



NIMS National Qualification System (NQS)

National Integration Center

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The National Integration Center (NIC) develops doctrine and tools to lead the whole community implementation of the National Preparedness System (NPS) and the National Incident Management System (NIMS).

NIMS NQS

Accurate and rapid mutual aid is critical during disasters, but mutual aid partners face difficulties without a common language or process to support the sharing of personnel.

Differing terminology, processes, and qualifications may lead to:

- Uncertainty of what's being requested
- Personnel deployed with the wrong skill sets
- Time lost while agencies assemble their teams
- Jurisdictions lacking confidence in the mutual aid they receive.

NQS provides a common language and approach for qualifying and certifying deployable emergency personnel, enabling mutual aid partners to accurately communicate resource needs in disasters.

NQS does not replace existing personnel qualification and certification systems.



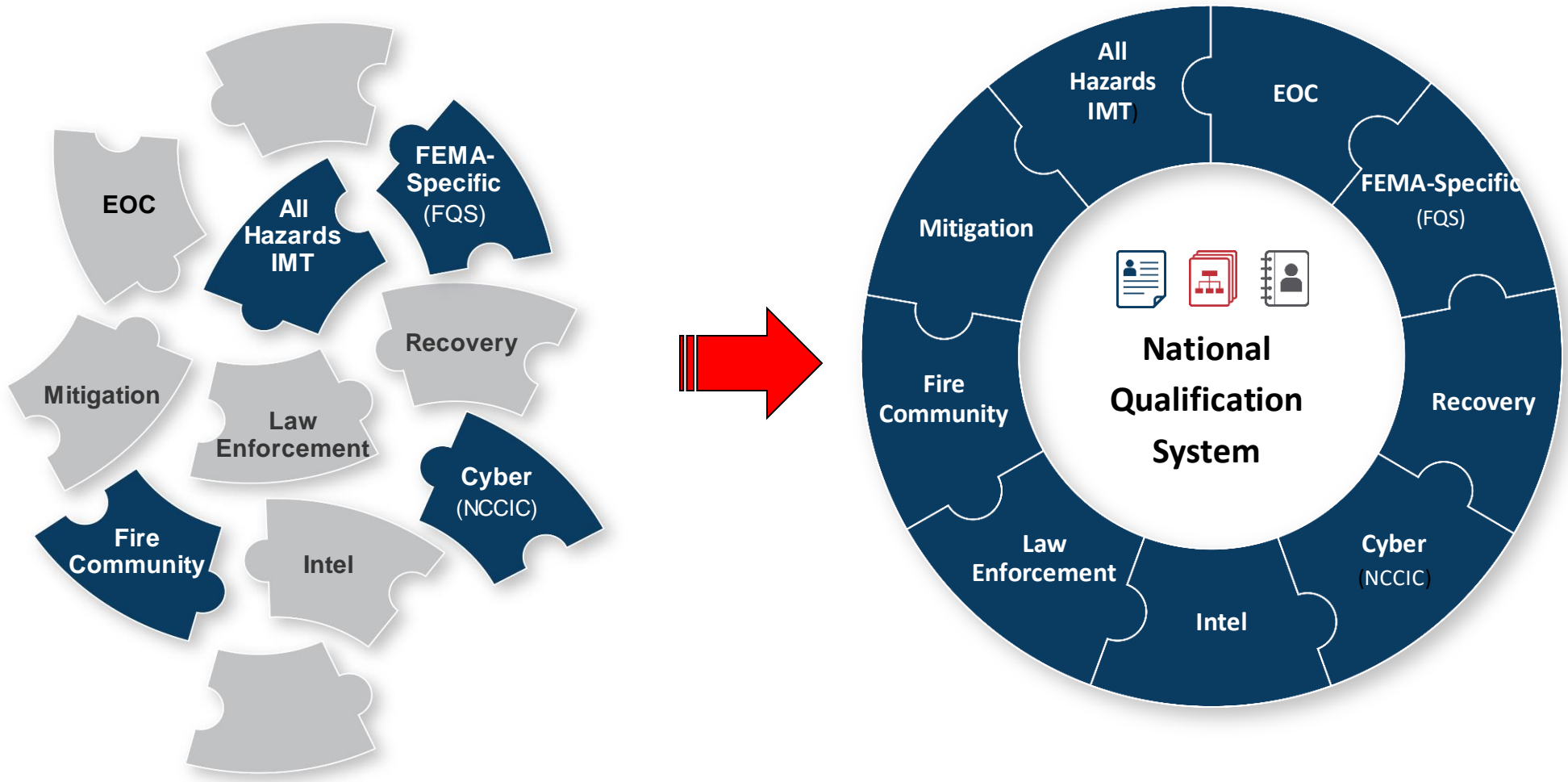
Benefits of NQS

- NQS provides the tools for jurisdictions and organizations to implement their own qualification and certification processes to share resources more seamlessly with other jurisdictions and organizations.
- NQS enhances mutual aid. By speaking with one voice, entities can:
 - Rapidly identify personnel who have the needed qualifications for the job;
 - Supplement their team with confidence knowing that the mutual aid they receive consists of the capabilities for which they asked;
 - Efficiently define staffing requirements; and
 - Clarify recruitment and training requirements.
- NQS also supports the National Preparedness Goal by creating a network of qualified personnel for potential nationwide deployment.



