

**CHAPTER 120c. TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION STANDARDS
FOR 911 EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS PERSONNEL**

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Authority

The provisions of this Chapter 120c issued under the Emergency Management Service Code, 35 Pa.C.S. § 7313, unless otherwise noted.

Source

The provisions of this Chapter 120c adopted August 11, 2000, effective August 12, 2000, 30 Pa.B. 4229, unless otherwise noted.

Cross References

This chapter cited in 4 Pa. Code § 120b.104 (relating to technical standards for plan).

§ 120c.101. Purpose.

The purpose of this chapter is to implement section 3(a)(6) of the act (35 P. S. § 7013(a)(6)) to establish minimum training and certification standards for emergency dispatchers, call takers and supervisors who work for 911 emergency communications centers or remote dispatch points in this Commonwealth.

§ 120c.102. Definitions.

The following words and terms, when used in this chapter, have the following meanings, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

Act—The Public Safety Emergency Telephone Act (35 P. S. §§ 7011—7021).

Agency—The Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency.

Lead or master instructor—The primary individual employed or selected by a county or municipality to conduct the training and certification courses described in this chapter for all call takers, emergency dispatchers, or 911 center supervisors employed at either a 911 communications center or remote dispatch point.

RDP—Remote dispatch point—A communications facility identified in a county 911 plan which is operated by either a county, city, borough or township. An RDP electrically receives emergency caller information from a 911 communications center or public safety answering point (PSAP) to dispatch emergency fire, medical or police services, as requested, to the scene of an emergency. A RDP is not a facility that houses either the fire, medical or police units that respond to an emergency unless the facility is specifically identified as an RDP in the county 911 plan.

§ 120c.103. Certification of county or municipal training programs.

(a) Each county, city, borough or township that operates a 911 communications center or RDP included in a 911 county plan shall be responsible for implementing the training provisions of this chapter as they apply to their employees. Each county shall set forth the methods or procedures for administering its training program in the county's 911 plan. A city, borough or township shall set forth the methods or procedures for administering its training program in a municipal training plan. A county and its municipalities may agree to conduct a joint or integrated training program for both county and municipal employees.

(b) The Agency shall annually review and approve the training section of a county's 911 plan or a municipality's training plan before the county or municipality is certified by the Agency to conduct its annual training program. The annual review shall coincide with the submission date of the county 911 plan's training section or municipal training plan to the Agency. Counties shall submit their 911 plan training sections to the Agency by September 11, 2000. Municipalities shall submit their training plans to the Agency by October 11, 2000.

(c) To obtain Agency certification, each county and municipal training program shall include the minimum hours of classroom and hands-on instruction and training course content set forth in this chapter for the certification of call takers, emergency dispatchers and 911 center supervisors. In addition, each county or municipal training program shall include the call taker, emergency dispatcher and 911 center supervisor practical skills tests prescribed by the Agency.

(d) As part of the annual certification process, each county or municipality shall provide the Agency with an accurate and up-to-date instructor information report. The report shall describe the educational background, experience, training skills, academic credentials and any other pertinent information of the lead or master instructors who will conduct the county's or municipality's training courses during the certification year. The Agency will annually review each lead or master instructor's information report. The Agency will annually certify those lead or master instructors who have met the training requirements of § 120c.108(c) (relating to certification curriculum and instructors) and who continue to show competency in their training area as determined by the Agency and the county or municipality that employs them as instructors.

§ 120c.104. Certification requirements for current and newly hired emergency communications personnel

(a) A county or municipal 911 call taker, emergency dispatcher or 911 center supervisor who is hired on or after August 12, 2000, whether the individual is working full-time or part-time as a permanent or temporary employee, shall comply with all of the training, certification and recertification requirements in this chapter that apply to the individual's job position, job description or job functions as a call taker, emergency dispatcher or 911 center supervisor.

(b) A county or municipality shall notify the Agency when a newly hired 911 call taker, emergency dispatcher or 911 center supervisor has completed his training program, has successfully passed the practical skills test and is available to take the appropriate written certification examination as described in § 120c.109 (relating to written examinations). The notification shall be provided on a form that is supplied by the Agency. The Agency will then schedule the individual's written examination within 30 days of receipt of the county or municipal notification form.

