South Carolina Office of Homeland Security Credentialing

Standard Operating Procedure

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**Purpose:**

Credentialing ensures that during any all-hazards event, state and local government have a prepared and qualified staff to respond. If successfully implemented, the Credentialing Program will provide state and local government the processes and tools for training and utilizing personnel with the specific skill-sets needed to respond.

The guidance in this document will assist state and local governments in establishing standards for a qualification system that ensures qualified personnel deploy to incidents. It can be used to establish a common language for defining job titles and enabling jurisdictions and organizations to plan for, request, and have confidence in the capabilities of personnel deployed for disasters and emergencies from other entities throughout the state. We highly suggest that all governmental, nongovernmental, and private sector organizations that have incident management roles align their personnel efforts with the National Qualification Standards (NQS) to qualify, certify, and credential their incident personnel. Here is the link: <https://rtlt.preptoolkit.fema.gov/Public>.

Many organizations and jurisdictions have already established processes for qualifying, certifying, and credentialing incident personnel. This standard operating procedure (SOP) does not replace these procedures. Rather, it helps build or refine qualification, certification, and credentialing processes to be highly effective and consistent statewide.

This document provides guidance to an Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) by:

• Describing the concept of operations for effective qualification, certification, and credentialing processes;

• Defining the actions and tools that help individuals demonstrate the minimum qualifications needed for incident-related positions.

**Applicability:**

This SOP is for use by all levels of government and organizations, including private sector entities and nongovernmental organizations (NGO) with incident management responsibilities. The qualification, certification, and credentialing processes described in this SOP are voluntary. To promote consistency across the State, NGOs and private sector entities should implement qualification and certification processes that are consistent with this guidance. This includes pre-identifying, typing, and qualifying incident management personnel based on minimum qualification criteria that align with the National Incident Management System (NIMS) Job Titles/Position Qualifications. For positions not defined in the NIMS Job Titles/Position Qualifications, these entities should use organizational and industry guidelines to type the positions and establish employee qualifications.

**Policy:**

The South Carolina Law Enforcement Division (SLED) has the responsibility for state oversight during terrorist events and Homeland Security. We want to ensure that those responders who are deployed to these events are properly badged and credentialed. Credentialing is an evidence-based system that defines levels of proficiency for emergency responder position titles, and then monitors and evaluates whether individuals meet the professional work performance standards required to execute the tasks associated within a position’s proficiency level.

SLED shall institute a program to grant authority to agencies and organizations to issue identification/credential cards for persons in specific positions to be deployed for intrastate mutual aid. There are specific certification and licensure requirements for numerous positions that people fill in response to a disaster. These positions fall under the licensing and certification authority of several state and local agencies in South Carolina. This is not an individual agency policy, but the coordination of those positions for which individual agencies are currently providing credentials.

Credentialing authenticates the identity and attributes (such as affiliations, skills, or privileges) of individuals or team members. Credentialing is vital to the emergency management community as it allows the community to plan for, request, and receive resources needed for emergency assistance. Credentialing makes certain that personnel and resources match needs and support effective management of legitimately dispatched responders.

Credentialing provides documentation that identifies, authenticates, and verifies the qualifications of emergency response personnel. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) NIMS standards call for typing of incident management personnel, emergency response providers, other personnel (including temporary personnel), and resources needed for emergency response.

The credential cards are the property of the agency/organization that issues them. The responsibility for verifying a person’s qualifications ultimately rests with the agencies/organizations that issue the card.

SLED and approximately 1,100 other organizations in South Carolina use the Salamander Live program and database for credentialing. Salamander Live provides state, local government and private industry the tools they need to manage incidents and events. Salamander Live can create interoperable tags and provide situational awareness. With Salamander Live one can create accountability tags, manage responders’ qualifications, view GIS mapping information, run detailed incident reports, access Salamander Live from anywhere with a web connection, and connect field tracking devices to create a common operating picture.

**Privacy Agreement**

Salamander Live contains personnel information on individuals whose data is stored in it. The use of this information is strictly for use by authorized personnel and the agencies they represent. By entering into this system, you agree to not release any personnel information to include, but not limited to: names, home addresses, telephone numbers, or personal medical information outside of Salamander Live.

**ACCESS and PERMISSIONS:**

Access and permissions to use Salamander Live will be through the County Emergency Management Agency, lead county department, or any standalone agencies that have separately purchased Salamander Live.

**Access** to Salamander Live is managed in a parent-child hierarchy (See Figure 1).

**Figure 1**

There are varying degrees of permissions in Salamander Live; the most common is Data Input/Print. Below is the list of permissions within Salamander Live.

**Administrator:** This is reserved for the System Administrator and provides access to all information in the Salamander Live database for South Carolina. This will be used by certain SLED personnel only.

**Administrator – No Security:** This allows the user the same permission as the Admin EXCEPT that they cannot delete any information for a specific organization.