NQS Overview

Working Together



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Implementation

FEMA was tasked with implementing 6 USC 320 Credentialing and Typing in the Post Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act (PKEMRA) and developed the National Qualification System (NQS). The NQS provides:

- Foundational guidelines for jurisdictions on the qualification of personnel resources within the National Incident Management System (NIMS);
- A common language and standardized approach for qualifying, certifying, and credentialing incident management and support personnel;
- Tools for jurisdictions and organizations to share resources seamlessly.



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Emergency Management Performance Grant

The NQS Implementation Objectives reflect the concepts and principles contained in NQS doctrine and aim to promote consistency in NQS implementation nationwide.

- The NQS Implementation Objectives provides guidance for implementation in the 2021 Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) Notice of Funding Opportunity.
- EMPG Program recipients are strongly encouraged to implement components of the NQS and may use their EMPG Program funds to support NQS implementation efforts.
- Beginning in Fiscal Year 2022, FEMA intends to make the implementation of NQS a requirement of award for EMPG Program funding.
- In a phased approach over three years, EMPG recipients should achieve or work toward achieving each of the objectives listed in this document to be considered NQS compliant.



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NQS Overview

Flexible and Scalable

NQS covers all 5 mission areas (Prevention, Protection, Mitigation, Response, and Recovery) and is adaptable to jurisdictions and organizations of all types and sizes.

NQS does not alter entities' authority to manage their own operations, certify their own people, or direct personnel within their own areas of responsibility.

Like NIMS, entities can use the tools at their own pace to meet their own needs – either to build a new qualification and certification process or to supplement an existing process.

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Implementation Objectives

Phase I NQS Implementation Objectives for FY'22	Example Indicators
<p>1. Ensure that incident workforce personnel qualifying for a position meet the minimum training requirements from the Job Title/Position Qualification for that position.</p>	<p>Official training guidance that specifies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Issuance of PTBs; documenting performance criteria for each position, include competencies, behaviors and tasks.▪ Which training courses incident workforce personnel must take;▪ How long they have to complete the training after they join the jurisdiction or organization; and,▪ Frequency of refresher training▪ Minimum criteria that trainees must meet to be qualified in a specific position. <p><i>The NIMS Training Program clarifies recommended training for incident personnel (NIMS Training Program page 10)</i></p>



Implementation Objectives

Phase I NQS Implementation Objectives for FY'22	Example Indicators
2. Use of a resource management or qualification tool system to track the qualification, certification and credentialing of incident workforce personnel.	<p>Resource management systems such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ OneResponder is a web-based application hosted in a cloud environment. It allows AHJs to management qualifications of personnel.▪ IROC provides a modern tool to support the interagency wildland fire community in ordering, tracking, and managing resources in response to wildland fires and all-hazard incidents. <p>Locally hosted tools such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Microsoft Excel spreadsheetMicrosoft Access database



Phase 2 NQS Implementation Objectives for FY'23	Example Indicators
<p>3. Develop organizational qualification system procedures, certification program and credentialing standards for incident workforce personnel in alignment with the NIMS Guideline for the National Qualification System.</p>	<p>Procedures include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establishment of a Qualification Review Board, or equivalent review processes for incident workforce personnel qualifications. • Individual and team coach and evaluation processes for incident workforce personnel qualifications. The NIMS NQS Supplemental Guide for Qualification Review Boards and NIMS <p>NQS Supplemental Guide for Coaches and Evaluators provides guidance for establishing and maintaining these programs.</p>

