

# Ask Not What Your Association Can Do for You, But What You Can Do for Your Association

By APCO International





ARITHMEDES/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

**V**olunteers are an important part of public safety in the United States. If you are reading this article it is likely that you are a volunteer or you are interested in volunteering your time and expertise. If you committed your career to public safety, you have very likely already volunteered in some way. You may have contributed your time to serving as an auxiliary police officer, volunteer firefighter, amateur radio operator or in other capacities such as assisting with public outreach at community events, assisting citizens of your jurisdiction with special needs, or during a major emergency.

APCO is an association whose foundation was built on, and survives today, because of the time and commitment of volunteers. Many articles in this publication, mostly written by volunteers like you, focus on the considerable benefits APCO provides to its members. What follows is a guide to how you

as an APCO member can give back so the association can continue to excel.

This article will introduce you to several areas of opportunity, which you can match to your own interest and expertise. Time is important to those who work in the public

safety communications industry and opportunities to contribute to your organization range from long term, bimonthly meetings to more focused “micro-volunteer” options.

### **APCO FREQUENCY COORDINATION (AFC)**

With experienced staff and the largest network of volunteer experts, APCO is the only organization that provides full radio frequency management services for public safety agencies. AFC is APCO’s spectrum management division, providing comprehensive radio frequency coordination for public safety agencies. APCO-AFC provides a number of services to assist public safety agencies in obtaining their FCC

license. These services are frequency coordination, licensing, engineering and license management.

An agency applying for a license to operate a land mobile radio (also known as a two-way radio) must submit an FCC Form 601 application through a certified frequency coordinator such as APCO through a frequency coordinator that will process the application and submit it electronically to the FCC. Many times an agency is not familiar with how to fill out an FCC Form 601. This is where APCO's licensing services can help. Once the application is submitted, it is reviewed for accuracy and forwarded to the coordination phase. The coordinator (either a staff or volunteer local advisor) may request further engineering documentation in order to assign the desired frequency. APCO's engineering can assist with such requirements.

The local advisors (APCO member volunteers) are a vital and current source of information for members requiring assistance in licensing their radio systems. The APCO local advisor network consists of 61 men and women who are experts in the field of public safety communications and share their skills with APCO. Advisors play an important role by staying involved in planning for 700 and 800 MHz spectrum allocations. There are 55 regions across the country. Each region has two regional planning committees (RPC) — one for 800 MHz and the other for 700 MHz band. The work of the region is performed by volunteer members. The work is tedious and requires knowledge of two-way radio communication systems and FCC rules and regulations.

### THE APCO INSTITUTE

As the largest provider of live and online training in our industry, the APCO Institute offers numerous volunteer opportunities. Volunteers are important to the process of curriculum development and review by serving in the roles of subject-matter expert, researcher, writer and more. Volunteers are also occasionally needed to serve as beta testers for new courses and technology enhancements.

Members who graduate from APCO's Registered Public-Safety Leader (RPL) Program can earn recertification credit by serving as volunteer course facilitators for future RPL courses. Volunteers interested

in committee work and professional development can serve on the APCO Institute Advisory Committee, whose primary role is the management of APCO's annual Silent Key and Commercial Advisory Committee Scholarship Program.

### STANDARDS

Accredited by the American National Standards Institute, APCO International is the premier standards setting body for public safety communications. Standards ensure interoperability, cost effectiveness and innovation; leverage connectivity and data sharing; create a common language; identify best practices; and establish benchmarks, core competencies and key performance indicators.

**More than 35,000 members rely on APCO for their professional needs; volunteers play a significant role in making that happen.**

APCO's entire standards development program is supported by volunteer subject matter experts who develop the national standards for public safety communications across the country. The volunteers who develop the standards range from those who use the equipment and services in the ECC (users), to those who produce the services and equipment (producers) and to other non-traditional volunteers like those from airports and universities (general interest).

Our standards fall into three categories: operations, training and technical. The standards development process is open, balanced and consensus based. Standards development working groups are tasked with either revising a standard, which occurs every five years, or developing a new standard, which can occur at any time based on the needs of the industry. Volunteers also assist with participating in small workshops anytime APCO develops a standard for an occupational position in the ECC (e.g., manager/director, supervisor, telecommunicator, etc.) or a process (e.g., incident handling process).

The standards development process is an excellent networking experience and a unique opportunity to enhance your professional

development. Our standards development process would not be possible without the hard work of the many subject matter expert volunteers who develop our standards.

Anyone interested in downloading standards or getting involved with standards development working groups and committees should visit APCO International's standards webpage or email [apcostandards@apcointl.org](mailto:apcostandards@apcointl.org) for more information.

