

INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM- POSITION QUALIFICATIONS SYSTEM

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4039

PURPOSE

CAL FIRE Position Qualifications System (PQS)

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) must have a well-trained, experienced, and organized workforce to effectively fulfill its mission. California State law¹ and Federal mandate² require the use of the Incident Command System (ICS) to provide a consistent statewide and national approach for all agencies to work effectively and efficiently together to prepare for, prevent, respond to, and recover from emergency incidents regardless of cause, size, or complexity.

This section sets forth the guidelines for an ICS Position Qualifications System for CAL FIRE personnel and those individuals under CAL FIRE administration. This system retains the foundation of performance-based qualifications that utilize employee experience to develop proficiency, as well as components to keep the system current and credible.

It is CAL FIRE policy to use the CAL FIRE Position Qualification System. In California, local government uses California Incident Command Certification System (CICCS), and the Federal Wildland agencies use the National Wildfire Coordination Group (NWCG) PMS 310-1, Wildland Fire Qualifications System. The implementation of this policy fully supports the Department's Mission and operational needs.

This policy does not apply to local government personnel participating on CAL FIRE Incident Management Teams.

The PQS establishes a process by which the Department will continue to provide a fully qualified workforce that can respond to and mitigate emergencies of various types and complexities.

The PQS establishes minimum training, skills, knowledge, and fitness standards employees must achieve and maintain for ICS position qualifications. The standards are adopted industry wide and are applied during mobilization outside of geographical or jurisdictional boundaries.

The PQS sets forth the procedure for certification of personnel in ICS positions once employees demonstrate competency.

The Statewide Training Committee (STC) will be responsible for maintenance of the Position Qualification System (4039).

¹ (CCR Title 19 "Standard Emergency Management System, "SEMS")

² Homeland Security Presidential Directive (HSPD)-5, National Incident Management System (NIMS)
4039-1

The PQS is a system wherein performance qualifications are based on completion of required training and where applicable demonstrated position performance is observed by an evaluator qualified in that position. The required training and qualification standards are outlined in the [CAL FIRE Position Development Guide](#) (PDG) and position performance is documented in an approved Position Task Book (PTB) when required. Satisfactory position performance may be assessed on emergency incidents (all risk), prescribed or training fires, simulated incident exercises, training or normal assigned work activities as deemed appropriate by the evaluator.

Currency Requirements

Employees must meet the currency requirements for CAL FIRE ICS positions as reference in the Position Development Guides.

Currency can be maintained by satisfying one of the requirements below within the "currency requirement" shown for that position.

1. Satisfactory performance of the position.
2. Satisfactory performance in a higher position(s) for which that position is a prerequisite, providing the individual was previously qualified in that position.
3. Satisfactory performance in a position that is identified in policy as "Other position assignments that will maintain currency".
4. Attending and passing the training refresher course for that position.
5. Instructing the position course.
6. Functioning in the position while participating in a scenario based exercise, planned event, or drill.
7. Employees are certified to the standards in force when the task book was initiated. Task books must be completed within three years of initiation.

Certification Process

Employees are considered eligible for position certification upon successful completion of all required position training and, where applicable, satisfactory position performance. Position qualification is a prerequisite for position certification and inclusion in a Unit, Region or Statewide Emergency Resource Directory (ERD) as such, or participation on a CAL FIRE Incident Management Team.

Employees seeking certification or recertification for any ICS position will submit the appropriate documentation of successful completion of all required training and experience as well as any additional applicable training completed to the designated Unit, Region, or Sacramento program representative. Documentation includes training certificates, position task book, and incident performance evaluations.

Trainees will be authorized based on the needs of the Unit, Region, and/or Department. Employees authorized as trainees must be qualified in prerequisite positions and successfully complete the required training prior to task book initiation and/or position performance. The PTB will be initiated by the respective Training Officer once an employee has completed the required training and is determined ready to perform the tasks pertaining to the position. The individual employee is responsible for completing required training courses, completing the appropriate PTB, providing evidence of satisfactory position performance, and maintaining accurate records of all training and experience completed.

A qualified employee becomes certified upon successful completion of all items listed in 4039 "Currency Requirements" and obtains the certifying signature from the Unit Chief or Region Chief of Program Manager on the PTB certification page.

The Training Officer should coordinate with the Unit/Program Manager for Trainee assignments. The Unit/Program Duty Chief coordinates with the Region Duty Chief for Trainee assignments. (See Policy 7754)

PTBs may be initiated prior to attendance and successful completion of required training upon approval of the Unit Chief or Program Manager. However, trainees cannot become qualified for the position until required training has been completed. A Trainee must be qualified in the prerequisite position(s) before a PTB can be initiated.

Completion of required training and experience alone does not guarantee that an individual is qualified to perform in a position or that a certification signature will be granted for the PTB.

Decertification

Certification may be rescinded by the Region, Unit, Program Manager, or their designee.