(c) A county or municipal 911 call taker, emergency dispatcher or 911 center supervisor who is working either full-time or part-time as a permanent or temporary employee before August 12, 2000, shall comply with only the application, age and written examination requirements of this chapter that apply to the individual's certification or recertification as a call taker, emergency dispatcher or 911 center supervisor. Each individual shall take the appropriate written certification examination by May 9, 2001.

(d) This subsection applies whenever a labor union agreement or some other reason requires a county or municipality to use job titles other than call taker, emergency dispatcher or 911 center supervisor to describe its 911 communication center or RDP personnel. Under these circumstances, the county or municipality and the Agency shall jointly compare the functions, duties and responsibilities of each county or municipal job position with the functions, duties and responsibilities of a call taker, emergency dispatcher or 911 center supervisor to determine which regulatory position (call taker, emergency dispatcher or 911 center supervisor) most closely relates to the county or municipal job position. After the joint determination has been made, either the call taker, emergency dispatcher or 911 center supervisor training and certification requirements of this chapter shall be applied to those individual county or municipal job positions. If a county or municipality and the Agency fail to agree on the appropriate training and certification requirements for a county or municipal job position, the Agency will, at its own discretion, decide the matter.

§ 120c.105. Call taker certification.

(a) *Roles and responsibilities.* A call taker is responsible for taking all calls made by the general public to a 911 emergency communications center and for

gathering all essential information from the caller to determine whether or not emergency response services need to be provided to the location or incident described by the caller.

(b) *Certification.*

(1) The Agency will certify as a call taker an individual who meets the following qualifications:

- (i) Completes an application form supplied by the Agency.
- (ii) Is 18 years of age or older.
- (iii) Has successfully completed a call taker training course approved by the Agency.
- (iv) Has passed a written examination prescribed by the Agency.
- (v) Has passed a practical test of call taker skills prescribed by the Agency.

(2) A call taker's certification is valid for 3 years from the date the certification was issued by the Agency. To maintain certification as a call taker, an individual shall comply with the recertification requirements in subsection (d).

(c) *Training course content and length.* Each call taker shall receive a minimum of 104 hours of classroom and hands on instruction. Training courses shall consist of the following items:

- (1) Telephone techniques.
- (2) Crisis call taking.
- (3) Incident specific information.
- (4) Interrogation skills.
- (5) Prioritization of calls.
- (6) Non-English speaking calls.
- (7) Text telephone for the deaf.
- (8) Hearing and speech impaired (TTY).
- (9) Abandoned 911 calls.
- (10) Silent 911 calls.
- (11) Roles and responsibilities of the call taker.
- (12) Interpersonal skills and stress management.
- (13) 911 center terminology.
- (14) Verification skills.
- (15) Use of 911 center equipment.
- (16) 911 center documentation skills.
- (17) Geography of 911 center service area.
- (18) Other material considered necessary by the instructor which has been approved by the Agency.

(d) *Recertification.* A call taker shall apply for recertification between 6 months and 60 days prior to expiration of the call taker's certification from the Agency. A call taker's failure to apply for recertification in a timely manner may

result in the individual not being recertified before the prior certification expires. The Agency will recertify as a call taker an individual who meets the following qualifications:

- (1) Completes an application form supplied by the Agency.
- (2) Is or was previously certified as a call taker by the Agency.
- (3) Successfully passes a call taker written examination prescribed by the Agency.

§ 120c.106. Emergency dispatcher certification.

(a) *Roles and responsibilities.* An emergency dispatcher is responsible for taking the information gathered by a call taker, determining the appropriate response to the situation and dispatching the available emergency fire, police, ambulance, emergency management or other resources needed to deal with the emergency situation.

