



North Carolina
Public Safety Communications Accreditation Program
(NCPSCAP)
STANDARDS MANUAL



North Carolina Public Safety Communications Accreditation Program (NCPSCAP)

A joint program of the North Carolina Sheriffs' Education and Training Standards Commission and the
North Carolina Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards Commission

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NCLEA Program Manager

PO Drawer 149 | Raleigh, North Carolina 27602

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CHAPTER 1 | ORGANIZATION

This chapter includes standards that address organizational structure, management and administration, allocation and distribution of personnel, and organizational integrity. The standards in this chapter also address the reporting relationships between the employees and the telecommunications center, and the reporting relationship between the telecommunications center and its governing body (where applicable).

1.01 Organizational Structure and Organizational Chart

The agency has a written directive describing its organizational structure and a current organizational chart with revision date. These documents are made available to all agency employees.

1.02 Chain of Command

A written directive designates the order of command authority in the absence of the manager to inform all employees and to ensure continuity of leadership and command.

1.03 Telecommunications Services Agreement

If the agency provides telecommunications services to public safety agencies outside of its own governing body, a written agreement governs services provided by the agency and includes:

- A. Specific services to be provided;
- B. Financial responsibilities of involved parties;
- C. Control of personnel and employment considerations;
- D. Ownership of and arrangements for use of facilities and equipment;
- E. Duration, modification, and termination requirements; and
- F. Review/revision criteria.

1.04 Criminal Justice Information Systems

The agency participates in state and federal criminal justice information systems, and at a minimum, shows compliance with CJIS Security Requirements through the successful completion of the current CJIS Division triennial audit.

1.05 Backup Protocol Plan

The Agency has a written backup plan, to include a hard copy, detailing protocols and procedures in the event of an emergency and/or evacuation of the telecommunications center.

1.06 Memorandum of Understanding for Backup Resources

The agency has written MOUs in place with any agency serving as a service provider outlined in the backup plan. An MOU governs public safety telecommunications services provided by the agency and includes:

- A. Specific services to be provided;
- B. Financial responsibilities, if any;
- C. Arrangements for use of facilities if required; and
- D. An annual review of all MOU's.

1.07 Continuing Compliance with NCPSCAP (NC Public Safety Communications Accreditation Program) Standards

The agency has a system in place that ensures ongoing compliance with NCPSCAP standards and has a written directive that designates a person within the agency responsible for monitoring continued compliance.

1.08 Administrative Reporting Program

A written directive specifies an agency administrative reporting program, which includes:

- A. An updated list of all administrative reports, as defined by the agency;
- B. The reason or purpose of the reports;
- C. The frequency of these reports;
- D. The position(s) responsible for the formulation of the reports;
- E. The review and approval process of required reports; and
- F. The distribution procedures for the reports.

CHAPTER 2 | DIRECTION AND SUPERVISION

This chapter includes standards that address direction, roles, values, authority, service area and contractual agreements, fiscal management, agency property, performance management, community involvement, and public education.

- 2.01 Organizational Component and Employee Accountability
Each organizational component is under the direct command of one supervisor and a written directive requires employees to be accountable to only one supervisor.
- 2.02 Duty to Obey Lawful Orders
A written directive requires employees to obey lawful orders of a supervisor, including any order relayed from a supervisor by an employee of the same or lesser rank, and establishes specific procedures to follow when an employee receives inconsistent, illegal, or conflicting orders.
- 2.03 Code of Conduct
The agency has a code of conduct that defines acceptable and unacceptable conduct.
- 2.04 Command Structure of Dispatched Disciplines
The agency has a written directive outlining each dispatch discipline's command structure and decision-making authority. (Discipline examples include Fire, Emergency Management Services (EMS) and Law Enforcement.)
- 2.05 Appearance Provisions
The agency has a written directive for personnel appearance guidelines, including provisions for clothing or uniforms, grooming, and authorized equipment while completing telecommunications functions.
- 2.06 Agency Quality Assurance
The agency has a written directive that establishes and maintains a quality assurance program in accordance with 09 NCAC 06C.0207.
- 2.07 Community Access to Telecommunication Resources
The agency provides information that is accessible to the public on how to reach emergency telecommunications services.

