



APCO AGENCY TRAINING
PROGRAM ACCREDITATION
(ATPA)
A Project 33© Initiative
Business Rules

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Mission

The mission of the Agency Training Program Accreditation (ATPA) Committee is to advise APCO staff regarding training for Public Safety Communications Program Evaluators and Applicant Agencies and the specific accreditation process.

Vision

To enhance the Public Safety Communications profession through the accreditation of agency training programs that meet national training standards.

Job Description¹

A Public Safety Communications Program Evaluator is an individual who, as a subject-matter expert, conducts a systematic review of agency training programs for compliance with established APCO standards. This enhances professionalism and promotes recognition of the public safety communications profession.

Committee Member Selection Criteria

Program Evaluator

In order to be selected as an APCO Public Safety Communications Program Evaluator, candidates should possess the following minimum qualifications:

1. Be an APCO member in good standing;
2. Possess the ability to write high-quality professional reports and/or comments;
3. Be able to remain objective and apply analytical skills in the assessment of public safety communications training programs;
4. Have the ability to maintain confidentiality; and
5. Be employed by an agency that holds APCO Agency Training Program Accreditation.

Team Leader

In order to be designated as a Team Leader, a Public Safety Communications Program Evaluator must possess the following additional qualifications:

¹ On March 19 and 20, 2013, an Occupational Analysis was conducted to identify the major duties and accompanying tasks of a Public Safety Communications Training Program Evaluator, as well as, the requisite knowledge, skills, and traits of an incumbent serving in that position. A second panel of incumbent workers validated the initial results on May 21, 2013 and an occupational profile was developed.

1. Have served as an APCO Public Safety Communications Program Evaluator for two years;
2. Have completed at least three training program evaluations;
3. Items 1 & 2 may be waived with equivalent experience as deemed by the Committee Chair;
4. Be recommended for the position by the Committee Chair.

Team Leader assignments will be made at the beginning of the committee year based on the number of committee members and anticipated applications. Team Leader notification will be made as soon as practical in the new committee year. A Committee Member that is interested in serving as a Team Leader will be communicated during the regularly scheduled committee sign up process.

The Team Leader will serve as the primary contact for APCO staff and will ensure that program evaluations are completed within the prescribed deadlines.

Committee Rules

The ATPA Committee is a Designated Committee and will function in accordance with the APCO Policy Manual and Bylaws.

Committee Members may be removed for lack of participation in committee activities at the discretion of the Committee Chair and Group Leader. Examples of adequate participation include, but is not limited to:

- Attendance at more than 50% of committee meetings;
- Timely acceptance and completion of application review assignments;
- Responding to all communication from APCO Staff and/or Committee Chairs;
- Completion of required training; and
- Completion of APCO required agreements, including intellectual property rights (IPR) agreement.

Training

Evaluator Training

Training for Public Safety Communications Evaluators is critical to ensuring the integrity of Training Program Accreditation. In order to ensure Evaluators receive the most effective and relevant training possible for their positions, an instructional program was developed. This

program consists of both a formal online initial training module and ongoing monthly conference call training. Learning objectives focus on the agency training program review process and evaluating compliance with established standards. All new Evaluators are required to complete the training within thirty (30) days of appointment to the ATPA Committee and shall complete this training before being assigned to participate in an evaluation of an agency's training program.

Evaluators will be required to complete refresher training as changes are made to the accreditation process or at least annually.

Agency Training

Training for agency representatives will be required in order to proceed with the ATPA process. This training program consists of a review of the Business Rules that guide the accreditation process, review of the current version of APCO American National Standard (ANS) Minimum Training Standards for Public Safety Telecommunicators (PST), and completion of a PowerPoint presentation designed to educate applicant agencies on the requirements of the accreditation program and process. Once the agency representative has completed the PowerPoint training, there is a short test and acknowledgement required to complete the training. After this step is complete, the agency representative will receive a certificate for training.

Agency Training Program Accreditation (ATPA) Process

The review process from beginning to end should take no longer than sixteen weeks, from the time the agency submits its application until accreditation is either awarded or denied. Evaluators should strive to complete the review within established timeframes.

Agency Roles:

Applicant / Applicant Agency: The agency seeking accreditation of their training program.

