

Alabama Association Of Emergency Managers



Professional Certification Program

*Updated & Board Approved 2024
Effective May 1, 2024*

A.A.E.M Certification Program Rules and Regulations

Certification Review Process & Fees: Congratulations on applying for one of our four certification levels! This booklet will provide you with the proper instructions for the application process, fees, appeals, required courses, and other information to help you successfully achieve this professional accolade.

1. Certification Application.

- a. Applications may be submitted online through the Certification's Smartsheet system. Access to the system is through the Association's website under the Certification tab (www.aaem.us/certification).
 - i. It is critical to ensure your email system allows the Smartsheet domain in order to receive timely notifications. It is not the responsibility of the AAEM Certification Committee to ensure you can receive the notifications.
 - ii. If you believe you are not receiving the notifications, you should email the Certification Committee and ask for assistance. Email: certification@aaem.us
- b. Applications can still be submitted via traditional mail; however, this process typically takes much longer than the online submission process. The mailing address for paper applications will be maintained on the Certification page of the Association's website.

2. Fees for Review

- a. A certification fee will be assessed for each evaluation of a training portfolio. The fee is good for one review and one appeal, if needed (see Section 3 - Appeals).
 - i. Certification Review Fee for BLEM & ILEM: \$50 (\$100 non-member)
 - ii. Certification Review Fee for ALEM: \$75 (\$150 non-member)
 - iii. Certification Review Fee for MLEM: \$150 (\$225 non-member)
- b. Re-certifications are required to be submitted by December 31st of the fifth year from your initial certification or latest re-certification (i.e., every five years). Re-Certification Review Fees are \$25 for members (\$100 non-members).
- c. Fees can be paid online through the Smartsheet/ACCA links or by check (address on page 9).

3. Appeals

- a. The Certification Review Committee assigns applications at random using the Smartsheet system. If the application is denied, the system triggers an automatic review by a second committee member.
 - b. If, upon the second review, the application does not meet the requirements of the level sought, the applicant will be advised of those shortcomings via a Smartsheet email initiated by one of the certification reviewers.
 - i. The applicant will be afforded one opportunity to appeal the ruling. This appeals process is limited to 30 days past the date of notice. If, on day 31, the applicant fails to respond or the supplemental documentation is not adequate, the application will be denied, and the applicant will need to resubmit and pay another review fee if they choose to continue.
 - ii. Notification of denial: The Smartsheet system will email you with a status update which will indicate the application was denied. Applicants will also receive a separate email with additional information needed to appeal the denial (i.e. missing certificates, etc.).
 - iii. Applicants must send additional supporting documents to certification@aaem.us within the allotted appeals timeframe. Once received, the documents will be reviewed and assessed. If found to be sufficient, the application will be approved. If the additional documentation is still lacking, the applicant will be notified of the deficiency and instructed to reapply once they have completed all the requirements of the level sought.
4. These are applications for a professional certification; thus, it is required that the applicants submit their files in a particular format to help the review committee do their jobs in a timely manner. If the applicant fails to submit the packet in the proper format required by the workbook (mail) or Smartsheet (online), this is justification for denying the packet. The applicant will be notified of the issue(s) and allowed to resubmit the application in the correct format. This must be done within 30 days of the notice. Resubmission of the packet will not count towards their one appeal per review.

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There are four levels of certifications: Basic, Intermediate, Advanced, and Masters.

1. **Basic Level certification** will require 200 hours of core training that includes the following 20 required classes from the core curriculum and 100 hours of optional training. (300 total)

Core classes required for Basic certification:

IS-5	An Introduction to Hazardous Materials
IS-100	Introduction to Incident Command
IS-120	An Orientation to Community Disaster Exercises
IS-200	ICS for Single and Initial Action Incidents
IS-230.d	Fundamentals of Emergency Management
IS-235.c	Emergency Planning
IS-240.c	Leadership and Influence
IS-241.c	Decision Making and Problem Solving
IS-242.c	Effective Communication
IS-244.b	Developing and Managing Volunteers
IS-317.a	Introduction to Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT)
IS-700.b	An Introduction to the National Incident Management System
IS-800.d	National Response Framework, an Introduction
IS-2000	National Preparedness Goal and System Overview
IS-2500	National Prevention Framework, an Introduction
IS-2600	National Protection Framework, an Introduction
IS-2700	National Mitigation Framework, an Introduction
IS-2900.a	National Disaster Recovery Framework, an Introduction
IS-2901	Introduction to Community Lifelines
Q-890	Emergency Response to Terrorism. Course is offered through the U.S. Fire Administration: https://apps.usfa.fema.gov/nfacourses/catalog/details/67