Agency Training Program Certification (ATPC), formerly P33, is a certification program based on APCO Minimum Training Standards for Telecommunicators. Agencies submit proofs or documentation of compliance with the standard and those submissions are evaluated by a member of the ATPC Committee. This committee seeks volunteers who have an understanding of accreditation or certification processes and excellent attention to detail to review agency submissions for certification.

### APCO COMMITTEES

APCO committees may be established for specific topics, such as cybersecurity, standards and frequency coordination, task force initiatives and others, that help govern and operate the association. With more than 20 current committees, APCO has a place for you! Generally, committee applications are accepted February 1 - April 1 of the current year for service during the next fiscal year. When volunteering for a committee, it is important to ensure your application is complete and all questions are answered. Volunteers also must read and agree to abide by the intellectual property rights policy during the volunteer process. If you have questions regarding committee sign up, please contact [apccommittees@apcointl.org](mailto:apccommittees@apcointl.org) or call (386) 322-2500.

### EVENTS

The APCO Annual Conference & Expo is one of the largest gatherings of public safety communications officials in the world. APCO members have several chances to volunteer their time at this event. As an industry expert you can submit a professional development session proposal to present your content to over 5,000 attendees and exhibitors. Another opportunity is to sign up to volunteer at the conference. Volunteer positions include tasks like working the information booth, handing out attendee bags or introducing session

speakers. For every four hours you volunteer, you receive a complimentary day pass, so it is a good way to give back and earn free registration.

These are just a few of the many ways to network with other dedicated public safety communications professionals and give back to your organization. APCO International serves the needs of public safety communications practitioners worldwide — and the

welfare of the general public as a whole — by providing complete expertise, professional development, technical assistance, advocacy and outreach. More than 35,000 members rely on APCO for their professional needs; volunteers play a significant role in making that happen. If you are now serving or have already contributed to the association through volunteering, APCO thanks you for your commitment and contribution. If you

wish to get involved, APCO has a volunteer position available for you today. Stay connected with APCO for all of our volunteer opportunities at [www.apcointl.org](http://www.apcointl.org). ●

*This article was written collaboratively by APCO staff members from the Communications Center and 9-1-1 Services department, the APCO Institute, AFC and the Events department.*

## CDE EXAM #54564

1. What are the three categories of APCO International's public safety communications standards?
  - a. Quality, training and operations
  - b. Operational, training and technical
  - c. User, general interest and producer
  - d. Technology, interoperability and operational
2. APCO International is accredited by the American National Standards Institute
  - a. True
  - b. False
3. To apply for an FCC license, one must file a \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. FCC form 600
  - b. W-2 form
  - c. FCC form 601
  - d. FCC form 584
4. APCO local advisors are \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. Paid employees of APCO
  - b. Radio consultants
  - c. Volunteer members of APCO
  - d. Radio dealers
5. APCO Committee sign-up is open from February 1 through \_\_\_\_\_ of the current year.
  - a. February 28
  - b. March 31
  - c. April 1
  - d. July 1
6. All committee volunteers must agree to abide by \_\_\_\_\_ during the volunteer process.
  - a. APCO bylaws
  - b. APCO committee rules
  - c. APCO intellectual property rights policy
  - d. APCO task force agreement
7. How many hours do you need to volunteer to earn a complimentary day pass?
  - a. Two
  - b. Three
  - c. Four
  - d. Five
8. What is one of the ways to volunteer at the annual conference & expo?
  - a. Working the information booth
  - b. Introducing session speakers
  - c. Handing out attendee bags
  - d. All of the above
9. What are two ways you can volunteer with the APCO Institute?
  - a. Assist with curriculum development
  - b. Become an adjunct instructor
  - c. Serve as a beta tester for new courses or processes
  - d. A and c only
10. Agency Training Program Certification certifies an agency's training program as meeting this standard:
  - a. Minimum training standards for agencies
  - b. Minimum training standards for public safety telecommunicators
  - c. How to train telecommunicators standard
  - d. Minimum agency standards

### FOR CREDIT TOWARD APCO RECERTIFICATION(S)

Each CDE article is equal to one credit hour of continuing education

1. Study the CDE article in this issue.
2. Answer the test questions online (see below for online exam instructions) or on the exam page from the magazine article (photocopies are not required).
3. Add/upload your CDE article information and certificate of achievement in the "My Classes Taken" section of APCO's Training Central at [www.apcointl.org/trainingcentral](http://www.apcointl.org/trainingcentral).

Questions? Call us at (386) 322-2500.

#### You can access the CDE exam online!

To receive a complimentary certificate of completion, you may take the CDE exam online. Go to <http://apco.remote-learner.net/login/index.php> to create your username and password. Enter the "CDE article" in the search box, and click on the "2019 Public Safety Communications Magazine Article Exams," then click on "enroll me" and choose "What You Can Do for Your Association (54564)" to begin the exam. Upon successful completion of the quiz, a certificate of achievement will be available for download/printing.