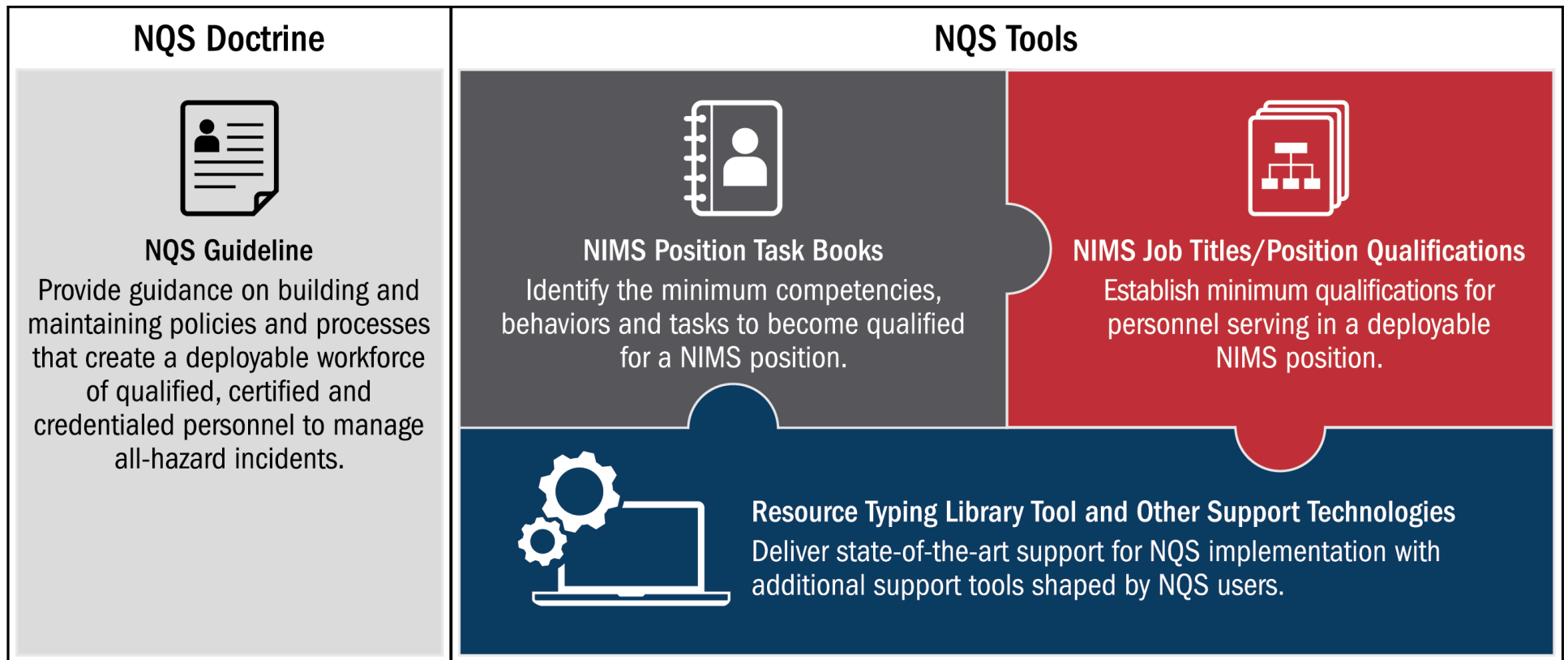


Implementation Objectives

Phase 3 NQS Implementation Objectives for FY'24	Example Indicators
4. Design, develop and conduct exercises in accordance with the Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) for incident workforce personnel.	Documentation and/or after-action reports that indicate participation in an HSEEP sponsored exercise or real-world incident.

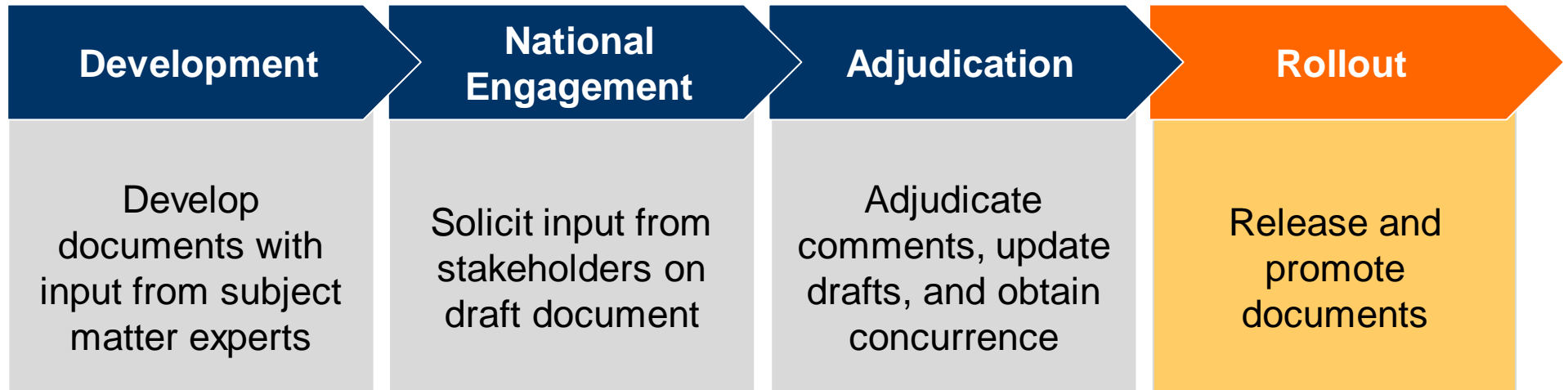


NQS Guidance and Tools



Development: A Collaborative Effort

- Each NIMS supplemental document follows a four-stage process.