2. **Intermediate Level certification** will require 250 hours of **additional** training that includes 14 required classes from the core curriculum and 100 hours of optional training. (Total 450 core and 200 optional) (650 total)

Core classes required for Intermediate certification:

IS-10.a	Animals in Disasters: Awareness and Preparedness
IS-15	Special Events Contingency Planning for Public Safety Agencies
IS-26	Guide to Points of Distribution
IS-42.a	Social Media in Emergency Management
IS-130	Exercise Evaluation & Improvement Planning
IS-201	Forms Used for the Development of the Incident Action Plan
IS-240	Leadership & Influence
IS-288	The Role of Volunteer Agencies in Emergency Management
IS-362	Multi-Hazard Emergency Planning for Schools
IS-366.a	Planning for the Needs of Children in Disasters
IS-368.a	Including People with Disabilities & Others with Access & Functional Needs in Disaster Operations
IS-403	Introduction to Individual Assistance
IS-559	Local Damage Assessment
IS-1000	Public Assistance Program & Eligibility

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3. **Advanced Level certification** will require the completion of 250 hours of **additional** training that includes 13 required classes from the core curriculum and 100 hours of optional training. (Total 700 core and 300 optional) (1000 total).

Core classes required for Advanced certification:

IS-29.a	Public Information Officer Awareness
IS-75	Military Resources in Emergency Management
IS-271	Anticamping Hazardous Weather & Community Risk
IS-393	Introduction to Mitigation
IS-552	The Public Works Role in Emergency Management
IS-772.a	Individual Assistance Preliminary Damage Assessment Orientation
IS-1006	Documenting Disaster Damage & Developing Project Files
IS-1009	Conditions for Public Assistance Grant
IS-1010	Emergency Protective Measures
IS-2001	Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA)
IS-2200	Basic Emergency Operations Center Functions
ICS-300	ICS-300 Intermediate ICS for Expanding Incidents – (G300) – Post 2019 Update
ICS-400	ICS-400 Advanced ICS Command & General Staff – (G400) – Post 2019 Update

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4. Master Level Certifications will require the following:

- A. **Membership:** Maintain, in good standing, membership in the Alabama Association of Emergency Managers for the previous five-year period.
- B. **Experience:**
 - 1. Five years working for a government emergency management office (must work an average of 30 hrs. per week), **and**
 - 2. Must document at least 10 years (must work an average of 30 hrs. per week) working in the emergency response or emergency coordination field. Examples include:
 - a) *Emergency Response Field* may include other first responder organizations (examples: law enforcement, fire, EMS, 911, EMA).
 - b) *Emergency Coordination Field* may include coordination of services within the five mission areas of the National Preparedness Goal (examples emergency planning coordinators, disaster response or recovery operations).
 - c) Working for a government EMA for 10 years satisfies sections 1 & 2 of this rule.
- C. **Certification:** Must hold the Advanced certification level for five years.
- D. **Training:** Completion of 350 hrs. of emergency management/response training. The certification committee will review the previous five-year period, giving credit only for training completed in the prior five years (EM-related Higher Education credit can be applied if not previously utilized on a lower-level certification). Up to 50 hours may be applied for instructing EM-related courses.
- E. **Service:** Must complete **7 out of 13** areas of service. Credit for service requirements may not include items previously submitted in lower-level certifications unless otherwise stated. All service requirements shall have proper supporting documentation attached to receive credit.
 - 1. **Conferences:** Attend an average of one professional conference per year over the last five-year period. Certificate of attendance/completion is required to receive credit.
 - 2. **Community Leadership:** Voluntarily perform a leadership role in an emergency response organization outside of your paid role in EM (i.e., not a part of the applicant's required job duties). Examples include but are not limited to: volunteer fire department, serve on a board or committee, special projects, etc.
 - 3. **Professional assignment:** Manage or participate in an emergency management special project or working group. Must be greater than 6 months duration and have a recognizable result or product at the end of the project. Credit can be awarded for submitting project membership documentation, timeline and concepts, and completed work product.
 - 4. **Publish an article:** Publish an article in a newspaper, newsletter, or professional journal about an emergency management topic within the previous 5 years. The article must be at least 500 words. To achieve credit, the applicant must provide a copy of or link to the article.
 - 5. **Speaking:** Participate in three presentations or panel discussions during the previous 5 years related to the emergency management field. Each speaking engagement must be a minimum of 30 minutes in length. The audience may be community or professional groups. Examples include radio, television, educational, podcasts, conferences, etc.