**Read Only:** The “Read Only” security role allows users to only view records, including any medical information captured in personnel records.

**Incident Management:** The Incident Management security role allows users to create, update and delete incidents. Users with this security role can also create and update Salamander Live accounts logins and grant access to optional features in Salamander Live.

**Org Admin – No Delete:** The Org Admin – No Delete role allows users to create and update records, as well as print ID Tags. Users with this security role cannot delete any records.

**Data Entry with Medical & Print:** This provides the ability to create users and enter, change or view data including medical data and capability to print credentials.

**Data Entry with Medical – No Print:** This provides the ability to create users and enter, change or view data including medical data, but without capability to print credentials.

**Data Entry with Print – No Medical:** This provides the ability to create users and enter, change or view data, excluding medical data, and with capability to print credentials.

**Data Entry – No Medical or Print:** This provides the ability to create users and enter, change or view data, excluding medical and without capability to print credentials.

**View Only with Medical:** This provides the ability to view data, including medical, without capability to print Credentials.

**View Only – No Medical:** This provides the ability to view data, excluding medical data, without ability to print credentials.

**Print Only:** There is no ability to view data, but credentials can be printed.

**Power User:** This provides full access to create and delete users and enter, change or view data, including medical data, and print credentials.

Note: The SLED’s Credentialing Program Coordinator will have full access to create, modify and view the agencies.

**Procedure:**

**A.** **Identification**

Identity verification must be conducted by the organization issuing any badge or credential using the Salamander system. It is the issuing agency’s responsibility to verify individual’s identity.

**B.** **Identification/Credential Card (IDCC)**

Authorized agencies shall issue IDCC based on the positions within one of the following eight discipline areas.

1. “Fire” shall be utilized for those individuals to be credentialed in Fire Fighting positions.

2. “Law” shall be utilized solely for individuals certified or have provisional certification through the South Carolina Criminal Justice Academy (SCCJA).

3. “Health & Med” shall be utilized for personnel credentialed in Medical positions.

4. “EM” shall be utilized for individuals to be credentialed in Emergency Management positions.

5. “Vol” shall be utilized for individuals to be credentialed as Volunteers.

6. “Gov” shall be utilized for Government positions.

7. “Private” shall be utilized for those individuals to be credentialed as Private Industry.

8. “Mil” shall be utilized by those individuals to be credentialed as Military members as determined by the South Carolina National Guard.

**C. Identification/Credential Card Appearance**

**1. Front of Card**

1. **Picture**

The IDCC shall not be valid unless a picture is included on the card.

**(1)** Photos should include head and shoulders and be on a single color background. Hats are not to be worn.



**(2)** It is encouraged that organizations use uniform clothing whenever

possible.

**(3)** Photos need to be cropped to meet the requirements of the system. Salamander Live allows the photo to be cropped after upload. To crop upload the picture, click Edit above the picture, crop to size as necessary, then click Done.

1. **Elements**

**(1) Last Name/First Name/Middle Initial**

Self-explanatory

**(2) ID Number**

Salamander Live will randomly issue a unique identifier in the system. It is recommended that each organization create their own series/sequence numbering system.

**(3) Organization Logo**

Logos will be the responsibility of the organization issuing the credential or badge. Organizational logos will be submitted to [jharmon@sled.sc.gov](mailto:jharmon@sled.sc.gov) for addition to the Salamander data base. Submit in jpeg format not to exceed 4mbyte.

**(4) Title**

This field will be designated for position title/rank. If the NIMS job title is appropriate it should be listed here.

**(5) Organization**

If the organization is affiliated with a county, city or regional group, that affiliation must be noted in this field. The **Organization Name** field should have the name of the organization if it is a private group. This field should be limited to a maximum of 28 characters including spaces. Although the field allows 50 characters, more than 28 characters will make the organization difficult to read at a distance. Only commonly accepted abbreviations will be accepted.

**(6) Issue Date**

The issue date is set when the qualifications are verified or the date of issue. If a reprinted card is issued for the same individual it must contain the original issue and expiration date.

**(7) Expiration Date**

The expiration date is to be set on the day of printing and will not exceed four years from the date of issue. The date should be set shorter than four years to expire at the same time as a qualification, such as a license or certification.

**(8) Text classification**

Clear-text classification is set by each card design. These classifications are not changeable. The purpose is to provide a non-color clear text definition of an individual’s discipline.

**(9) Color Coding**

The card color scheme will be in accordance with previous guidance used by the issuing agency or organization.