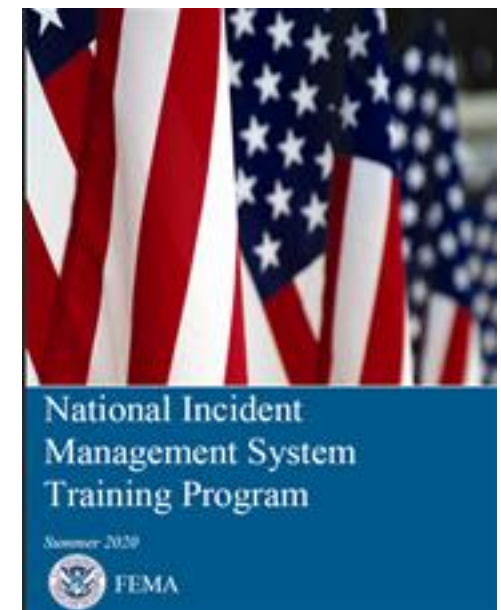
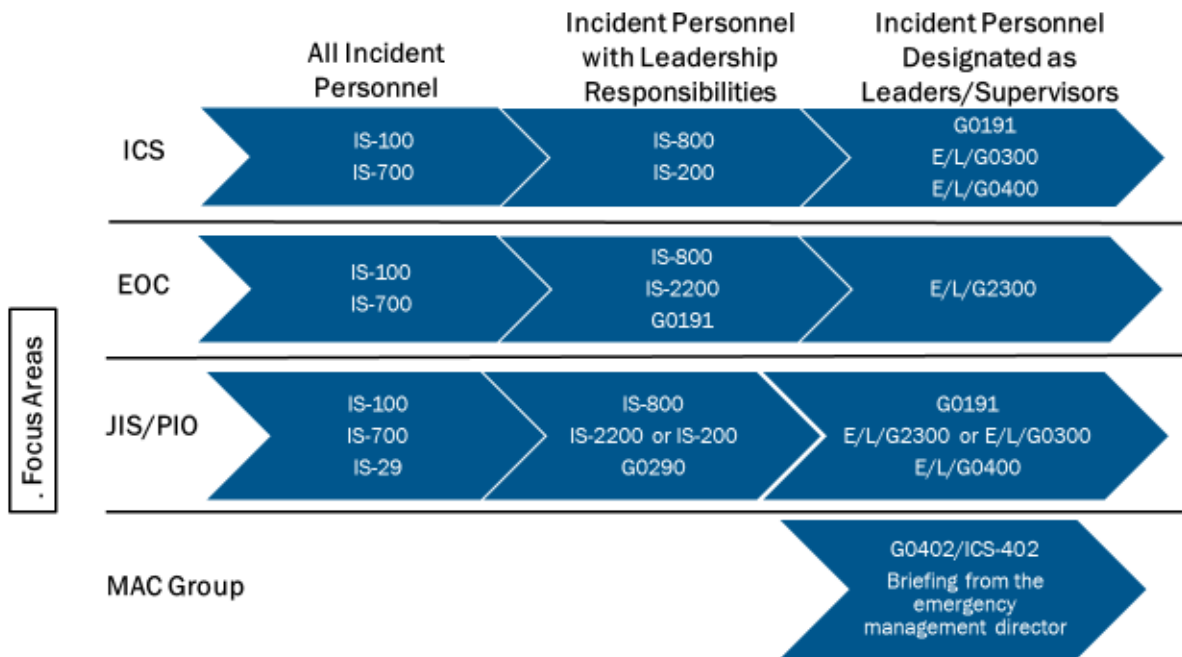
- Development of Resource Management supplemental guidance and tools is a collaborative effort involving all sectors of the nation's disaster community. FEMA:
 - Draws upon industry, NIMS, and other government best practices;
 - Involves subject matter experts; and
 - Engages partners in development, communications, and feedback



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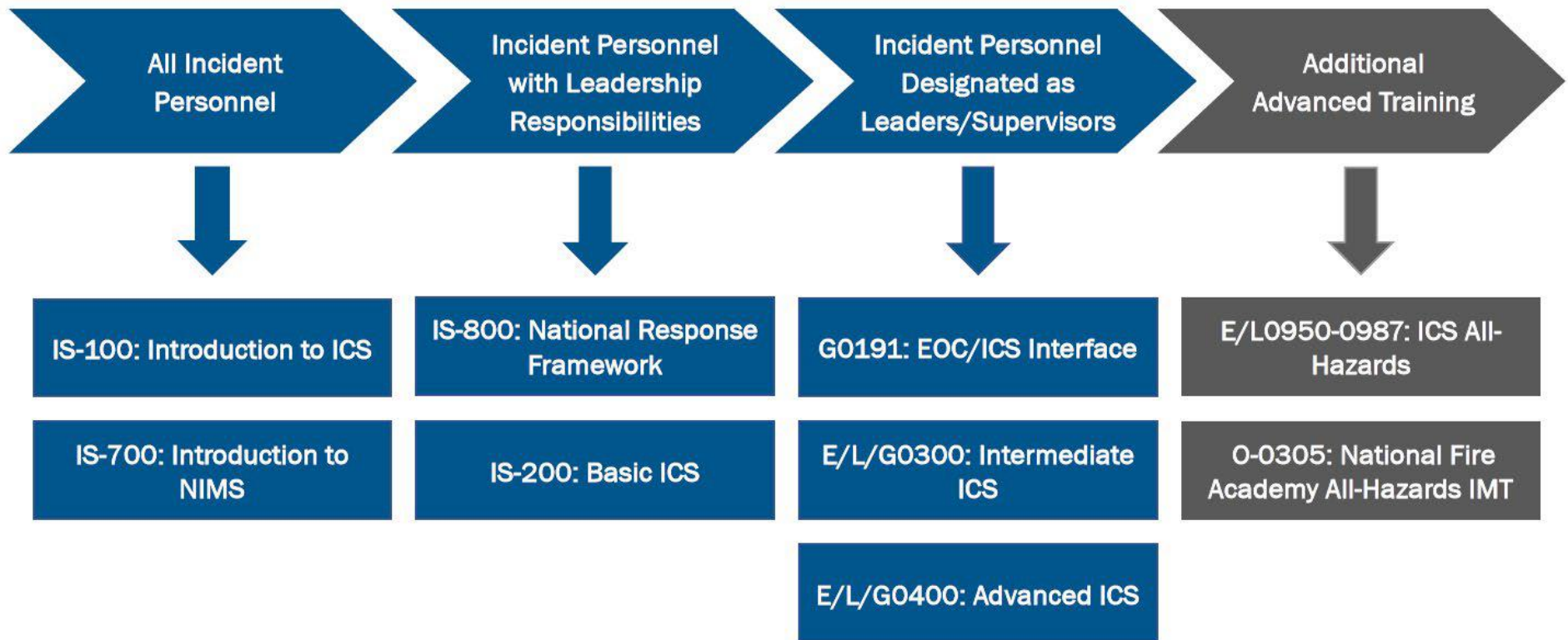
Focus Area Personnel



