualification Currency, should meet all the criteria given below:

1. **Criteria**
   a) The event is complex enough to suggest a Type 3 All-Hazards Incident Management Team (AHIMT) or higher is appropriate to manage.
   b) Sharing of information between incident responders is necessary in order to close critical decision loops.

c) The event must span at least two distinct operational periods in which the identified Command and General Staff are assigned and engaged. The periods should include, as a minimum:
    i. Development and production of an **Incident Action Plan** for the on-scene management or the EOC. This could occur in advance of the actual onset of the event
    ii. On-scene management of the event
d) Time spent as an entire AHIMT planning for and providing on-scene event management must encompass a minimum of two distinct, separate operational periods in which the identified Command and General Staff are assigned and engaged
e) It is ideal to have a Command and General Staff filled with an individual in each position (see list in next bullet item); however, some considerations and caveats are:
    i. Trainees can be evaluated by a fully qualified individual who is in a supervisory position within the ICS structure (e.g., a fully qualified Incident Commander could evaluate a Planning Section Chief Trainee; a fully qualified Planning Section Chief could evaluate a Resources Unit Leader Trainee).
    ii. The event should involve a significant amount of coordination between functional areas and the establishment or maintenance of good working relationships.
    iii. Positions within an EOC or during the Recovery phase may not have a full ICS structure in place.
f) Event influences should include:
    i. Agency Administrators or Executives sponsoring the event to outline the goals
    ii. Elected Officials
    iii. Media
    iv. Stakeholders and public
g) Event should involve multijurisdictional (preferred), or significant multi-agency partners in the same jurisdiction.
h) Planning should include contingency planning, e.g., incident within event planning.
i) All applicable ICS forms must be completed for the IAP
j) The complexity of the incident must match the Type rating of the position. A trainee must be evaluated by personnel currently qualified at an equivalent position or in a position that supervises in ICS or has the same qualification, but a higher Type (e.g., a Type I Public Information Officer can evaluate a Type III Public Information Officer).

k) To be creditable for Currency: The position performed must be listed in the PQR as maintaining Currency.

Qualifying Exercise Attributes

These guidelines provide consistency and authenticity when a local AHJ uses or recognizes an operations-based (functional or full-scale) exercise, to evaluate personnel, provide an opportunity for trainees to complete tasks in their PTBs, or maintain qualification Currency for a position identified within this Guide. AHJs are encouraged to use the Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) guidance along with these guidelines when developing exercises to ensure a quality training and evaluation opportunity.

1. **Preparatory Training**

IMPORTANT: Exercise players should be given an appropriate level of foundational training to ensure they are sufficiently prepared for an exercise. Preliminary training may include:

a) ICS courses through the ICS-300 course, ICS-400 recommended
b) EOC overview and interface training
c) Position-specific training appropriate to the position to be played and/or significant progress (recommend 50% or greater) in the target PTB
d) Training on the Planning P should be completed prior to or at the beginning of the exercise as a review

2. **Exercise Components**

a) The exercise must be operations-based, either a functional or full-scale exercise.
b) An analysis of the exercise's incident scenario must be equal to or higher than the complexity Type rating for the ICS positions that are using PTBs or the ICS positions being exercised to maintain Currency in those positions.
c) If elements of the planning process are required to be exercised or evaluated, the scenario must encompass multiple operations periods or require at least one complete cycle of the planning process.
d) All appropriate Command and General Staff or EOC leadership positions should be filled.
e) Staffing for the Command and General Staff positions should be completed with the following considerations:
    i. Trainees may be evaluated by a fully qualified individual who is a Player in a supervisory position within the ICS structure
    ii. Trainees may be evaluated by a fully qualified individual who is an Evaluator in the exercise
    iii. When a subordinate ICS position is not filled in an ICS organization, the supervisor of that position assumes all functional responsibilities of the unfilled subordinate position

iv. The exercise should require a significant level of coordination between functional areas and the establishment or maintenance of positive and productive working relationships necessary on an actual incident or event

