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TEXAS COMMISSION ON LAW ENFORCEMENT

Technical Assistance Bulletin

To: All Texas Law Enforcement Agencies, Chief Administrators
From: T.J. Vineyard, Compliance and Standards
Regarding: Public Information Officer certification and training
Date: Updated April 28, 2026

Under the provisions of HB 33, certain law enforcement agencies are required to have a designated public information officer (PIO) (Texas Government Code § 411.3735).

Those agencies subject to this requirement are:

- A municipal police department,
- A sheriff's office,
- A county constable's office,
- A school district police department, and
- The Texas Department of Public Safety.

The PIO may be the chief administrator but is not required to be a peace officer. If the chief administrator is the PIO, they must obtain the certification and complete the continuing education requirements. An agency is only required to have one certified PIO.

The PIO, if not directly employed by the chief administrator, should be clearly designated to the role through policy or written agreement. For example, a county PIO may, by written policy, act as the PIO for the sheriff's office and the constables in the county. A school district PIO may, by written policy, be designated as the PIO for the school district police department. A small agency could obtain a Memorandum of Understanding where a PIO from a larger agency agrees to act as the PIO for both agencies.

The PIO must complete training and obtain a certification from the Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM) within one year of assignment to this position, and complete continuing education annually (Texas Government Code § 418.333). Individuals designated as a PIO currently have until September 1, 2026, to complete this requirement.

A PIO or their agency should be able to produce proof of certification and proof of continuing education (certificates) on inspection. Agencies that designate an external PIO through policy or agreement must maintain a copy of that PIO's proof of certification and continuing education with the agreement or policy.

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The currently approved courses to obtain TDEM certification are:

TCOLE number	Course Name	FEMA/TDEM number	Link
TCOLE 666038	Bill Blackwood LEMIT Public Information Officer Course	N/A	Click here
TCOLE 666318	TEEX MGT 318 Public Information in All-Hazards Incident	N/A	Click here
TCOLE 3763	FBI LEEDA Media and Public Relations	N/A	Click here
TCOLE 3775	FBI LEEDA Master Public Information Officer	N/A	Click here
TCOLE 667388	FEMA/NIMS Advanced Public Information Officer	FEMA E-388	N/A
TCOLE 667952	FEMA/NIMS All-Hazards Public Information Officer	FEMA E-952	N/A
TCOLE 664033	TDEM Texas Public Information Officer Course	T-PUB4033	N/A

You should report the training to TCOLE as you do all other training, and ALSO report the training to TDEM:

How to Complete Certification to TDEM:

1. Select and complete one approved course from the list above.
2. Save your completion certificate, ensuring your name and TCOLE PID are clearly displayed.
3. Upload your certificate to <https://www.preparingtexas.org/>. Please see below for further instructions.

TCOLE is working with TDEM to simplify this process so that PIO training, including certificate continuing education obligations, reported to TCOLE under a valid PID will automatically be reported to TDEM. This TAB will be updated once that process is finalized.