

D2022-02 - Certification Directive: Frequently Asked Questions

General

I'm already in-progress under D2017-02 – do I need to start over under the new directive? No. In accordance with Directive 2022-02, Section IV.G, anyone in-progress has one year from the date of the new Directive (July 5, 2023) to complete requirements under the 2017 Directive.

Will my previously earned certifications be recognized? Certifications earned under D2017-02 (or earlier) remain valid for a period of five years from the date of issuance of the new certification directive (so, until July 5, 2027) at the level they were issued (ie: Basic, Advanced, or Professional). If an individual has already completed all three levels of certification under D2017-02, they would go through Recertification at the Professional level. Recertification will then be required every five years.

How does this work for an individual currently certified at the “Basic” or “Advanced” level under D2017-02? Do these individuals complete the Associate and Professional initial certifications fully, or do they need to complete the Professional certification and then recert Professional going forward? If an individual completed Basic or Advanced certification (or both) under 2017-02, they would complete the Professional under D2022-02 criteria and would then recertify at the Professional level every five years after that.

Is the Application for Recertification something that is used at each “level” (Associate/Professional)? For instance, could someone obtain their “Associate” certificate and sit at that level for 5 years and then recertify for that level? All certifications issued under D2022-02 will now have an expiration date five years after the date of issuance. Recertification is at the highest level the individual attained – so if someone has their Associate certification and has not met the requirements for Professional by the time their Associate is approaching expiration, they will recertify at the Associate level. If they have their Professional, they will recertify at the Professional level. Keep in mind, however, that appointed coordinators are required to complete both levels of the professional development program as prescribed by Title 35, so the appointed coordinator would need to complete the Professional certification no later than three years following their appointment per 7502(e)(2) and would then recertify at that level going forward every five years.

Will all current PEMA certifications be valid for five years from the directive date (July 5, 2022) or from date of issuance? Existing certifications that were issued prior to D2022-02 being issued on July 5, 2022, will be good for a period of five years from the Directive's issue date (so, until July 5, 2027). Anything issued after July 5, 2022 will be good for five years from the date it was issued, regardless of whether the certification was issued under D2017-02 or D2022-02 and will include the expiration date on it.

How do these new requirements aid EM professionals in the state attain IAEM certification as either an AEM or CEM? The state certification can be used as [one of the contributions](#) for IAEM initial certification as a CEM. The training hours taken as part of the state recertification can also be used to satisfy training hour requirements for [initial certification](#) or recertification at the CEM or AEM level.

Eligible training courses are listed in the [IAEM Training Allocation Table](#). Finally, professional contributions under the recertification program may also be applied to the CEM [certification/recertification](#) program if they meet the IAEM criteria as well.

How will the D2022-02 program be pushed out to the stakeholders for Practitioner certification? The program has been sent out to other state agencies to share with their stakeholders (i.e.: school districts; higher education; etc.) and information regarding the program is also available on the PEMA website. We will also be doing periodic pushes via PEMA’s social media channels and work with other professional groups, such as KEMA and FEMA’s higher ed team, to continue to increase awareness of the program. Finally, External Affairs will also be including this information in their newsletter and will be sharing with private sector partners and VOADs.

Will training program guidance be provided to ensure counties are accurately tracking the local emergency coordinator training & certification? While each entity should be tracking their own personnel’s training already, the counties will track the training for their municipal coordinators the same way they have always tracked this training. The recertification tracking will be the responsibility of PEMA and not the counties, though counties are welcome to also track if they’d like. Also, under the Directive, PEMA TED will – and currently does – maintain a record of all certifications and recertifications issued.

When will the classes that are labeled as Virtual be available on TrainPA? The virtual offering of Duties & Responsibilities is going through final testing now. Initial Damage Reporting was revised and updated by the Recovery team and is with the contractor for virtual conversion now. The Resource Request Process course is going through content review currently. In the meantime, you can work with the Area Offices on in-person offerings of Initial Damage Reporting and Duties and Responsibilities, and we will arrange for Resource Request Process webinars (with registration through TrainPA for a certificate) until the course is available for self-study on TrainPA.