f) To be considered as a qualifying exercise for Unit Leader positions, the Section Chief and at least two of the Section's Unit Leader positions should be filled.
g) Specific scenario events (or injects) that prompt players to implement the plans, policies, procedures, and protocols that require testing during the exercise, must include:
    i. Simulated activities occurring on the incident that warrant action
    ii. Simulated external influences from:
        - Agency Administrators or Executives
        - Elected Officials
        - Media
        - Stakeholders and public
h) Injects must include information that is required to be shared with other incident management members to demonstrate the ability to receive, prioritize, and share the essential elements of information necessary to successfully complete a task, duty, or responsibility
i) A sufficient number and quality of injects must be provided to fully engage each participants and immerse them in the ongoing incident response while participating in the NIMS planning process
j) The scenario may be multijurisdictional (preferred) or significant multi-agency in the same Jurisdiction
k) If the scenario involves Unified Command, then all Unified Commander positions should be filled and present during the exercise
l) An ordering process must be used that either uses or simulates the Jurisdiction's processes and procedures for incident ordering. This ordering process can involve a local Emergency Operations Center (EOC), local or geographic dispatch centers, or an expanded dispatch function
m) All applicable ICS forms must be completed for a complete IAP.

VII. Maintenance, Loss of Certification, Decertification, and Recertification

Maintenance of Qualifications

Performing the responsibilities of a given position frequently enough to maintain those knowledge, skills, and abilities is referred to as *being current* in the position or maintaining *currency* in the position.

Successfully performing in a position or associated position for which an individual is qualified, during a "qualifying" incident, event, or exercise **at least once** during the time interval stated in the Position Qualifications Requirements (PQR), maintains an individual's currency. The currency time interval varies by position. Some positions require position performance at least once every three years, while others require performance at least once every five years.

The currency interval stated starts from the last date the individual performs "a" through "c" below. Each time the individual performs "a" through "c," the time interval starts over.

1. Currency Requirements

Currency for a position is maintained by meeting one of the following requirements:

a) By successful performance in the position they are qualified for
b) By successful performance in a position listed in the PQR under number 7, "Positions That Maintain Currency for This Position"
c) By successful performance in a higher position(s) for which that position is a requirement, providing the individual was previously qualified in that position

2. Process to Remain Current

Individuals are responsible for tracking their currency for each position they are qualified for. An individual must reapply 60 days prior to the expiration of their current credential by submitting a **formal notice to the State Qualifications Review Committee**. Failure to reapply prior to expiration of their position credential may result in the actions described in Section VII(B)(1).

Currency documentation included in the email must include one or more of the following:

- Incident Action Plan(s) with person's name on the appropriate forms (ICS 202, ICS 203, ICS 204, etc.)
- Incident, event, or exercise performance evaluations (such as an ICS 225, Incident Personnel Performance Rating, or equivalent) from qualified Evaluators or supervisors
- Narrative of experience within the past five (5) years. Include supporting information about:
- Number of deployments, assignments, or exercises
  - Number of operational periods for each assignment/deployment
  - Variety of incidents
  - The complexity level (Type) of incidents, planned events, exercises during which the individual performed

Loss of Certification

1. Reasons

Loss of certification may occur because of either voluntary or involuntary actions by a credentialed individual.

- An individual may choose to drop one or more of their qualifications for personal reasons.
- An individual will lose their qualification(s) if they lose currency in the position or fail to follow the process described in Section VII(A), *Maintenance of Qualifications.*

Individuals who lose their qualification(s) should not be considered as available for assignments outside their local entity. A local AHJ can determine how the individual may perform within their entity irrespective of their MTRQS qualification status.

2. Recertification after Loss of Certification

An individual who desires reinstatement of a qualification they lost due to:

a) Lack of currency or

b) Dropped for personal reasons

should submit their request through a formal notice to the SQRC.

