

Mutual Aid Box Alarm System – Illinois Administration – Standards and Guidelines

Index #: B-07-02

Adopted: 10/14/2015

Revised:

Page 1 of 8

Subject: Tier II MABAS Statewide ID Cards Credentialing of Responders

Functional Area: Administration

Category: Procedure and Guideline

Approved By:



Information Provided

- Section 1 Authority – Tier 2 Credentialing Cards
- Section 2 Credentialing History
- Section 3 Purpose of Tier 2 Credentials
- Section 4 Guidance and Goals – Tier 2 Cards
- Section 5 Frequently Asked Questions
- Section 6 Procedures for Obtaining a Tier 2 Card Credential

Section 1 Authority – Tier 2 Credentialing Cards

- Issued and recognized by MABAS & IEMA Statewide Response Plan
- Controlled approvals by employing agency fire chief or designee
- Credentialing guidance by and through various DHS/FEMA agency policies and circulars
- Financially supported through DHS grant funds and local agency cost offsets
- Recognized by ITTF Committee and IEMA statewide system of controls, reimbursement eligibility and accountability documentation

Section 2 Credentialing History

The issue of credentialing first came to notice following Hurricane Andrew landfall to southern Florida. Damage to structures, infrastructure and loss of life recovery of victims' remains took months to manage. The area impacted in southern Florida included the greater Miami urbanized area, rural farmlands and large areas of national parkland.

The then fire chief of metro Dade Fire Department, David Paulison, experienced large numbers of volunteers and so-called first responders arriving to "HELP" following the hurricanes landfall. All of the volunteers and most of the first responders self-dispatched creating a disaster within the disaster in managing the surge throughout the large area of impact.

As Chief Paulison reflected following the event, it's not that we couldn't use the help and assistance, but we had no idea who the volunteers and first responders were. We were unable to determine their qualifications, validate expertise and define their capabilities. We also had opportunists show up claiming they were paramedics, doctors and rescue specialists. Metro Dade officials could not validate the capabilities and legal skill levels as no credentialing system existed at that point of time within our nation.

Later in time, Fire Chief David Paulison came to be the President's selection as the nation's FEMA Administrator following the previous FEMA Administrator who had been in-charge during Hurricane Katrina, which had land fallen in the greater New Orleans area. Then FEMA Administrator Paulison identified the need to establish a national credentialing system for all first response providers and many other professional disciplines.

Mutual Aid Box Alarm System – Illinois Administration – Standards and Guidelines

Index #: B-07-02

Adopted: 10/14/2015

Revised:

Page 2 of 8

In Illinois following Hurricane Katrina (CIRCA 2006) a decision was made to initiate a credentialing system. The credentialing effort was managed through Illinois Terrorism Task Force (ITTF). The first attempt at credentialing in Illinois followed the Federal Government's credentialing system for their employees. The system was titled a Tier 1 credentialing card which had numerous problematic aspects to accomplishment including; expensive cost, extended timelines to accomplish and the need to re-issue and validate cards with recurrence over time. The Tier 1 credentialing system was determined unachievable and unaffordable for Illinois system.

MABAS-Illinois proposed the currently in-place Tier 2 credentialing and accountability system to the ITTF as the system which will meet Illinois needs. The benefits of the Tier 2 credentialing system for Illinois were identified by the following qualities:

- Inexpensive and affordable
- Credentialed validation is easily controlled by shared actions by the employer and statewide system administrators, like MABAS.
- The systems software and communication capabilities allows an "in the clouds" database accessible statewide.
- The systems software allows instant validation of a credential and logging of individual on incident tracking and documentation records.
- The Tier 2 system is interoperable and will read and record drivers licenses and military ID cards.
- Tier 2 credentials when used produce a "receipt" which can validate a person's access to controlled areas.
- Tier 2 credentials support adequate documentation regarding reimbursement claims.

MABAS-Illinois adopted the Tier 2 credentialing system and its software record keeping capability for statewide use. Specifically, the MABAS Tier 2 System is designed to support the following resources for qualification validation, accountability and documentation actions where grant or Declarations of Disaster reimbursement might be expected including:

- MABAS Statewide Special Operations Teams, (HM, TRT, Water Rescue, US&R, MIST, Lead Command Officers and the like).
- MABAS general firefighting and EMS certified and qualified individuals (FF II, FO I, EMT, EMTA).
- Nonaffiliated professionally licensed individuals who are officially assigned to a MABAS Statewide Team (doctors, engineers, search dog handlers, etc.)

Section 3 Purpose of Tier 2 Credentials

(Discussion limited to MABAS Statewide System)

The purposes of Tier 2 credentials go beyond simply having an ID card. They include:

- Having an ID card which represents a series of statewide recognized standards
- Allows the individuals employing agency and fire chief to control who they are comfortable with being deployed as part of a significant event or Declaration of Disaster
- The Tier 2 card allows field validation through electronic "in the cloud" databases which identify an individual's certifications, skills and capabilities.
- For special team member rosters, the Tier 2 card validates full certification capabilities for the response ready team.
- The Tier 2 card allows rapid in and out processing for all steps in a mobilization and deployment process. The Tier 2 card can be read in the field through MABAS owned hand held electronic readers for documentation, accountability and reimbursements.

