

# FAQS: Telecommunicator Certification

## General Information

### What is the definition of a telecommunicator?

A Telecommunicator is defined by 12 NCAC 10B .0103(15) as:

*(15) "Telecommunicator" means any person performing responsibilities, either on a full-time, part-time, permanent or temporary basis, for communication functions to include receiving calls or dispatching for emergency and law enforcement services.*

### Who must be reported for Telecommunicator certification?

- Telecommunicators working under the direct supervision and control of the Sheriff are mandated to be reported to Sheriffs Standards for certification.
- **Effective July 1, 2021** Telecommunicators working for municipal police agencies are mandated to be reported for certification to Sheriffs' Standards.
- All other agencies (911, Emergency Comm, etc.) remain "non-mandated" agencies in reference to Telecommunicator certification, but may voluntarily report their telecommunicators for certification.

### What are the minimum standards for Telecommunicators seeking certification with the Sheriffs' Commission?

- The **minimum** certification standards for all Justice Officers (Deputies, detention officers and telecommunicators) are set out in 12 NCAC 10B .0301 and are summarized as follows:
  - U.S. citizen
  - 18 years of age
  - High school graduate or equivalent
  - Fingerprinted by the employing agency
  - Medical examination as required by 12 NCAC 10B .0304
  - Negative drug screen
  - Notify the Sheriffs' Standards Division within five (5) business days of any criminal charges, Domestic Violence Orders and/or Civil No-Contact Orders
  - Good moral character
  - Background investigation including a personal interview pursuant to 12NCAC 10B .0305 and .0306
  - Not been convicted of or committed a crime or crimes as specified in 12NCAC 10B .0307.

## What documentation must be submitted to Sheriffs' Standards for certification?

The entire application packet is required. Original documents are to be submitted to the Sheriffs' Standards Division and you must keep a copy for your files. Required documents include:

- Report of Appointment (F-4T form)
- Authorization for Release of Information
- Medical History Statement (F-1 form) (*valid for one year prior to date of appointment*)\*
- Medical Examination Report (F-2 form) (*valid for one year prior to date of appointment*)\*
- Negative Drug Screen (*valid for 60 days prior to date of appointment*)
- High School Diploma or Equivalent
- Personal History Statement (F-3 form) (*valid for 120 days prior to date of appointment*)\*\*
- Background Summary (F-8 form) (*valid for 120 days prior to date of appointment*)\*\*
- Statewide AOC, NCIC and DMV records checks in every name by which the applicant has been known since age 12 (*valid for 120 days prior to date of appointment*)\*\*
- Certified criminal history records checks from each jurisdiction the applicant has resided for the 10 year period prior to appointment and where he or she last attended high school. These records checks must include every name by which the applicant has been known since age 12 (*valid for 120 days prior to date of appointment*)\*\*
- DD-214 (Member 4 copy) military discharge document showing characterization of discharge must be provided for applicants with prior military service
- AOC-CR-280, Verification of Expunction form results must be provided for applicants appointed 1/1/2021 or later.
- In-Service Training documentation may be required for telecommunicators with prior service.

The most current forms may be found on our website at: <https://ncdoj.gov/law-enforcement-training/sheriffs/all-commission-forms-publications/>

*\*Effective January 1, 2018, Telecommunicators who have not previously held certification with this Commission, but who have been continuously employed by an entity other than a Sheriff's Office, and who have previously provided a valid Medical History Statement (F-1) and Medical Examination Report (F-2) for admission into a Commission accredited Telecommunicator Certification Course shall not be required to submit additional F-1 and F-2 forms for the purpose of obtaining certification. (F-1 and F-2 forms will be required for entry into a Commission accredited Telecommunicator Certification Course.)*

*\*\*Under Commission rules, Background documentation is valid for a period of 120 days prior to the date of appointment. However, in instances where these documents may be several months or even years old, it is possible that some information may have changed (ie, addresses, criminal history, etc.). It is recommended that current background documents containing the most up to date information be submitted. Failure to report any potential criminal activity or charges that may have occurred since the date of appointment may result in action against the individual's certification.*

### **Is the date of appointment for certification the same as the original hire date?**

It depends. There are a number of factors to be considered for telecommunicators coming in to certification who may have been working in non-Sheriff agencies for a number of years. Below are a few of the possible scenarios.

**#1:** Agency may use actual hire date, assuming the individual completed basic TCC within 12 months of hire date and has completed (or must make-up) mandated in-service training for each year he or she has been employed as a telecommunicator. Must also submit complete application packet and documentation showing continuous employment as a telecommunicator with that agency. Under this option, officer receives certification “credit” for total years of service as a telecommunicator.