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6. **Professional Instruction:**
 - a) Teach three different classes or conference sessions, each lasting no less than 45 minutes, on a topic within the EM field/profession (think Core not Optional training). Credit can be achieved with course application forms, rosters, schedules, authorization/approval paperwork, letter signed by a supervisor or course lead, etc., or
 - b) Develop a training session (greater than 3 hours). Proof of course development must accompany the application. Credit can be achieved through letters of participation or support, curriculum development documentation, course presentation, etc.
7. **Disaster Assistance Credit:** Obtain five disaster assignment credits in the previous 15 years. Previously applied credit from BLEM, ILEM, and ALEM can count if within the previous 15 years. Credit can be achieved in the form of letters from supervisors or jurisdiction assisted, sign in sheets, time sheets, certificates, WebEOC/EMITS/E-Team type documentation of deployment, etc. See additional rules for guidance.
8. **Legislative Contact:** Document a legislative contact on the state or national level about an emergency management issue. Documentation must include the name of the legislator, date contacted, and topic covered, along with supporting materials. This supporting material may include a photo of a sign in sheet, email confirmation or thank you for visiting, phone log of conversation (leaving a message does not count), email or letter to the legislator (including response), agenda, photo with the legislator with time stamp, etc.
9. **CLEM Certification:** Receive and maintain the Certified Local Emergency Manager or CLEM Eligible designation from the Alabama Emergency Management Agency. The documentation required is a letter from AEMA with the designation confirmation.
10. **Community Involvement:** Participate in or volunteer with a community disaster response/recovery organization such as the American Red Cross, HAM Radio ARES/RACES, CERT, Salvation Army, Civil Air Patrol, Boy Scouts of America, God's Pit Crew, etc. Confirmation of work may include membership card with name, affiliation, and dates served, letter of support from the organization, etc.
11. **Exercise Credit:** Must document a major contributing role in three community disaster drills or exercises. Acceptable exercise types include Tabletop, Games, Functional, and Full-Scale Exercises. Involvement may include planning, coordinating, evaluating, or management roles. Credit can be achieved by submitting exercise documentation with the applicant's name listed alongside the prominent role, certificate or letter of participation signed by another party, etc.
12. **Professional Certification:** Completion of a professional certification from FEMA, IAEM, or other emergency management organization (examples include but not limited to Advanced Professional Series, Master Exercise Practitioner Program, Continuity of Operations, Master PIO, AEM, CEM, EMI National Academies, etc.).
13. **Other:** Other contributions may be recognized if they do not apply to one of the other established categories. The burden of proof is on the applicant to convince the review committee that the activity presented contributes to the professionalism of the applicant and the emergency management field. An example of this could be a Mentoring Program.