Agency Representative: Any person within the agency who is tasked with completion of the ATPA application.

Agency Point of Contact (POC): The primary agency representative responsible for the ATPA application.

Step 1: Application Pre-Requisites

Prior to payment and purchase of the ATPA application, the agency will be required to complete the Agency Training noted above and upload the certificate to its account.

Step 2: Application for Accreditation

An agency seeking accreditation shall submit a non-refundable application of fee of \$650.00 (for APCO Agency Group Members) and \$700.00 (for APCO Individual Members)

and complete an ATPA Application for each training program for which accreditation is sought. Applications expire one (1) calendar year from the date of purchase. APCO Staff will monitor the progress of application completion and send reminders to the agency at six (6) and nine (9) month intervals.

Recognition at the annual APCO Conference is based on the submission of a complete application by December 1 of the prior year. As an example, applications submitted by December 1, 2025 will be recognized at the APCO 2026 Conference if accreditation is achieved. This provides sufficient time to accommodate any delays in the evaluation process due to unforeseen circumstances. This also allows for awards to be ordered in time to present at the subsequent Annual Conference.

Step 3: Compliance with APCO American National Standard (ANS) Minimum Training Standards for Public Safety Telecommunicators (PST)

Applicant Agencies must submit proof of compliance with each element of the Standard. Proof of compliance includes, but is not limited to:

- The current lesson plans used in the training program;
- A current version of additional training materials such as student manuals and workbooks;
- Audiovisual aids and their description;
- Completed performance examinations;
- Completed Testing instruments;
- Completed class evaluation forms; and
- Instructor support materials.

Applicant Agencies are encouraged to include additional materials to prove compliance with the standard. Examples of additional material include; but are not limited to:

- Agency policies and/or written directives,
- Completed daily observation reports (DOR)
- Completed training checklists.

The Applicant Agency must show the training program in use, blank documents will not be accepted for accreditation.

In the application explanation field, the agency is required to identify the precise location of applicable proofs so that reviewers can go directly to the supporting material. It is acceptable to cite as proof, “see document name, page 14, line 3.”

Step 4: Review for Application Completeness and Assignment of Evaluation Team

Within three (3) business days of submission, APCO Staff will perform an initial review of the application to determine if it is substantially complete. If the application is incomplete, APCO Staff will notify the agency POC and provide guidance on what is

needed to make the application complete. Complete applications will be assigned to an Evaluation Team which consists of a Team Leader and an Evaluator.

Evaluation Team Responsibilities

Within three (3) business days of assignment, the Evaluation Team must notify APCO Staff that they either accept or decline the assignment. Upon acceptance of the assignment, the Evaluation Team shall log into the ATPA platform and formally accept the review.

The assigned Team Leader will immediately conduct a review of the application to ensure it is substantially complete. If the Team Leader determines that the minimum information needed to proceed with the evaluations has not been provided, APCO Staff shall be notified.

Upon completion of the initial review of the application, the Team Leader will contact the Evaluator to discuss the plan for completing the review.

The Evaluation Team will complete their review of the application within fifteen (15) business days.

Evaluation Process

Step 1: Establish Evaluator Contact

The Team Leader will contact the Evaluator to discuss the plan for completing the review. It is recommended that this contact be made by telephone to ensure there is adequate communication before, during, and after the review is complete.

Step 2: Evaluating the Materials

The Evaluation Team is given access via the web portal to uploaded documentation provided by the agency in support of the application. The Evaluation Team uses the web portal to compare each element of the Standard against the proofs of compliance and other materials uploaded by the applicant. The Evaluation Team will review the application and mark each element as 'approved' or 'need information'.

Deficiencies or Questions

If the Evaluation Team identifies any deficiencies in the application proofs of compliance, has any questions about the submitted material, and/or are unable to open a specific document, the Team Leader will notify the Committee Chair and APCO Staff. The Evaluation Team will provide specific instructions to the applicant agency in the comments field of the application ensuring that necessary documentation is specifically identified to the applicant agency. **Committee members shall not directly contact any agency.** All communication will be facilitated through APCO Staff. The Committee Chair may have limited contact

with applicant agencies and should consult with APCO Staff to ensure a consistent message.