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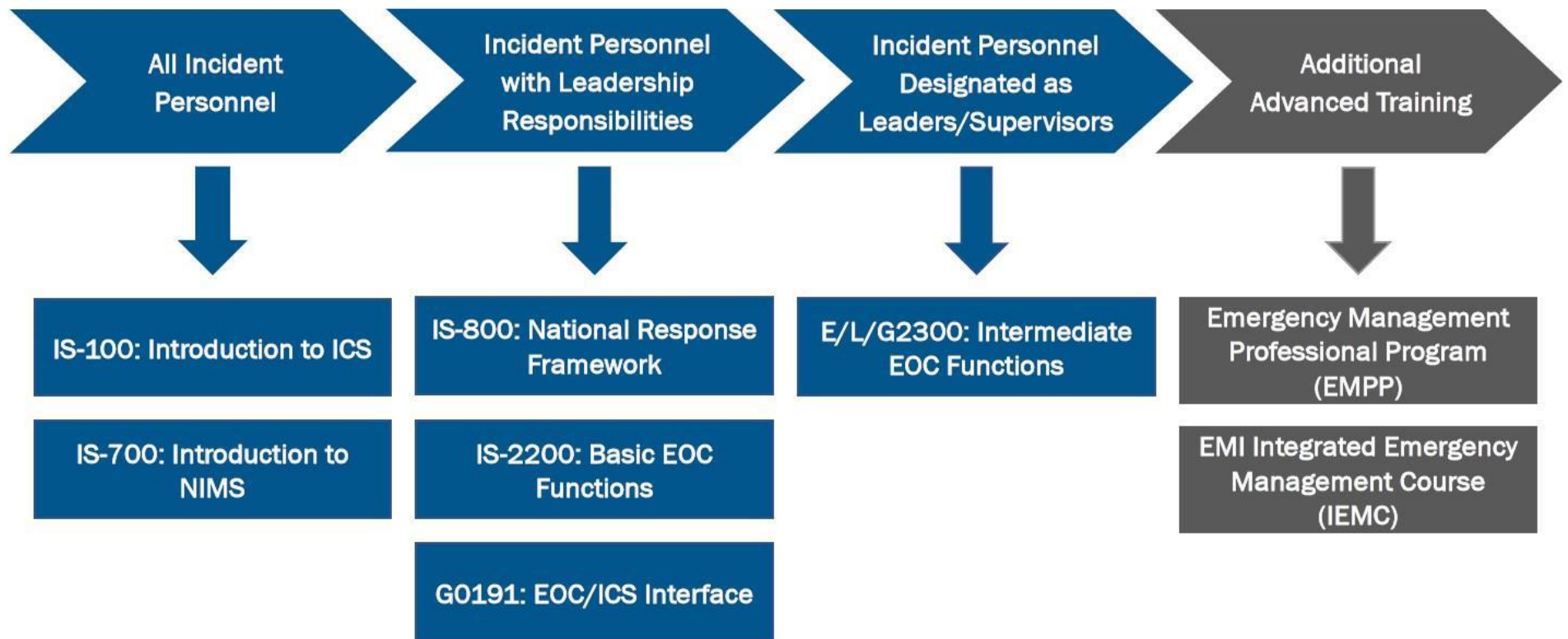
Focus Area: ICS Training