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Additional Rules and Information

1. **Certification Integrity** - Applicants may not be the signatory of any certificate or affidavit which applies to their own certification application. Applicants must use appropriate supplemental documentation for proof of participation (i.e., course roster, sign in sheet, letter signed by another participant, transcript, etc.).
2. **Core Credit Non-IS** - Any FEMA, State EMA, DOJ, ODP, or NDPC training course that produces a transcript, will count toward **core credit**. Core credit courses are defined as professional development training that directly aligns with the typical day-to-day functions of an emergency manager as it relates to preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery activities. If you are unsure if a training class will count, it is up to the applicant to provide documentation to support their case.
 - a. FEMA may suspend or change the independent study content. Should any of the required core classes be suspended or cancelled, contact the certification committee chair for alternate courses (certification@aaem.us).
 - b. FEMA IS courses will only be accepted if they appear on a FEMA transcript. We do not need a copy of every FEMA Independent Study certificate. The transcript is preferred for verification.
3. **Optional Training Credit** - Any course that does not align with the definition of core credit but contributes to the overall goal of public safety, leadership and management, etc. may be eligible for Optional Training Credit. Examples may include APOST for law enforcement, EMT courses, Fire Fighter I, Public Safety Telecommunicator I, CPR/First Aid, etc.
4. **Degree Consideration-**
 - a. Coursework at any degree level from an accredited institution shall count towards Optional Credit.
 - b. EM-related coursework may be credited towards Core hours at the request of the applicant. This applies to MLEM credit hours if not previously applied to another certification level. Supporting documentation (i.e. course syllabus) is not required but may benefit the applicant (see point C.).
 - c. The Certification Committee has the discretion to approve or deny the EM-related coursework on a case-by-case basis. If one is denied, the applicant will be informed as to the reason(s) for the denial and afforded an opportunity to provide supplemental supporting documentation.
 - d. Transcripts must accompany the application if degree credit is requested. A photo of a diploma will no longer suffice for full credit.
 - e. Quarter Hours: 10 contact hours per quarter hour (3 hours = 30 contact hours)
 - f. Semester & Term Hours: 15 contact hours per semester hour (3 hours = 45 contact hours)
 - g. There is no limiting time factor for certification consideration.
5. **Instructional Credit** – Applicants may submit proof of course instruction and apply those hours towards new applications and renewals.
 - a. New applications for certification are capped at 25 hours, with the same allocation criteria as Core or Optional training (i.e., 16 hours towards *Core* for teaching an EM-related course, and 9 hours towards *Optional* for teaching a section of EMT class),
 - b. MLEM applicants may apply up to 50 hours total of instructional time of EM-related courses if within the previous 5 years.
 - c. For certification renewals, 25 hours per year can be applied for teaching EM-related courses, with a maximum of 125 hours (out of 250 hours required) for any five-year renewal period.
 - d. Proof of instruction must accompany the workbook showing the applicant as the listed instructor. Examples include, but are not limited to: Course application forms, Rosters, Schedules, Authorization/Approval paperwork, Letter signed by a supervisor or course lead, etc.