(b) *Certification.*

(1) The Agency will certify as an emergency dispatcher, either for fire, police, ambulance or emergency management services, an individual who meets the following qualifications:

- (i) Completes an application form supplied by the Agency.
- (ii) Is 18 years of age or older.
- (iii) Has successfully completed the requirements prescribed by the Agency to be a call taker.
- (iv) Has successfully completed an emergency dispatcher fire, police, ambulance or emergency management training course prescribed by the Agency.
- (v) Has passed a written examination prescribed by the Agency for either emergency dispatcher fire, police, ambulance or emergency management.
- (vi) Has passed a practical test of emergency dispatcher skills for fire, police, ambulance or emergency management prescribed by the Agency.

(2) An emergency dispatcher's certification is valid for 3 years from the date the certification was issued by the Agency. To maintain certification as an emergency dispatcher, an individual shall comply with the recertification requirements in subsection (d).

(c) *Training course content and length.*

(1) A dispatcher fire shall receive a minimum of 120 hours of classroom and hands on instruction. Training courses shall consist of the following items: Completion of all call taker training requirements (104 hours) plus 16 hours of fire safety issues, fire terminology, fire dispatching protocols, 911 center record requirements, fire dispatching incident specifics and other material considered necessary by the instructor and which has been approved by the Agency.

(2) A dispatcher police shall receive a minimum of 136 hours of classroom and hands-on instruction. Training courses shall consist of one of the following

items: completion of all call taker training requirements (104 hours) plus 32 hours of police safety issues, policy terminology, police dispatching protocols, 911 center requirements, NCIC/clean orientation, police dispatching incident specifics and other material considered necessary by the instructor and which has been approved by the Agency.

(3) A dispatcher ambulance or emergency medical service (EMS) shall receive a minimum of 120 hours of classroom and hands on instruction. Training courses shall consist of the following items: completion of all call taker training requirements (104 hours) plus 16 hours of EMS safety issues, EMS terminology, EMS dispatching protocols, emergency medical dispatch, 911 center record requirements, EMS dispatching incident specifics and other material considered necessary by the instructor and which has been approved by the Agency.

(4) A dispatcher emergency management (EMA) shall receive a minimum of 120 hours of classroom and hands on instruction. Training courses shall consist of the following items: completion of all call taker training requirements (104 hours) plus 16 hours of EMA safety issues, EMA terminology, EMA dispatching protocols, 911 center record requirements, EMA dispatching incident specifics and other material considered necessary by the instructor and which has been approved by the Agency.

(d) *Recertification.* An emergency dispatcher shall apply for recertification between 6 months and 60 days prior to expiration of the emergency dispatcher's certification from the Agency. An emergency dispatcher's failure to apply for recertification in a timely manner may result in the individual not being recertified before the prior certification expires. The Agency will recertify as an emergency dispatcher an individual who meets the following qualifications:

- (1) Completes an application on a form supplied by the Agency.
- (2) Is or was previously certified as an emergency dispatcher by the Agency.
- (3) Successfully passes an emergency dispatcher written examination prescribed by the Agency.

§ 120c.107. 911 center supervisor certification.

(a) *Roles and responsibilities.* A 911 center supervisor is responsible for managing the overall operation of a 911 emergency communications center. A supervisor's duties include:

- (1) Supervising the activities of all call takers and emergency dispatchers present in the 911 center.
 - (2) Providing decision making, direction and control, and other authority for the operation of the 911 center.
 - (3) Handling other duties and responsibilities as assigned by proper authority.
- (b) *Certification.*