CHAPTER 3 | HUMAN RESOURCES

This chapter includes standards that address employee performance and related topics, such as classification, delineation of duties and responsibilities, compensation, benefits, working conditions, contract management, performance appraisals, grievance process, disciplinary procedures, record-keeping programs, and employee wellness.

3.01 Annual Performance Evaluations

The agency has a written directive that requires, at a minimum, annual performance evaluations. Performance evaluations must cover a specific period and not extend beyond one year. Performance evaluations must be completed for all employees, including full-time and part-time staff. Performance evaluations shall be signed by the employee and reviewer.

3.02 Personnel Files

The agency maintains a personnel file(s) on each employee, which contains originals or copies of all documents and/or digital files related to personnel matters, including discipline, changes of status, training received, commendations, records of counseling, performance evaluations, and the appropriate Commission's required documentation. Personnel files must be kept confidential and stored in a secure location with limited access in accordance with state statutes.

3.03 Early Intervention System

A written directive establishes procedures for a personnel early intervention system to document and track the actions and behaviors of telecommunications personnel who may require intervention to improve performance. At a minimum, the system should establish the following:

- A. Documented employee's behavior or actions to review, including complaints;
- B. System for initiating review based on information reported and documented;
- C. Supervisory responsibilities and intervention to correct behavior;
- D. Referral (voluntary or involuntary) to the employee assistance program or counseling, if available; and
- E. Annual review of the system utilized to determine program effectiveness.

3.04 Quality Assurance

The agency has a written directive for a quality assurance program that supports operational expectations, to include:

- A. Documented quality checks of each employee's assigned duties, to include call taking and dispatch;

- B. Quantity of checks;
- C. Process for Telecommunicator feedback; and
- D. Reporting process of the quality checks.

3.05 Corrective Action and Disciplinary Procedures

The agency has a written directive establishing guidelines for the types of violations that result in tracking, intervention, and/or disciplinary action. The written directive shall set forth procedures for investigative assignment, corrective action, and/or discipline and describe the appeal process.

3.06 Investigations of Complaints

The agency has a written directive requiring documentation, review, investigation, and disposition of complaints against the agency or its employees. All complaints will be thoroughly investigated, based on facts, and will include:

- A. Notification of complaint to all parties;
- B. A time limit for completion of investigations, including possible disciplinary action;
- C. Procedures for request and approval of extensions of time if needed;
- D. Notification to all parties that the investigation has concluded; and
- E. Information and records related to complaints are confidential and shall be kept securely.

CHAPTER 4 | RECRUITMENT/SELECTION/PROMOTION

Employees are an Agency's most valuable asset and the recruitment and selection of the most qualified employees available is critical to the success of the Agency's mission. The selection of employees must be non-discriminatory, job-related, and administered in a fair and consistent manner. Continuing evaluation of employees is necessary to ensure the consistent direction of employees' efforts towards Agency goals.

Good employee relations are necessary to retain competent employees and provide for their continued growth and development. All Agencies must have established procedures for promotional opportunities to ensure fairness in the promotional process.

4.01 Recruitment Plan

The Agency shall participate in a recruitment program and maintain a written recruitment plan. The recruitment plan shall minimally:

- A. Contain a statement that the agency is committed to equal opportunities for employment;
- B. Define goals and objectives for the agency;
- C. Establish a plan to achieve stated goals and objectives;
- D. Annually review the progress of the recruitment plan towards goals and objectives, as well as update the plan when needed; and
- E. Establish the position responsible for the plan.

4.02 Participation in a Recruitment Program

Agency staff that participates in the recruitment program are appropriately trained on personnel related matters and equal employment opportunities.

4.03 Recruitment and Selection

The agency utilizes a formal recruitment and selection process that provides equal opportunity to all applicants, full-time and part-time, based on minimum employment and testing requirements as established by the agency, governing authority, and the laws of North Carolina, to include at a minimum:

- A. Minimum of 18 years of age; and
- B. Minimum High School Graduate or GED.
- C. Selected candidates comply with minimal qualifications as outlined in the current North Carolina Administrative Code (NCAC).

4.04 Job Descriptions

The agency establishes and maintains job descriptions for all positions within the agency and has a process for periodic review and update.