Causes for decertification may include the following:

1. Failure to maintain currency
2. Separation from CAL FIRE
3. Documentation of poor performance
4. Employee requests decertification

Employees who are decertified will follow the procedures outlined in 4039 "Currency Requirement" to regain certification.

ICS Qualification Development

Uniformed/Bargaining Unit 9 employees should follow a dual path for ICS position qualifications. One path should be in the Operations section; the second path should be in another Command or General Staff section. (For training purposes only, Air Operations ICS positions are considered a separated training path).

Non-uniformed /non-BU 8 employees, with supervisor approval, should follow a single ICS path. (See also Policies 8135.5 and 7754.1).

ICS Position Qualification System Development Guide

[4039 MASTER Document \(Insert Hyperlink\)](#)

RESPONSIBILITIES

Regions, Units, and Programs

Regions, Units, and Programs are to conduct evaluations (at least annually) of an employee's ICS position qualification and certification. Completion of refresher training, position assignments and other position maintenance requirements are the basis for recertification in an ICS position.

ICS position certification will be conducted at the following levels:

Unit Chief, Program Manager, or designee

ICS 100-300 Level: ICS position certification at the 100-300 level is the responsibility of the Unit Chief, Program Manager, or designee.

Region Chief of equivalent, or their designee

ICS 400 Level: ICS position certification at the 400 level is the responsibility of the Region Chief or equivalent, or their designee.

Employees

All CAL FIRE Safety personnel responding to incidents shall have as a minimum the following training:

- I-100 Introduction to the Incident Command System
- IS-700.A-National Incident Command System
- IS-800.B-National Response Framework, An Introduction
- CAL FIRE Basic Firefighter (BFF)

All CAL FIRE Non-Safety Personnel responding to incidents should have as a minimum the following training:

- I-100 Introduction to Incident Command System
- IS-700 A – National Incident Command System
- IS-800 B – National Response Framework, An Introduction
- CAL FIRE Emergency Incident Awareness (EIA)

The following courses, when required, must be instructor-lead (not online):

- ICS 200 Level certifications require I-200, ICS for Single Resources and Initial Incident Actions
- ICS 300 Level certifications require I-300, Intermediate ICS for Expanding Incidents
- ICS 400 Level certifications require I-400, Advanced ICS Command and General Staff-Complex Incidents

Fitness Standards

Personnel must be able to meet the physical demands for emergency ICS position assignments.

1. **Arduous:** Duties involve field work requiring physical performance calling 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 emergency situation. CAL FIRE employees in a safety category, who are designated fit for duty, are deemed to meet the arduous duty standard.
2. **Moderate:** Duties involve field work requiring complete control of all physical faculties and may include considerable walking over irregular ground, standing for long periods of time, lifting 25 to 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.
3. **Light:** Duties mainly involve office type work with occasional field activity characterized by light physical exertion requiring basic good health. Activities may include climbing stairs, standing, operating a vehicle and long hours of work, as well as some bending, stooping or light lifting. Individuals can usually govern the extent and pace of their physical activity.
4. **None:** Positions that do not require any physical exertion. Duties are normally performed in a controlled environment, such as an incident base or camp. Positions identified in the ICS - Position Development

Guide with a fitness level of “None” or any technical specialist position must be capable of meeting the light designation when temporarily performing their functions on the fireline.

DEFINITIONS

The components of the PQS are as follows:

1. CAL FIRE Position Development Guide (PDG): This guide lists the training, experience, currency, fitness requirement, and qualification requirements for each ICS position.
2. Certification: Confirmation that the individual has met the training and experience requirements for a specific ICS position. The Unit, Region, or Program manager will make the confirmation and authorize the certification.
3. Certification Card: CAL FIRE documents ICS positions the employee is authorized to fulfill as a trainee or as fully certified. The wallet sized card will contain the employee's name, Unit, ICS positions, and the Unit Chief's or Program Manager's signature with date. The card should be updated annually or when an employee's certification changes.
4. Job Air: Job Airs facilitate position development where there is not developed training course and to provide a ready references for job performance.
5. Position Task Books (PTB): The PTB contains all critical tasks required to perform the job. CAL FIRE will use a department specific PTB or where applicable, CAL FIRE will accept PTB approved by the NWCG when there is no CAL FIRE specific task books.
6. Qualification: An individual's accomplishment of all required prerequisite experience, required training, physical fitness, trainee, and currency requirements for a specific ICS position.
7. Trainee: An individual who is preparing to qualify for a position and meets the training, experience, and fitness requirements, has a task book initiated for the position, and is approved by the Unit, Region, or program, and listed as a Trainee in the ERD.
8. Training Courses: Training provides the specific knowledge and skills required to perform tasks identified in the PTB. There are two categories identified in the position training guides:
 - a. Required Training: Training that meets the minimum position requirements and is completed before certification is granted.
 - b. Recommended Training: Training that enhances the knowledge or skills but may not be necessary to meet minimum position requirements.

[\(see next section\)](#)

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[\(see Forms or Forms Samples\)](#)