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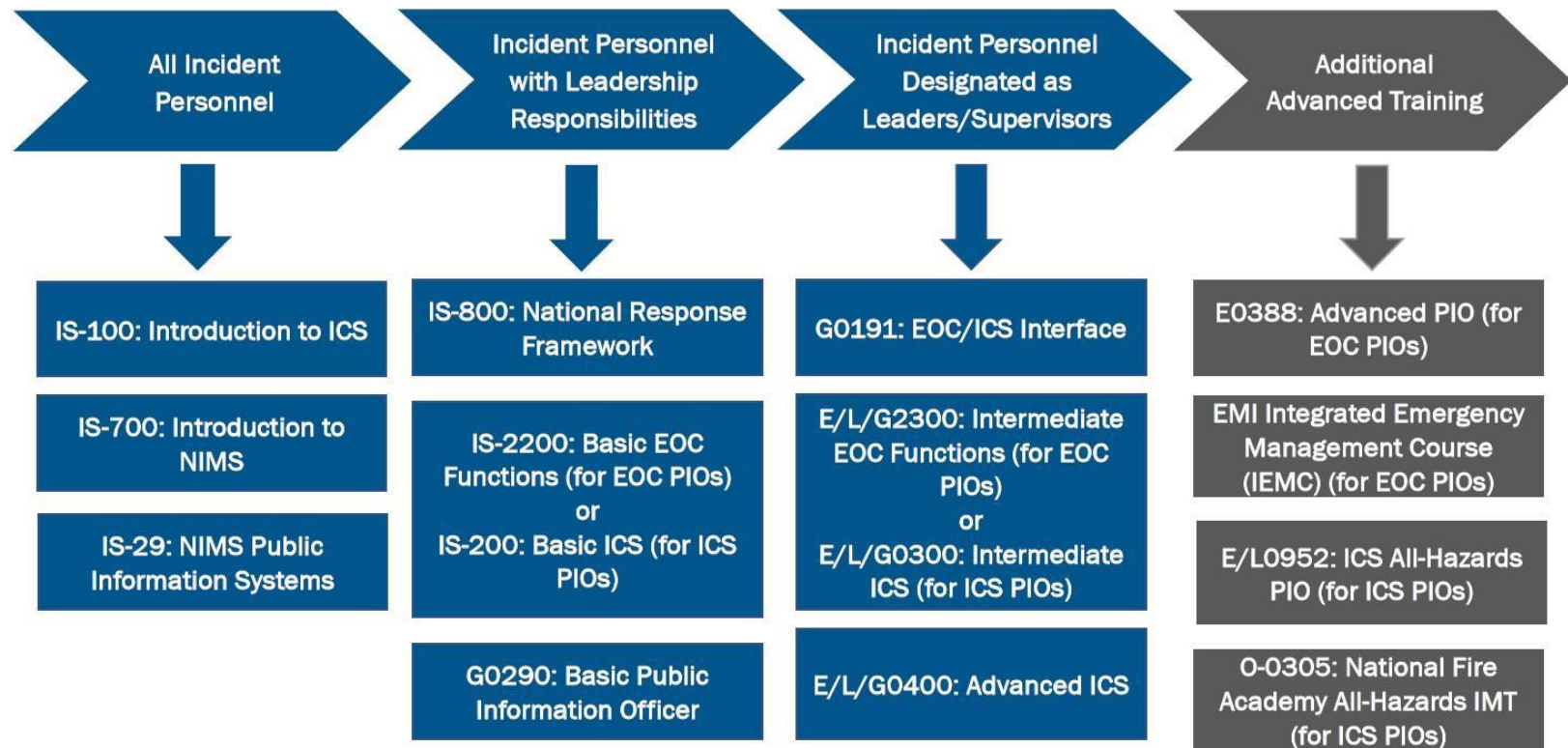
EOC Training Progression



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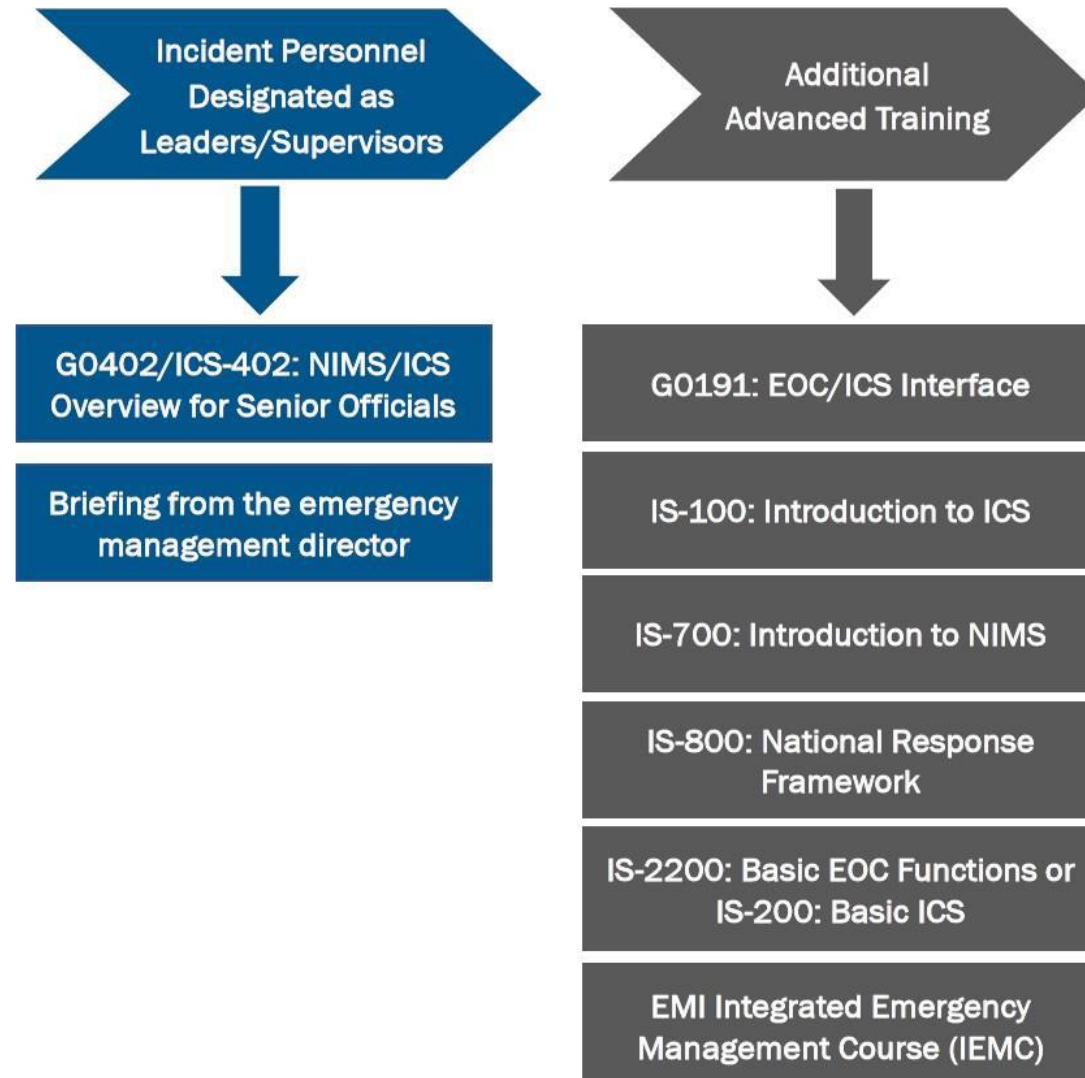
JIS/PIO Training Progression