If a coordinator has completed Duties and Responsibilities, Headquarters Orientation, Initial Damage Reporting, and Area Office Orientation already, do they need to take the Train PA P-series course? No, they do not.

What constitutes a “Long Duration” event (for Experience in Lieu of Exercise)? Under page 7 of the Directive (Section VII.A.3), we specify that this means several operational periods. Several is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as “more than two.” So, if you had an activation that lasted three or more operational periods and contained sufficient complexity that would qualify.

What is the process for submitting certification applications? All certification packets, once ready to submit, should be submitted to RA-EMPQS@pa.gov. The PEMA Area Offices will submit the completed packages for county and municipal emergency management coordinators once they have signed the checklist. Individuals applying as practitioners can submit directly to RA-EMPQS@pa.gov.

Recertification

Why was a recertification requirement included in this new Directive? After soliciting feedback from peers in emergency management and reviewing other model state and national qualifications systems it

was determined that including a recertification or continuing education component made the most sense to ensure individuals had the most current knowledge and skills to effectively perform their jobs. Continuing education or recertification are required for vast majority of careers, including other public safety professions. With the constantly evolving role of emergency management, it made sense to ensure that those responsible for implementing emergency management programs at all levels understand the changes to policy, programs, technologies, and tools available to them to prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters.

With the recertification requirements, does this apply to municipal coordinators? Do local coordinators need to achieve professional certification, or can they remain at the Associate level?

Under Title 35, Section 7502 (e), each appointed coordinator (municipal or county) needs to achieve both phases of the career development program. If a local coordinator has achieved both Basic and Advanced certification under a previous Directive, then after five years (from date of issuance of the new directive), they would need to go through the Recertification and would receive a Professional Recertification, as that is the current Phase 2. If a municipal coordinator is initially certifying under D2022-02, then yes, they would need to achieve both Associate and Professional (both phases of the program per Title 35).

Will there be any sort of state provided tool to track these recertification hours or requirements? Initially, no, but we are currently evaluating the use of a portal so that applicants can upload their own docs and track their progress towards certification and recertification. We'll keep you updated on the progress of this initiative.

Will IST attendance continue to be required under the recertification? Yes. IST attendance at least twice a year is required under the Annual Statement of Work for county coordinators and has been added as one of the professional contribution categories for recertification purposes. This is an easy way for county coordinators and staff to earn hours under one of the contribution categories.

Are all FEMA IS certificates older than 5 years now invalid? What about E/G/K/L series courses? FEMA IS course certificates and certificates for E/G/K/L series courses are not invalid and can still be used to satisfy requirements for initial certification. However, certificates for courses completed prior to the five-year recertification period cannot be used to meet recertification requirements.

What happens if an individual has more than 75 hours of training but not 25 hours in one specific category? The training requirements for recertification outlines that training must be completed in at least three (3) of the five (5) mission areas. A *maximum* of 25 hours of training can be applied to each mission area. As an example, if an individual has taken 16 hours of training in one mission area, 24 hours in a second mission area, 21 hours in a third mission area, and 16 hours in a fourth mission area, they will have met the training component requirements.

Clarification on Professional Contributions & What Counts

Is membership on KEMA, NEMA, or IAEM required for certification? Membership is not *required*; however, it is one of the ten (10) contribution categories that an individual has available to them to

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meet the requirements for recertification. Per the Directive, an individual needs to meet four professional contributions within the five-year recertification period out of the 10 available professional contribution categories. Additionally, EMPG funding can be used for membership in IAEM as well as AEM/CEM certification. Counties that receive EMPG funding can choose to use it for that purpose under the Director's guidance last year.

Are instructors qualified through PEMA or OSFC the only qualified instructors allowed to provide courses that will be recognized for initial certification or recertification? No. The Recertification Application lists PEMA or OSFC-qualified instructors, or instructors that are qualified through FEMA (such as those instructing courses through EMI, NFA, TEEX, LSU, CDP, etc.), or an approved Educational Training Agency (ETA), such as a community college. Adjunct professors or affiliate faculty instructing courses in emergency management, homeland security, or similar subjects for an accredited institute of higher education would also be examples of a qualified instructors.