**#2:** Agency may choose an appointment date which is other than the actual date of hire, as long as it is within 12 months of the date he or she completed basic TCC; and, individual must have completed (or must make-up) mandated in-service training for each year since appointment date. Must also submit complete application packet and documentation showing continuous employment as a telecommunicator with that agency. Under this option, officer receives certification “credit” for multiple years of service as a telecommunicator.

**#3:** Even if individual has been serving as a telecommunicator for some period of time and previously completed basic TCC, an agency may choose to use a more current appointment date. In order to be credited with basic TCC, documentation of continuous employment as a telecommunicator with that agency must be submitted. Also submit mandated in-service training for the year prior to becoming an active certified telecommunicator. Under this option, the officer does not receive certification “credit” for total years of service as a telecommunicator, but is not required to complete multiple years of in-service training.

### **What about “Grandfather” Certification for telecommunicators?**

A Telecommunicator who was appointed prior to March 1, 1998, may be eligible for Grandfather Certification, assuming there has been no break in service (in excess of one year).

Grandfathered Telecommunicators are exempt from the basic training requirement. For such telecommunicator officers, the employing agency must submit the Report of Appointment (Form F-4T) and a letter from the Chief or from the agency’s Human Resources department verifying dates of service as a telecommunicator. The remaining certification documents would be waived under these circumstances. However, in order to be certified as a Grandfathered Telecommunicator, you must show compliance with the mandated in-service beginning in 2007 and going forward.

Persons who previously met the requirements for grandfather certification but who separated from employment and/or certification for a period of one year or more must complete a commission-accredited Telecommunicator Certification Course in its entirety and pass the State Comprehensive Examination within the 12 month probationary period.

## Training

### What is the basic training requirement for Telecommunicator Certification?

- The Justice Academy authored Telecommunicator Certification Course is the required basic training for Telecommunicator certification with the Sheriffs' Standards Commission. This is currently a 47 hour course and is typically offered at the Justice Academy and community colleges across the state. Additionally, some telecommunications agencies are authorized by the Commission to offer this course. The pending and approved course schedule is available on the main page of the Sheriffs' Standards Division website: <https://ncdoj.gov/law-enforcement-training/sheriffs/>

### Can APCO or some other training be used to satisfy the basic training requirement?

No. The Sheriffs' Commission requires all certified telecommunicators to successfully complete the Justice Academy authored basic Telecommunicator Certification Course.

### How long does a telecommunicator have to complete the basic training requirement?

- A telecommunicator has one year from his or her date of appointment for certification to complete the basic training requirement. Please note that the appointment date may differ from the actual employment date for telecommunicators in non-sheriff agencies.
- Any individual who completed the basic Telecommunicator Certification Course prior to being appointed as a telecommunicator has one year from the date of completion to be appointed (and ultimately certified) as a telecommunicator. Failure to be appointed in a one year period will result in a lapse in training and that training will not be credited towards future telecommunicator certification.

### Is annual In-Service Training (IST) required for certified telecommunicators?

- The short answer is "yes." Sixteen (16) credits of in-service training is required for certified telecommunicators each year. The annual required training is set out in the Mandated In-Service Training Manual which may be accessed on our Forms and Publications webpage at <https://ncdoj.gov/law-enforcement-training/sheriffs/all-commission-forms-publications/>
- There are some circumstances under which a telecommunicator is not required to complete the in-service training for a particular year, such as:
  - Telecommunicators who are appointed on or after July 1<sup>st</sup>, and who have not been previously appointed or certified as an active telecommunicator
  - A telecommunicator who is also certified with your agency as a sworn officer and who completes the annual in-service training (24 credits) as required by the Criminal Justice Commission may be exempt from IST *if* the Chief designates that individual's primary position as that of a sworn law enforcement officer.

- Any telecommunicator whose certification is held in an **Inactive** (non-working) status may not be subject to annual in-service training requirement as long as they remain in an inactive status. (**Note:** *an Inactive status designation is appropriate for telecommunicator officers who do not perform the duties of a telecommunicator, but whose certification is merely being held by the agency. An inactive status would also be appropriate for officers who are out on an extended medical or military leave. This status may change periodically for an individual and should be reported on a Change in Status form.*)

**Is a telecommunicator required to complete annual In-Service Training in the year he or she completes the basic Telecommunicator Certification Course?**

Yes. Unless telecommunicator IST is waived for one of the reasons noted above, it is required.