- (1) To be certified as a 911 center supervisor, an individual shall:
 - (i) Complete an application form supplied by the Agency.
 - (ii) Be 20 years of age or older.
 - (iii) Have successfully completed the requirements prescribed and supplied by the Agency to be a call taker.
 - (iv) Have successfully completed all requirements prescribed by the Agency to be an emergency dispatcher fire, police, ambulance and emergency management.
 - (v) Have successfully completed a front line supervisor course prescribed by the Agency and passed a written examination given for that course.
 - (vi) Have passed a practical test of 911 center supervisor skills prescribed by the Agency.
- (2) A 911 center supervisor's certification is valid for 4 years from the date the certification was issued by the Agency. To maintain certification as a 911 center supervisor, an individual shall comply with the recertification requirements in subsection (d).
- (c) *Training course content and length.*
 - (1) Each 911 center supervisor shall receive a minimum of 224 hours of classroom and hands on instruction.
 - (2) Each 911 center supervisor shall complete the following courses:
 - (i) Call taker (104 hours).
 - (ii) Dispatcher fire (16 hours).
 - (iii) Dispatcher police (32 hours).
 - (iv) Dispatcher ambulance (EMS) (16 hours).
 - (v) Dispatcher emergency management (EMA) (16 hours).
 - (vi) Front line supervisor (40 hours).
 - (3) The front line supervisor course shall consist of the following items: lower level management skills/principal technical support numbers—resource locations, technical troubleshooting for equipment, public/media relations, departmental chain of command, policy and preplanning, operational flow, and other material considered necessary by the instructor and which has been approved by the Agency.
- (d) *Recertification.* A 911 center supervisor shall apply for recertification between 9 months and 90 days prior to expiration of the 911 center supervisor's certification from the Agency. A 911 center supervisor's failure to apply for recertification in a timely manner may result in the individual not being recertified before the prior certification expires. The Agency will recertify as a 911 center supervisor, an individual who meets the following qualifications:
 - (1) Is or was previously certified as a 911 center supervisor by the Agency.
 - (2) Completes an application form supplied by the Agency.
 - (3) Successfully passes a 911 center supervisor written examination prescribed by the Agency.

§ 120c.108. Certification curriculum and instructors.

(a) The Agency will review and approve all certification curricula, materials, examinations, training records and other related matters that are necessary to implement the certification and recertification standards established by this chapter.

(b) The Agency will approve all lead or master instructors used by a county or municipality to conduct any of the certification courses reviewed and approved by the Agency. As part of the approval process, each county or municipality shall submit an annual lead or master instructor information report as required by § 120c.103(d) (relating to certification of county or municipality training programs).

(c) All lead or master instructors shall complete an 8-hour train-the-trainer instructor course conducted by the Agency. The course is designed to provide and reinforce basic training skills to 911 center training instructors. The course shall include instruction in the areas of instructor methodology, the roles and responsibilities of the trainer, the use of instructional aids, classroom safety and record-keeping. A training schedule of course availability will be provided by the Agency on a quarterly basis.

(d) Police dispatchers shall be trained by the Pennsylvania State Police (PSP). The PSP is the control terminal agency and shall provide instruction and certification to terminal agency coordinators (TAC) and terminal agency personnel on the Commonwealth Law Enforcement Assistance Network (CLEAN). The 24-hour training program provides the knowledge necessary to operate the CLEAN system in accordance with PSP policies and regulations.

(e) Ambulance or emergency medical service dispatchers shall be trained by Department of Health approved contractors who provide instructors to conduct the emergency medical dispatch training of 911 communications center or remote dispatch point personnel. The Department of Health shall also approve course materials used by the contracted instructors.

Cross References

This section cited in 25 Pa. Code § 120c.103 (relating to certification of county or municipal training programs).

§ 120c.109. Written examinations.

(a) The Agency will administer all written examinations for the certification and recertification of call takers, emergency dispatchers and 911 center supervisors. The examinations will be conducted at each county's 911 center or each municipality's RDP during normal shift periods, as agreed upon by the Agency and the county or the municipality.

(b) Written certification and recertification examinations shall consist of 100 questions that include 50 questions from a Nationally recognized 911 organization such as the National Emergency Number Association (NENA) or the Asso-

ciation of Public Safety Communication Officials (APCO) and 50 questions that are specific to each county's or municipality's 911 communications system, operational procedures and other related matters.

Cross References

This section cited in 25 Pa. Code § 120c.104 (relating to certification requirements for current and newly hired emergency communications personnel).

§ 120c.110. Practical skills tests.

(a) *Conduct.* A practical skills test shall be conducted by the lead or master instructor used by the county, city, borough or township. The call taker, emergency dispatcher or 911 center supervisor shall demonstrate proper usage of the equipment applicable to his area of assignment. Call-taking and dispatch audit reviews may be used to review proper techniques.