4.05 Job Announcements

The agency's recruitment notices and/or job announcements for all employees:

- A. Provide a description of the qualifications and job requirements;
- B. Advertise the agency as an equal opportunity employer on all recruitment applications and recruitment advertisements; and
- C. Advertise official application filing deadlines, if any.

4.06 Selection Process

A written directive describes all elements of the selection process and ensures that all are administered, scored, evaluated, and interpreted in a uniform manner.

4.07 Background Investigations

Whether conducted in-house or using contractual services, the agency has a written directive regarding background investigations that shall include:

- A. Employees conducting background investigations are appropriately trained,
- B. Procedures for the utilization of a computer voice stress analyzer (CVSA) or polygraph, if used,
- C. Procedures for psychological evaluations, if used,
- D. Verification of biographical data; family data; scholastic data; employment data; and criminal history data,
- E. Interviews with the applicant's personal and professional references,
- F. A summary of the investigator's findings and conclusions regarding the applicant's moral character known to the agency, and
- G. Any reviews and/or reports required by the agency CEO.

4.08 Promotional Process

The agency has a written directive that describes the components of the promotional process, which may include any applicable qualifications, announcements, testing procedures, grading, and any appeal process.

4.09 Promotional Eligibility List

If the agency establishes a promotional eligibility list, a written directive specifies the duration of the list and the criteria for placement on the list.

CHAPTER 5 | TRAINING

This chapter includes standards that address pre-hire, new hire, annual, remedial, specialized, and promotional training. The proper training of newly hired employees is critical to the development of the individual and reduces risk and liability. Ongoing training (in-service training) should be provided to employees to ensure they maintain skill levels and are kept abreast of the latest techniques, policies, procedures, laws, rules, and regulations affecting their profession. Training must be consistent and properly delivered.

5.01 Telecommunicators Training

The agency requires all telecommunicators to be certified in accordance with North Carolina Sheriffs' Education and Training Standards Commission, or a nationally recognized professional organization or association, such as the International Academy of Emergency Dispatch (IAED), National Emergency Number Association (NENA), or Association of Public Safety Telecommunications Officials (APCO).

5.02 New Hire Training

A written directive requires all newly hired employees to complete a training program that establishes core competencies prior to independent assignment to duty outside the supervision of a Communications Training Officer (CTO).

5.03 Annual In-Service Training

The agency has a written directive requiring all telecommunicators to complete annual in-service training in accordance with continuing education requirements for their certifications and/or agency-required training.

5.04 Remedial Training

A written directive establishes the agency's remedial training program and includes:

- A. The available types of remedial training; and
- B. Timelines which remedial training is to be completed.

5.05 Accreditation Training

The agency requires accreditation training for all employees within thirty days of employment and prior to an onsite assessment.

5.06 Assignment-Specific Training

The agency provides all newly assigned and/or promoted persons with job-related training consistent with their new level of assignment and responsibility prior to assignment or within the first year following assignment. (Examples include: CTO, trainer, mentor, quality assurance, supervisor, and executive, etc.)

5.07 Medical Aid

If the agency authorizes emergency medical instructions over the telephone or radio, employees must be appropriately trained and follow approved emergency medical guidelines or materials.

CHAPTER 6 | OPERATIONS

This chapter includes standards that address the written directive system, administration, Federal Communications Commission (FCC), call taking, communication with officers, facilities, equipment, telecommunication device and text phones (TTY/TDD), radios, records management, and computer systems.

This chapter requires policies, procedures, regulations, and practices to be specified in writing and available to all employees. A standardized format and indexing system for written directives provides greater understanding and accessibility. Regular review and updating of policies to keep written procedures current with operational and administrative practices is required.

This chapter also establishes guidelines and procedures for call-taking. These standards address non-emergency and emergency phone calls, including the 911 system. These standards also address the information necessary for communication centers with direct or indirect access to the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) and other federal/state/local information databases to adhere to and follow the rules, regulations, and laws governing their access.

6.01 Agency Written Directive System

The agency has a written directive system that includes all agency policies, procedures, and practices. The written directive system shall:

- A. Establish an organizational format for all written directives;
- B. Establish the process and timeline by which the agency issues, reviews, revises, and approves written directives, including persons authorized to revise and approve written directives;
- C. Require written directives be made available to and reviewed by all affected employees in a manner designated by the agency CEO;
- D. Provide a documented system and procedures for dissemination and acknowledgment of new and revised written directives to all affected employees;
- E. Provide procedures and guidelines for archiving policies; and
- F. Require centralized storage of written directives and documentation of acknowledgment by all staff.