The SQRC will examine the circumstances to determine if the individual should revert to trainee status for that position and/or:

a) Be reinstated without additional requirements (within position currency interval)

b) Be issued a new PTB to complete

c) Complete further training, or

d) The individual can gain the requisite experience through the performance assignment method. If the performance assignment method is recommended, the individual must perform the duties of the position for a minimum of two operational periods under the supervision of an Evaluator before recertification is granted

A return to trainee status may have the advantage of introducing the individual to new technology, procedures, and advances in incident and event management. Evaluation of an individual's currency and competency is critical whenever qualifications have been lost.

Decertification

Decertification is the process the SQRC may invoke to remove an individual's position qualifications or credentials. The SQRC may decertify personnel when it is documented that the individual:

a) Has documented poor performance at an incident/event

b) Demonstrates non-compliance with this Guide

c) Fails to adhere to applicable policies/procedures

d) Performed in a fraudulent, unsatisfactory manner

e) Acted in an unsafe manner

f) Misrepresented attendance or participation in the PTB process

g) Falsification of documentation

h) Took insubordinate actions that led to unsafe conditions on the incident

i) Intentionally misrepresented incident qualifications or currency

j) Deliberately disregarded identified safe practices

The SQRC may decertify personnel for other reasons after an investigation of the facts surrounding the circumstances that raised the issue of decertification to begin with.

1. Guidelines for Decertification

Decertification of NIMS ICS qualification only applies to performance in the NIMS position the person was deployed for or was performing; it is not intended to affect regular job-related duties. Individuals who are decertified should not be considered as available for assignment in the decertified/non-qualified position(s) outside their local entity. A local AHJ can determine how the individual may perform within their entity irrespective of their MTRQS qualification status.

Incident Commanders (ICs) do not have the authority to decertify the qualifications of an individual. A qualified person may be demobilized from an incident by the IC. ICs are responsible for providing documented reasons for relieving an individual, forwarding the information to the SQRC. ICs must include a copy of the individual's Incident Personnel Performance Rating Form (ICS 225) in the documentation package.

2. Recertification after Decertification

The SQRC will evaluate and prescribe the steps required to regain certification on a case-by-case basis for an individual who has been decertified for reasons described above. Recertification may include, as appropriate, training outlined in the PQR and/or training relevant to the reason(s) for decertification. Recertification of a decertified individual should, in most cases, include performance of the duties of the position for at least two

operational periods under the supervision of an Evaluator before recertification is granted.

Appeals

Appeals relative to denial of eligibility for a higher qualification or decertification may be made by using the following procedure:

1. Appeals Procedure

Appeals shall be made in writing by the individual who was denied the requested qualification or was decertified, and shall be emailed to the SQRC chair no later than 30 days after notification of initial review and denial. Appeals must contain:

a) A description of the reason for/circumstances leading to the appeal

b) Supporting documentation

c) Description of the desired outcome

The SQRC chair will notify the IMAC chair of an appeal. The IMAC chair may appoint members to an "Appeals Subcommittee" for the purpose of reviewing appeals under this section. The subcommittee shall include at least one individual who is qualified in the position being appealed.

The Appeals Subcommittee chair shall render their written decision to the IMAC chair within 30 days of receipt of appeal. The decision of the Appeals Subcommittee chair shall be final.

VIII. Revocation and Transferring Qualifications

Revocation

Only individuals who maintain employment or sponsorship with an entity and whose qualifications are current should possess MTRQS-related credentials. When an individual's employment or sponsorship with an entity is terminated, the employing or sponsoring entity should retrieve any MTRQS-incident-related credentials from the individual and notify the SQRC.

On notification, the SQRC will forward the notification to the IMAC. Any incident-related credentials or qualifications card should be revoked, returned, and/or cancelled.

Transferring Qualifications (Portability)

Individuals who were qualified under MTRQS, but experienced a change in employment or sponsorship resulting in their no longer being covered by MTRQS, may be able to transfer their qualifications to a new employer or sponsor.