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MAC Group Training Progression



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NIMS Guideline for the National Qualification System (NQS)

- The Guideline establishes the doctrine for NQS. It provides guidance to an Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) or designee by:
 - Describing the primary elements of an effective qualification, certification, and credentialing system;
 - Identifying the steps for certifying the qualifications of incident personnel;
 - Describing how to stand up and implement a review process; and
 - Introducing the need to credential qualified and certified personnel.
- The Guideline does not provide procedural details.



NQS Guideline

NQS Concept of Operations

NQS uses a performance-based approach that focuses on verifying the capability of personnel to perform as required in the various NIMS positions.

A continuum of the integrated qualification, certification, and credentialing processes constitutes the NQS approach.



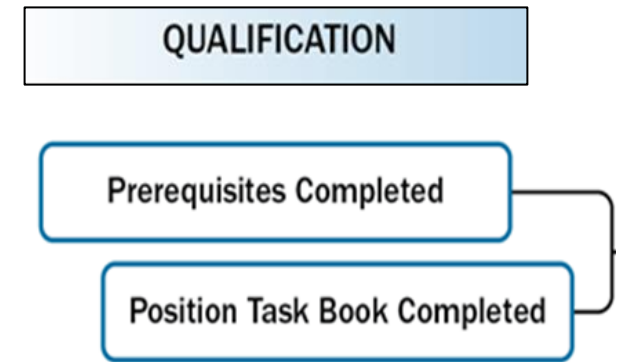
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Qualification

- NQS qualification is the process of:
 - Enabling personnel to perform the duties of specific incident positions and meet any other prerequisites established for the positions; and
 - Documenting that individuals have demonstrated the capabilities required for those positions.
- Performance of the duties of a particular position occurs through a combination of training, on-the-job coaching, and experience.
- A Job Title/Position Qualification establishes the minimum qualification criteria for a specific position.



Certification

- Certification is the Authority Having Jurisdiction's (AHJ) final and official documentation indicating that an individual is qualified to perform in a specified NIMS position.
- A Qualification Review Board (QRB) is a panel representing the AHJ who evaluates the trainee's ability to fulfill an incident-related position.
- The QRB evaluation results in a recommendation to the Certifying Official (CO) to certify or to not certify the trainee as qualified for a specific position.

CERTIFICATION

Qualification Review and
Certification/Recertification



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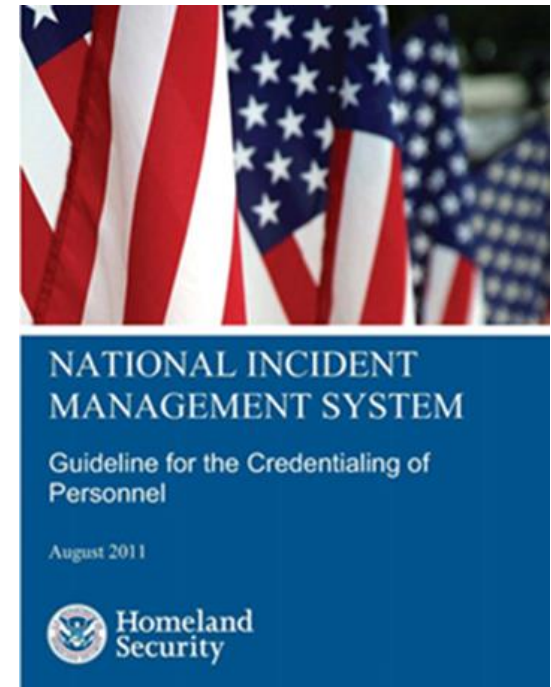
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Credentialing

- Credentials verify an individual's identity and qualifications to fulfill a specific incident-related position.
- Credentials may also document other attributes of individuals, such as affiliations and/or privileges.
- The content from the Credentialing Guideline previously released for national engagement is now an appendix within the NQS Guideline.