**(10) Personnel Barcode**

The barcode on the front of the card is automatically generated in Resource Manager. Examples of both the PDF-417 and the QR Barcode are listed below (See the **resourceMGR web™** User Guide for more information on what is included in each item in the barcode). It contains as a minimum:

1. Barcode Expiration
2. Organization Country Code
3. Organization State Code
4. Organization Type Code
5. Organization ID
6. Organization Name
7. Personnel ID
8. Last Name
9. First Name
10. Rank

1. Date of Birth

**(11) Other ID**

Other ID is assigned in the software as an optional field. This can be used as a place to display a radio number, patrol number, or any other pertinent reference number for that individual.

**(12) Lamination**

Lamination will be used at the discretion of the issuing agency. If laminated, no holograms are authorized to be used on the card.

**(13) Footer**

The footer along the bottom of the card will read the name of the state/ jurisdiction where the card was issued. This will be used to assist in identification when responders are called to cross jurisdictional boundaries and/or state lines for aid and assistance.

**2. Back of Card**

**a) Qualification Field**

The qualification field contains **qualifications** as identified by both the card holder, and the card holder’s organization of affiliation. There is a high-to-low hierarchy in qualifications of Federal then State then Local. **State qualifications shall not supersede federal qualifications and local qualifications shall not supersede that of the state or federal government.**

**(1)** Qualifications for positions and credentials at the state, local and regional levels are listed below.

1. For positions listed in NIMS Resource Typing Library Tool the standards for qualification and credentialing will be adhered to. The link for the Resource Typing Library Tool is <https://rtlt.preptoolkit.fema.gov/Public>
2. State qualifications not listed in the Resource Typing Library Tool will be defined and outlined by the working groups assigned by the SLED-DHS.
3. Regional qualifications will be defined by local, regional, or state response groups, regional IMT groups, and volunteer organizations with official memberships.
4. Local qualifications will be defined at the local level by local organizations.

**(2)** Requests to add local and regional qualifications to Salamander Live can be made by emailing qualification requests to [jharmon@sled.sc.gov](mailto:jharmon@sled.sc.gov).

**(3)** All qualifications will have an expiration of the earlier of either the card renewal date or expiration date of the qualification put into Salamander Live. It is the organization’s responsibility to track the qualifications of the personnel they are creating credentials for in order to ensure that they continue to maintain the assigned level of qualification.

**(4)** NIMS guidance on credentialing does not confer the authority or privilege to practice any profession. Only the receiving department, agency or jurisdiction can extend that privilege or authority after evaluating the person’s information.

**(5)** Two key elements in the qualification process include typing personnel by discipline/job, and then certifying that the personnel possess at least the minimum level of training (experience, licensure, certification and fitness) to perform the job.

**b) Other ID Code 128 Barcode**

The Other ID barcode is an option upon printing the IDCC to encode the Other ID on the front of the card into a code128 barcode on the back. The template option “OtherID\_code128” must be selected when printing. This barcode has several particular applications to include time clock and patient medication tracking. The intended use of this barcode should be identified by the issuing agency / organization.

**c) Medical Barcode**

The Medical Tab is used to capture the person’s basic and vital medical information. This information is confidential and can only be accessed with the proper user account permissions. Medical information is encoded on a separate barcode and can be scanned and viewed in the field during emergencies.

(1) Gender

(2) Blood Pressure

(3) Blood Type

(4) Allergy Conditions

(5) Medical Conditions

(6) Physician

(7) Insurance

(8) Height

(9) Weight

(10) Emergency Contact Name

(11) Emergency Contact Phone

\* Card holders should be advised that the information contained in the barcode is not encrypted and can be read. It is not protected should you choose to disclose it.

**D.** **Verification**

Verification of personnel ensures “… personnel possess a minimum level of training, experience, physical and medical fitness, and capability appropriate for a particular position…” This requires organizations to test and evaluate their personnel against the qualifications established by the typing efforts. Additionally, organizations must “…authenticate qualifications…” through a formal process to approve and provide signature for personnel qualifications.

**E.** **Revocation**

A critical component of identity and qualifications is revocation. Organizations need to have a process in place to revoke credentials when certain events occur. **No more than**

**24 hours** after a person is relieved of their position, no matter the condition of their release, it is the card issuing organization’s responsibility to get the card back and destroy it using the guidelines listed in paragraph F. Likewise, if an individual’s qualifications change, their credentialing information should also be updated in the affected databases or records **within 30 days**. Updating responder’s credentials are vital when utilizing SIV (Salamander Identity Verification is currently only available with 02 Track App during an incident). SIV allows for the instant verification that the responder record exists, that the qualification/badge has not expired, and that their status is current.

**F.** **Card Disposal**

Expired, revoked, or returned credential cards should be shredded if possible but will be destroyed by cutting through the barcode as a minimum, so that the card can no longer be read by the system. NOTE: If the credential is printed on a proximity card it will be destroyed in the same way as the standard card.

Requests for changes to be made to this document can be sent to jharmon@sled.sc.gov. This document will be reviewed and revised annually by the SLED-Office of Homeland Security