Step 3: The Evaluation Team Determination

Upon completion of the review, the Team Leader **will ensure that the evaluation team is in agreement** in all areas of the application prior to “final submit”. The Team Leader will contact APCO Staff and the Committee Chair for guidance if the Evaluation Team cannot reach an agreement on the application’s approval, request for more information, or denial. The Team Leader will notify the Committee Chair and APCO staff that the evaluation is complete and provide the evaluation team’s recommendation, which will be one of the following:

- Accreditation;
- Denial of Accreditation; or
- Renewal of accreditation.

Accreditation

Once the Review Team approves an applicant agency’s accreditation, a written notification of accreditation from the current APCO President will be sent to the agency POC.

Agencies achieving accreditation will be recognized at the next² APCO International Annual Conference and Exposition with the presentation of a plaque. APCO Staff will publish a quarterly press release announcing newly accredited agencies and maintain an updated list of all accredited agencies on the APCO website.

Denial of Accreditation

If the Review Team indicates that the application does not meet the standard or the submitted materials do not sufficiently show proof of compliance with agency practice, accreditation will be denied. APCO Staff will notify the applicant agency of this decision with a notice of denial from the Committee Chair which outlines the specific areas of deficiency. The applicant agency may request a ninety (90) day extension to revise and submit missing documentation, but such requests must be submitted no later than thirty (30) days prior to the original application deadline. Extension requests received within thirty (30) days of the original deadline will not be considered. Requests for extensions shall be made in writing and directed to APCO Staff. No additional application fee is required. A second and final review of materials will be conducted once the agency submits its changes during the extension. The initial Evaluation Team will be assigned to the second review when available.

If an extension request is not received within the required timeframe, or sufficient documentation is not provided during the ninety (90) day extension, accreditation will be denied,

² Based on submission deadline of December 1.

and the applicant agency must reapply. Applicants that do not receive accreditation will be required to wait a minimum of six (6) months before reapplying for accreditation. Reapplication for accreditation must include a non-refundable certification fee of \$650.00 (for APCO Agency Group Members) and \$700.00 (for APCO Individual Members), and the submission of all required documentary proofs and supporting materials as required in the original program guidelines.

Reaccreditation

ATPA is valid for three (3) years from the accreditation date (date on the accreditation letter). The accreditation year will be noted on the plaque presented to the agency.

Reaccreditation follows the same process as the original accreditation (outlined above). Materials submitted as part of the application shall reflect current practices of the agency and be dated within a reasonably current timeframe. An agency should begin the reaccreditation process six (6) to twelve (12) months prior to expiration. An Evaluation Team comprised of individuals who were not involved in the initial accreditation for the applicant agency shall conduct the reaccreditation evaluation.

Upon successful reaccreditation, the agency will be presented with a accreditation plaque that will be valid for another three (3) year period from the date of the accreditation.

Accreditation Expiration

There is no grace period for expired agency accreditation and ATPA is considered expired three (3) years from the date of accreditation.

The ATPA platform sends an automated email to the agency with the following template six months prior to the agency's expiration date.

CLOSE TO EXPIRATION:

Subject: APCO Agency Training Program Accreditation Approaching Expiration

We noticed that the APCO Agency Training Program Accreditation for your agency will be expiring on (fill in the date). Below is the link to start the reaccreditation process, as well as a link to the rules and procedures for the program.

[Click Here to Start the Reaccreditation Process](#)

[Click Here to View APCO Agency Training Program Accreditation Rules and Procedures](#)

If you have any questions, please contact ATPA Staff at atpa@apcointl.org or APCO tollfree number 888-272-6911.

Intellectual Property

All materials submitted remain the intellectual property of the applicant agency and are not disclosed beyond the ATPA Committee and APCO Staff. Agencies may redact the names of employees or personnel information on submitted documents as needed. Each member of the ATPA Committee is bound by the terms of a non-disclosure agreement that prohibits the release of information obtained through the application review process. The identities of the Evaluators are confidential and known only to the Committee and APCO Staff to prevent undue influence or interference with the review process.

Record Retention

APCO will maintain agency records for the current accreditation period and the previous accreditation period, or a maximum of six (6) years.