CREDENTIALING

Credentials Issued
or Reissued



Resource Library

The FEMA resource library shows there are currently 311 Position Qualifications listed, with 102 associated task books. FEMA continues to publish additional position task books. The Resource Typing Library lists approximately 163 typed resources. Only positions that have completed a task book would be eligible for a credential. Credentials are provided for Type 3 or higher positions. Agencies are responsible for credentialing at Type 4 or 5



Job Titles / Position Qualifications



- Job Titles/Position Qualifications describe the education, experience, training, and other qualifications for a specific position.
- These documents consist of the following sections:
 - **Description:** A description of the primary functions of the position.
 - **Education:** The minimum education required for the position.
 - **Training:** The minimum training required for the position
 - **Experience:** The minimum experience required for the position.
 - **Physical/Medical Fitness:** The necessary level of physical/medical fitness for the position.
 - **Currency:** The minimum currency requirements to maintain the position.
 - **Technical Licenses and Certification:** Any licenses or certifications necessary for the position.

[RTL.xlsx](#)



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Job Titles / Position Qualifications



Resource Typing Definition for the National Qualification System
Emergency Management

MEDICAL UNIT LEADER

RESOURCE CATEGORY	Emergency Management
RESOURCE KIND	Personnel
OVERALL FUNCTION	The Medical Unit Leader manages a Medical Unit aid station, which provides treatment, care, and stabilization for ground or aeromedical transportation.
COMPOSITION AND ORDERING SPECIFICATIONS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This position can be ordered as a single resource. 2. Discuss logistics for this position, such as security, lodging, transportation, and meals, prior to deployment. 3. The position typically works 12 hours per shift, is self-sustainable for 72 hours, and is deployable up to 14 days. 4. Requestor may specify any additional qualifications necessary based on incident complexity and needs.

Each type of resource builds on the qualifications of the type below it. For example, Type 1 qualifications include the qualifications in Type 2, plus an increase in capability. Type 1 is the highest qualification level.

COMPONENT	TYPE 1	TYPE 2	NOTE 8
DESCRIPTION	Same as Type 2, PLUS: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Is a licensed clinician: physician, physician assistant, or nurse practitioner. 2. Has primary responsibility over all aspects of patient care through the study, diagnosis, and treatment of diseases, injuries, and other physical and mental conditions. 	The Medical Unit Leader: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Is a registered nurse (RN) or an Advanced Life Support (ALS) paramedic with community health/paramedic certification and experience, along with a background in public health. 2. Provides first responder/first receiver and preventative public health and medical support to the Incident Management Team (IMT) and teams in the field. 3. Manages a Medical Unit aid station, which provides treatment, care, and stabilization for ground or aeromedical transportation. 4. Prepares medical emergency plans for handling injured or ill responders. 5. Assists in public health-related issues at facilities supporting personnel. 6. Coordinates medical monitoring of responders, including individual screening and rehabilitation throughout incident operations and demobilization. 	Not Specified

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MEDICAL UNIT LEADER

1 OF 5



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Position Task Books

- Position Task Books (PTBs) identify the competencies, behaviors and tasks that personnel must demonstrate in order to become qualified for a defined incident position.
- Various organizations use PTBs to demonstrate competencies.
- PTBs provide an observable, measurable, and standardized method of documenting the trainee's performance in a position.
 - The PTB is used to document the trainee's successful performance of the specified tasks.
 - PTBs do not replace the use of an Incident Personnel Performance Rating (ICS Form 225).
- Authorities Having Jurisdiction may add discipline- or hazard-specific tasks to NIMS PTBs.

[RTL.xlsx](#)



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NQS Technology Solution: OneResponder

- A web-based application hosted in a cloud environment that is free and accessible to all members of the whole community.
- Key features provide jurisdictions or organizations the ability to:
 - Manage their own resource catalogs in real time
 - Share qualification data with selected partners
 - Assign roles, establish partnerships, and set privacy levels and data accessibility for their members
 - Develop reports and dashboards of qualified personnel
 - Portability of qualifications if individuals change jobs
 - Manage their own position qualifications
 - Manage and issue electronic Position Task Books (ePTBs)



Resource Typing Library Tool (RTL) and Other Support Technologies



The RTL, an online catalog of national resource typing definitions and job titles/position qualifications, complements the components of NQS.

As NQS continues to evolve and mature, additional technology tools will be developed to assist stakeholders in implementing an effective qualification and certification system.

Seeking input from stakeholders on ideas for additional supporting technology that makes implementation of NQS effective and easier.





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Contact the National Integration Center

for NIMS or NQS inquiries:

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