(b) *Call taker practical skills tests.*

(1) The call taker shall demonstrate skill knowledge in the following areas: telephone operations, complaint card system, TDD/TTY operations, local forms and computer aided dispatch (CAD) system (if available).

(2) A call taker practical skills test shall evaluate the call taker's knowledge in the use of emergency and nonemergency lines, hotlines, call transferring, line tracing, conference and call holding. The call taker shall demonstrate use of the complaint card system to include location and types of incidents, caller information and supplemental information. TDD/TTY operations will evaluate knowledge of TDD/TTY call recognition, the use of preprogrammed messages and communication. If available, the call taker shall demonstrate CAD operations to involve showing use of local CAD functions related to call-taking.

(c) *Emergency dispatcher practical skills tests.*

(1) The emergency dispatcher shall demonstrate knowledge in the following areas: radio dispatch operations, complaint card system and standard operating procedures (SOPs) relating to the area of dispatch.

(2) Emergency dispatcher medical tests shall evaluate knowledge of the EMS complaint cards to include location and types of incidents, response information and supplemental information. Radio dispatch operations shall evaluate knowledge of types of EMD class responses, medical patches, response unit prioritization and unit tone and paging systems. If available, the emergency dispatcher shall demonstrate CAD operations to involve showing use of local CAD functions related to medical dispatching.

(3) Emergency dispatcher fire tests shall evaluate knowledge of the fire complaint cards to include dispatch and response times, unit status, location and types of incidents, and supplemental information. Radio dispatch operations shall evaluate knowledge of fire response levels, alarm determination, response unit prioritization and unit tone and paging systems. If available, the

emergency dispatcher shall demonstrate CAD operations to involve showing use of local CAD functions related to fire dispatching.

(4) Emergency dispatcher police tests shall evaluate knowledge of the police complaint cards to include dispatch and response times, unit status, location and types of incidents and supplemental information. Radio dispatch operations shall evaluate knowledge of police response areas, status checks, local police codes and phraseology. If available, the emergency dispatcher shall demonstrate CAD operations to involve showing the use of local CAD functions related to police dispatching.

(d) *911 Center supervisor practical skills tests.* The 911 center supervisor shall be evaluated in the areas relating to call-taking, emergency fire, police and medical dispatching as described in subsections (a)—(c).

§ 120c.111. Retention of records for audit.

(a) A county, city, borough or any other public or private operator of a 911 emergency communications system or RDP in this Commonwealth shall maintain a record of the certification document and related supporting documents for each employe, agent or representative who is certified by the Agency as a call taker, emergency dispatcher (for example, fire, police, ambulance, emergency management) or 911 center supervisor. The records shall be retained for 4 years starting at the time the certification document or its supporting documents were signed and dated by the proper signatory to the document.

(b) A county, city, borough, or any other public or private operator of a 911 emergency communications center or RDP shall make the records described in subsection (a) available for audit by Commonwealth and Agency officials within 10 days after receiving a written request that those records be made available for audit. The audit request may be made at any time during the 4-year record retention period.

§ 120c.112. Right to enter and inspect.

(a) The Agency has the right to enter any 911 emergency communications center or RDP in this Commonwealth during regular and usual business hours, or at other times when the Agency deems necessary, to conduct the following activities:

(1) Inspect the employment records that pertain to the certification of all 911 emergency communications center or RDP personnel and the staffing of those personnel.

(2) Inspect the county plans, emergency dispatch protocols and other documents related to the operation of the 911 emergency communications center or RDP and the dispatch of emergency services by that center or RDP.

(3) Inspect the equipment and other items required to be maintained at the 911 emergency communication center or RDP under § 120b.104(b) (relating to technical standards for plans).

(b) The Agency reserves the right to enter any 911 emergency communications center or RDP and make inspections at least semiannually, and at other times upon complaint or a reasonable belief that violations of this chapter or Chapter 120b (relating to public safety emergency telephone program) may exist.

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