Will Educational Methodology be required for instructors? Each instructor program has its own requirements. To become a PEMA Instructor an individual needs to successfully complete an Educational Methodology course, or a similar course of instruction that deals with the principles of education and training (e.g., the E/L 141: Instructional Presentation and Evaluation Skills course at EMI). EMI, OSFC, the Consortium Schools, other Educational Training Agencies (ETAs), and institutes of higher education, such as those offering undergraduate and graduate degrees have their own requirements for instructors. Those entities should be contacted for further information if you have questions on their instructor requirements.

Does response to real world incidents count toward any of the recertification requirements? Yes. Disaster Response is category 8 in the Professional Contributions Section of the Recertification Application.

Does participation/attendance at IST or conferences count toward con-ed hours? Yes. We have added a category to capture annual attendance at PEMA and county-held ISTs and a variety of conferences. Verification in the form of certificates or sign in sheets for each year would be needed. Conferences could include the KEMA conference, IAEM Conference, NEMA Conference, NENA Conference, State Hazmat Conference, task force symposiums or conferences, National Homeland Security Conference, etc. County-held ISTs would be the training that is held for municipal coordinators and their staff.

Does participation in activities related to the 9-1-1 office count toward con-ed hours? Yes. Participation in activities to 9-1-1 and PSAP operations will count but cannot make up more than 25% of the contributions or con-ed hours used as part of the recertification. While 9-1-1 is a significant foundational component of emergency services delivery, it is a piece of larger, more comprehensive emergency management program. The recertification application and directive has been updated to reflect that, along with examples of what would be eligible (not all-inclusive).

Is the elected or appointed leadership category for professional contributions limited to a "leadership" position? Yes. It is limited to a leadership position such as a position on an executive board or committee (e.g., President, Vice-President, Secretary, Committee Chair, etc.). We added a separate contribution category that would encompass a non-leadership membership position in an

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organization (e.g., a LEPC) or volunteering for an emergency management organization, as well as participation on committees, subcommittees, or workgroups for emergency management purposes (e.g., FEMA RISC, regional task force committees or workgroups, etc.).

Does the research paper mentioned have to be published in a publication or can it just be about an emergency management topic and submitted to PEMA? Under the Publication contribution category, individuals can submit a research paper on an emergency management related topic that they have completed as part of a college course, undergraduate or graduate degree program, or as part of the National Emergency Management Advanced or Executive academies. It is not expected that individuals would write a research paper and submit it to PEMA solely for that purpose. Other types of EM-related publications that would count include writing a newsletter or article for your municipality, county, the *PEMA Emergent News* newsletter, local newspaper, a magazine, or a journal. Please remember that the referenced article or research paper must fall within the previous five-year period for recertification.

What other types of speaking or presenting contributions are acceptable? Acceptable activities include presenting to local groups on preparedness or safety topics; manning a booth at National Night Out or similar public event; speaking to interns in an internship program or at a job fair about emergency management; presenting at a conference, in-service training, or workshop; conducting presentations for local coordinators, local school districts or stakeholders on emergency management topics; presenting to elected/jurisdiction officials on emergency management, etc. There is a significant amount of outreach opportunities available that qualify. The key is to make sure that you are providing documentation and that the presentation is on an emergency management/homeland security-related topic. Acceptable documentation would include items such as an invitation to speak at an event, copy of a flyer sent to stakeholders inviting them to attend the presentation or training listing the presenter, or an agenda with the applicant's name listed as speaker.

What other types of activities county for Legislative Engagement? In addition to the activities already listed, other activities would include engaging in a town hall style meeting or presentation with your Governor's Office regional representative, local state representative or senator, or congressional delegation member to speak with constituents or stakeholders on various topics or promote various emergency management initiatives.