6.02 Telecommunications Operation

The agency has 24-hour, two-way radio capability that provides continuous communication between the telecommunications center and the public safety personnel.

6.03 Immediate Access to Telecommunications Center Resources

Telecommunicators have immediate access to the following resources:

- A. Supervisor in charge;
- B. Rosters of all agency employees;
- C. Current contact information of all agency employees;
- D. Jurisdictional maps detailing the agency's service and surrounding areas;
- E. Telephone numbers of public service agencies; and
- F. Critical Incident Plans and All Hazard Plans.

6.04 Standard for Answering 911 Calls

The agency establishes a written directive that strives to answer 90% of 911 calls within 10 seconds and 95% of all 911 calls should be answered within 20 seconds, in accordance with 09 NCAC 06C.0209.

6.05 Misdirected Emergency Calls

A written directive establishes procedures for handling and forwarding misdirected, abandoned, and hang-up emergency calls.

6.06 TTY/TDD Access and Text-to-911 Procedures

A written directive establishes procedures for initial and annual training for handling calls received through teletypewriters (TTYs), also known as "telecommunications devices for hearing and/or speech impaired (TDDs)," and text to 911.

6.07 Calls for Service Dispatch Times

The agency has a written directive establishing timeframes for when calls for service (CFS) shall be dispatched.

6.08 Operational Readiness

A written directive requires telecommunications equipment to be stored or maintained in a state of operational readiness and designates the position(s) responsible for its maintenance.

6.09 Playback System

The Telecommunications Center has a playback system for telephones and radios to allow information to be retrieved when necessary.

6.10 Telecommunication Center Hours

The agency has a telecommunications system in place that address 24-hour call receipt capability. If the agency does not provide in-house 24-hour service, the system addresses communication with a back-up agency to ensure response to calls for service.

CHAPTER 7 | CRITICAL INCIDENTS/SPECIAL OPERATIONS/HOMELAND SECURITY

Chapter 7 includes standards that address emergency operations, operational readiness, accessibility of plans, special events, disasters, civil disturbances, tactical operations, and other homeland security related topics to include terrorism. These standards also address the security of the telecommunications center to include physical security of the site, security for the employees, and security measures for equipment.

7.01 Security Measures

The agency has security measures and a plan in place to be reasonably secure from physical attack or sabotage. The plan is made available to all agency employees and the agency provides appropriate training.

7.02 Evacuation Plan

The agency has a written evacuation plan which outlines:

- A. Process for evacuation;
- B. Process for transfer of services; and
- C. Documented initial and annual training on the plan by all agency employees.

7.03 Emergency Power

In the event of a power failure, the agency has an alternative source of power sufficient to ensure the continued operation of the telecommunications center and maintain that power source at a minimum by documented inspections and load testing that are conducted at least monthly or in conformance with manufacturer recommendations.

7.04 Emergency Operations Plan (EOP)

The agency has a written EOP for handling critical and unusual incidents, and the plan has a documented review annually. The plan is made available to all employees.

7.05 Request for Assistance

The agency has a written directive and procedures for handling emergency responder down calls for assistance.

CHAPTER 8 | FISCAL MANAGEMENT

Chapter 8 includes standards that address sound fiscal management of the telecommunications center to ensure available resources are used effectively, tracked appropriately, and accountability and transparency of expenditures maintained. All procedures shall be compatible with generally accepted accounting principles and regular audits to ensure compliance must be performed.

8.01 Fiscal Management Responsibility

The agency has a written directive outlining the person(s) responsible and scope of the overall fiscal management of the telecommunications function.

8.02 Budget Process

A written directive outlines the agency's budget process.

8.03 Accounting System

The agency or financial personnel has access to an accounting system that includes appropriations, balances, expenditures, and unencumbered balances.

8.04 Cash Funds

If the agency accepts cash, a written directive governs the security and accountability of monetary transactions and includes:

- A. A balance sheet or ledger;
- B. Receipts or documentation; and
- C. Quarterly accounting of cash activities.