Requests for incident qualifications documentation from an entity that is now employing or sponsoring an individual who was formerly qualified under MTRQS should be directed to the SQRC. The SQRC should work with the entity to determine what documentation is available and appropriate. After receiving a signed request, the SQRC should provide non-sensitive available and appropriate documentation.

Physical Fitness Review and Approval

The MTRQS delegates to the entity that employs or sponsors the responder the responsibility for using the Physical Fitness Categories and descriptions to:

- Establish standards that approximate the conditions described in the Physical Fitness Categories
- Apply appropriate testing methods to validate the levels of physical fitness indicated
- Monitor and certify the fitness of their personnel who are credentialed under the MTRQS
- Regularly, or when indicated by a change in physical fitness that affects the ability to deploy, notify the SQRC by email.

As part of that responsibility, MTRQS recommends that any employer or sponsor also consider implementing the following optional health and fitness components:

- Baseline medical evaluations
- An evaluation to determine that an individual can meet the physical demands of the position for which they are being qualified
- A comprehensive wellness and fitness program

When developing a method to validate fitness, the testing method should be a measurable evaluation process able to withstand the scrutiny of challenges to its applicability to actual, expected incident conditions for the specific position. Consider reviewing 5 CFR § 339.203 - Physical Requirements as one of the references. MT DES will utilize FEMA's Resource Typing Library for physical fitness requirements for each ICS position.

All-Hazard Position Physical Fitness Categories
Personnel must meet established physical health and fitness demands for the position for which they are credentialed for deployment. The fitness levels are categorized as *Arduous*, *Moderate*, *Light*, or *None*. **Note that these categories have different definitions than the categories for NWCG.**

- **Arduous**

Duties involve fieldwork requiring physical performance that calls for above-average endurance and superior conditioning. These duties may include an occasional demand for extraordinarily strenuous activities in emergencies under adverse environmental conditions and over extended periods of time.

Requirements include running, walking, climbing, jumping, twisting, bending, and lifting more than 50 pounds; the pace of work typically is set by the incident or event situation and may involve work periods lasting 12 to 14 hours or longer.

- **Moderate**

  Duties involve fieldwork requiring complete control of all physical faculties and may include considerable walking over irregular ground, standing for long periods of time, lifting 25–50 pounds, climbing, bending, stooping, squatting, twisting, and reaching.

  Occasional demands may be required for moderately strenuous activities in emergencies over long periods of time.

  Individuals usually set their own work pace.

- **Light**

  Duties mainly involve office-type work with occasional field activity characterized by light physical exertion requiring basic good health.

  Activities may occur at an Incident Command post, base, or camp, and may include climbing stairs, standing, operating a vehicle, and long hours of work, as well as some bending, stooping, or light lifting.

  Individuals almost always can govern the extent and pace of their physical activity.

- **None**

  Duties are normally performed in a controlled environment, such as an EOC.

Physical Fitness Guidelines

a) If an individual is credentialed for multiple positions that have different fitness levels, the highest fitness level shall be required if the position with the most strenuous fitness level is to be certified.

b) The fitness levels for Technical Specialist positions are determined by their employing or sponsoring organization.

c) During the physical fitness validation, an employing or sponsoring entity may enable the credentialing of a responder(s) with one or more disabilities. The employing or sponsoring entity and the individual must establish what reasonable accommodations are needed prior to communicating this to the SQRC.

   - If the individual can perform his or her job without any reasonable accommodations, the individual should be credentialed and deploy as any other qualified individual.

- If the individual requires some identified, reasonable accommodations, these must be provided before the individual accepts an assignment. The individual should not deploy until the needed accommodations are provided. The individual needs to understand deployments are often to emergency locations and are temporary in nature, and these locations may not have facilities that are ADA-compliant.
- Reasonable accommodations will often depend on the type of accommodations needed, location of the individual's workplace, and Type and length of the incident. It is important to note that when credentialing individuals with disabilities, the need for reasonable accommodations must be addressed before the credentials are issued.