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6. **Conference Credit-** Credit for training received at EMA conferences will be allowed. Verification of attendance by the conference committee will be required.
7. **Disaster Credit-** Credit can be applied to both initial and re-certifications with stipulations.
 - a. For Basic, Intermediate, and Advanced applications, up to 80 hours credit can be awarded for work during each declared disaster (i.e. Emergency, Major, SBA), incident of national significance (ex. SEAR 1-3 events, Deepwater Horizon, etc.), or a State Declared Disaster (i.e. Ice Storm 2024). Applicants have the option to receive “core” or “optional” credit for the disaster assignments. Only **one** disaster assignment credit is allowed **per** certification level Basic through Advanced.
 - b. Verification will need to be supplied for credit. Credit can be achieved in the form of letters from supervisors or jurisdiction assisted, sign in sheets, time sheets, certificates, WebEOC/EMITS/E-Team type documentation of deployment, etc.
 - c. MLEM applications have separate rules. Refer to the MLEM requirements for additional details.
 - d. Up to 80 hours of credit may be applied to your recertifications. The incident must have occurred within the current five-year recertification period to count. Credit can be achieved in the form of letters from supervisors or jurisdiction assisted, time sheets, sign in sheets, certificates, WebEOC type documentation of deployment (or whatever state system is currently being utilized), etc.
8. **Certification Period-** Certification will be good for the five-year period after certification is awarded. Recertification will be required at the end of the last year of your certification period.
9. **Recertification-** A minimum of 50 hours (average) per year, or 250 hours total for five years of continuing education, must be completed. Only training completed after the date of initial certification or last recertification will be considered. Courses must be EM-related or contribute to the EM profession (think core, not optional, training).
 - a. **Completion of any “required core” classes added after the original awarding of your last certification must be completed.**
 - b. Classes updated since your last certification can count towards recertification hours, although they are not required to be retaken.
 - Example: IS-5.a was last updated in 2013. If, in the future, FEMA updates it to IS-5.b, anyone who has not taken the updated version can complete it for credit on their next recertification.
 - If a course has been updated multiple times within your current certification period, only the latest edition of the course will be considered for recertification credit.
 - c. **ICS 300 & 400** classes were updated in 2019. FEMA’s EMI requires students to take these updated courses to attend many of their classes. Therefore, **all certificate holders are required to take the updated version of these two courses for their next recertification.** A one-year grace period will be afforded to all 2024 recertifications (those required to recert in 2024 and have not yet completed the updated 300 & 400 courses have an extension to 2025 to complete them and recert).
 - d. A list of these changes can be found on the AAEM Certification website (<https://www.aaem.us/certification>), as well as on the EMA Independent Study Course List (<https://training.fema.gov/is/crslist.aspx> - courses will have the date posted in blue next to the course name).
10. **Best Practice:** Turn in more than the minimum required hours. In the event a certificate or activity is denied, it is always good to submit a few extra courses in each category (or for the Master-level, one or two extra service requirements) to ensure your application goes through. We oftentimes see certificates accidentally duplicated and the bare minimum hours needed submitted resulting in being short the required hours for certification and their application being denied.

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Per the A.A.E.M By-Laws, the President of the Board shall appoint or confirm committee chairs. The Board is responsible for oversight and voting or approving all changes to the Certification program.

The Certification Committee Chairperson is selected by the AAEM President at the beginning of each term, or as necessary in the event the position is vacated during the year. Any association member who would like to be considered for Certification Chair should contact the AAEM President (president@aaem.us). Certification Chairs should hold the MLEM designation.

The A.A.E.M. Executive Board or their appointed representative(s) will serve as the Certification Committee. It is the responsibility of the Certification Committee to provide guidance to the Certification Chairperson on all matters related to the Program, to include changes to the rules and updating the required core course list. Additionally, the Committee assists in reviewing certification applications throughout the year. Any association member who would like to be considered for membership on the Certification Committee should notify the current Certification Chair via email (certification@aaem.us). Committee members should hold, at minimum, the ALEM designation.

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Instructions for Completion of Certification Application

- ☐ Read the rules and regulations for the certification program.
- ☐ Complete the Certification Application (found on the website, links below)
 - [BLEM-ALEM Certification Workbook](#)
 - [MLEM Certification Workbook](#)
- ☐ All tabs of the workbook that apply to your certification application level must be completed in their entirety. Helpful videos on how to utilize the workbooks can be found on the certification website: www.aaem.us/certification. Each tab has useful cells where your information is calculated to show total hours submitted. Some of these cells will turn green once sufficient hours have been added.
- ☐ Don't forget to provide supporting documentation for every item you place within the workbook. Failure to do so will result in that line item not being counted.
- ☐ If using the online submission system (Smartsheet), follow the instructions provided on the form. Upload the workbook and supporting documents in the order and manner detailed within the instructions. Failure to do so may result in the application being returned. Helpful videos on the application process, including step-by-step guidance on how to combine files as requested and uploaded can be found on the certification website: www.aaem.us/certification
- ☐ Payment for Review: Applicants must pay for the certification level being attempted and either as a member or non-member. Select the appropriate membership category and certification level to be applied for. If paying by check, ensure the correct amount is applied and make payable to Alabama Association of Emergency Managers. Put your name and "Certification" in the notes and send to the address below.
- ☐ Questions about the rules or certification process can be emailed to certification@aaem.us.
- ☐ If mailing your packet (online submissions are preferred), send to:

**Jefferson County EMA
c/o Chris Tate, AAEM Certification Chair
709 19th St. N.
Birmingham, AL 35203**