APPENDIX A – GLOSSARY

Abandoned Call: An emergency call that comes into the agency and the caller disconnects before the call is successfully delivered to a call-taker/dispatcher.

911 Hang-up: An emergency call that comes into the agency and the caller disconnects after being successfully connected to a call-taker/dispatcher.

Accreditation - The bestowing of credentials symbolizing approval from a professional organization upon practitioners or specific institutions. Complying with specific accepted standards established for an institution or occupation.

Annual - An event occurring once every 12 months.

Appeal: To resort to a higher authority or greater power, as for sanction, corroboration, or a decision that could reverse a decision.

Audit: A comprehensive examination to verify compliance with established standards, written directives, and operational procedures, and to recommend any indicated changes.

CEO - Chief Executive Officer: Agency Head, the Sheriff, the Chief of Police, or the Director or Commissioner of a criminal justice entity.

Chain of Command: An organization's hierarchy with formal lines of communication through each level of command.

Code Of Conduct - Specific guidelines for behavior, including prohibitions.

Commission: Refers to the North Carolina Sheriffs' Education and Training Standards Commission or the Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards Commission as defined In North Carolina Law.

Complaint - An allegation of misconduct, violation of law or agency directives against any employee of the agency. This does not include a complainant's misunderstanding or disagreement with the application of law or agency policy or procedures.

CTO - Communications Training Officer

Directive - A written document used to guide the actions of employees and establish agency policy and practices. Examples of written directives include, but are not limited to policy statements, standard operating procedures, general orders, memoranda, laws, written orders, instructional material.

Early Intervention System: A system to document and track the actions and behaviors of personnel for the purpose of intervening and improving performance.

Employee: one employed by an agency for wages or salary.

Employee Assistance Program (EAP): The program designated to assist the employee with concerns or problems (personal or job related), that could affect the employee's personal or professional well-being. The program may be done in-house, including Human Resources, or may be outsourced to a private or public entity.

Equal Employment Opportunity - The providing of equal opportunities for employment and conditions of employment to all personnel regardless of race, creed, color, age, sex, religion, national origin, marital status, or physical impairment.

Grievance - Formal request in writing to resolve differences in identified matters due to an actual or supposed circumstance regarded as just cause for protest.

Incident Command System (ICS): Organization and coordination of personnel and agencies to stabilize an incident while protecting life, property, and the environment. There are five major components: command, planning, operations, logistics, and finance/administration.

In-service Training: Specified formal and informal training that enhances personnel's knowledge, skills

and/or abilities. This can be in the form of State mandated training, specialized training, advanced training, professional development training, or less formal types of training.

Job Description - An official written statement setting forth the duties and responsibilities of a job, and the skills, knowledge, and abilities necessary to perform it.

NCIC - National Crime Information Center.

Performance Evaluation: An assessment of an individual's work conduct, over a specified period of time, that addresses any positive or negative performance and behavior pertaining to the individual's work.

Personnel: the people who are employed in an agency.

Quarterly - An event that occurs in 3-month intervals.

Recruitment Plan: A written plan describing methods to be utilized for recruiting, hiring, and retaining qualified employees.

Remedial Training - Training conducted to correct an identified deficiency.

Review: To examine or study.

Selection Process: Procedures utilized to determine which candidate will fill a specific position.

Standards: A compilation of professional best practices and requirements, as determined by the NCPSCAP Accreditation Committee, to be appropriate for participating North Carolina agencies.

TDD - A telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) is a teleprinter, an electronic device for text communication over a telephone line, that is designed for use by persons with hearing or speech difficulties.

Telecommunicator - An individual employed by an emergency service provider, whose primary responsibility is to be an operator for the receipt of calls for emergency services made by telephone, radio, or other electronic means and for dispatching appropriate personnel/resources.

TTY - Text Telephone. A special device that allows people who are deaf, hard of hearing, or speech-impaired to use the telephone to communicate, by allowing them to type messages back and forth to one another instead of talking and listening. A TTY is required at both ends of the conversation in order to communicate.

Written Directives: Policy, procedure, plan, rule, general or special order, state law or local ordinance, etc. that applies to an agency and its personnel.