Mutual Aid Box Alarm System – Illinois Administration – Standards and Guidelines

Index #: B-07-02

Adopted: 10/14/2015

Revised:

Page 3 of 8

- Controls of the Tier 2 credentialing card allow fire chiefs and/or MABAS leadership to remotely revoke a Tier 2 card from the main database of an individual (loss of certification, retirement, inactive status, etc.).
- Affords higher level of validation of individuals capabilities and qualifications/certification for intra and interstate deployments.
- Provide a single source document as a standard recognized statewide for fire service qualifications and competence in various areas of expertise and skill.

Section 4 Guidance and Goals – Tier 2 Cards

1. MABAS-Illinois includes the following resources which have influence on how and why the Tier 2 credentialing system is designed to operate and function:
 - Sixty-nine (69) operating divisions statewide including nearly twelve hundred (1,200) fire agencies, out of approximately one thousand two hundred and fifty (1,250) total fire agencies in Illinois.
 - Approximately thirty-nine thousand (39,000) firefighters, out of an estimated total of forty thousand (40,000) firefighters in Illinois.
 - Approximately one hundred (100) Special Operations Statewide Teams, including:
 - Thirty-nine (39) Hazardous Materials Teams.
 - Thirty-seven (37) Technical Rescue Teams.
 - Fifteen (15) Underwater Rescue/Recovery Teams.
 - One (1) Urban Search and Rescue Team. Approximately two hundred and forty (240) person team.
 - MABAS Incident Support Teams (MIST) – in development.
 - HazMat, TRT and Underwater Rescue/Recovery Statewide Teams each maintain rosters (CIMS) where approximately twenty (20) fully certified response ready roster slots and ten (10) in-training slots are maintained. HazMat and TRT response ready team slots may be increased to thirty (30) from twenty (20) for teams who choose to do so and currently have the trained and certified resource to do so. An increase to thirty (30) response ready slots for any statewide team requires concurrence and support from the MABAS Operations Section Chief.
2. MABAS guidance and standards requires all Statewide Special Operations Team members (HM – TRT – Water Rescue – US&R – MIST) to have Tier 2 credential cards.

The total number of Tier 2 credentialed individuals is approximately:

 - Ninety-one (91) – Special teams (HM – TRT – Water) with twenty (20) response ready rostered individuals = One thousand eight hundred and twenty (1,820) individuals.
 - One (1) – Urban Search and Rescue Team = Two hundred and forty (240) individuals
 - Estimated total Tier 2 cards = two thousand and sixty (2,060) individuals within the Statewide Special Operations Team community.
3. MABAS guidance and standards for general firefighting and EMS qualified individuals and who and how many firefighters should be issued Tier 2 credential cards is based on statewide CAD (Computer Aided Dispatch Protocols). The CAD is never going to exceed taking more than twenty percent (20%) of a division's general firefighting resources.

Accordingly, MABAS recommendation to divisional departments follows the CAD protocol by suggesting each fire agency obtain Tier 2 credentials for twenty percent (20%) of their respective general fire fighting force. Local fire agencies may credential more than twenty percent (20%) of their general firefighting/EMS resources with Tier 2 cards if they wish. MABAS does request five dollars (\$5.00) cost recovery charge from agencies for every Tier 2 credential card processed and produced.

Mutual Aid Box Alarm System – Illinois Administration – Standards and Guidelines

Index #: B-07-02

Adopted: 10/14/2015

Revised:

Page 4 of 8

The practice for general firefighting/EMS resources following the twenty percent (20%) CAD rule would provide an estimated eight thousand (8,000) Tier 2 credentialed individuals for statewide deployment.

4. MABAS does maintains a practice which disallows an individual from being on more than one response ready roster of any Statewide Special Operations Team (HM, TRT, Water, US&R and MIST). The practice is in place to prevent double, triple or more counting an individual as a resource. Also, the practice provides an increased probability of effective resource capabilities of statewide special teams when multiple divisions and multiple types of similar or dissimilar teams are being simultaneously tasked for a statewide mobilization and deployment event. This standard applies only to special operations teams recognized for statewide response by MABAS.
5. MABAS only regulates and maintains procedures, practices and standards for officially recognized and established statewide special operations teams. Local MABAS divisions' teams are regulated by their local divisions' policies and practices.
6. Statewide special operations response ready rostered individuals with a Tier 2 credentialed card are allowed to use that credentialed card to fill a general firefighting/EMS position for a statewide mobilization and deployment so long as the individual is qualified as a capable and competent resource for the position they are being asked to fill regarding the statewide general firefighting/EMS tasking.
7. Employing fire agency fire chiefs are the only authorized individuals to request and approve an individual for award and assignment of a Tier 2 credentialed card from MABAS-Illinois. The employing chief must participate in an online briefing of particulars the fire chief is agreeing to by assigning a Tier 2 credentialed card to an individual under their employment and supervision.

Further, any individual sponsored by a fire chief for a Tier 2 credentialed card requires the fire chief validate the individual's qualifications, certifications and capabilities as noted on their Tier 2 application and as required. All liabilities created by stating untrue or inaccurate qualifications, certifications and/or capabilities of an individual are assumed by and the responsibility of the nominating fire chief as the authority having jurisdiction.

8. Section 6 of this document provides step-by-step procedures and process flowchart for requesting and securing a MABAS Tier 2 credential card. Actions are required on line by both the nominating fire chief (or their designee) and the individual themselves being nominated.

Section 5 Frequently Asked Questions?

TIER 2 CARD CREDENTIALING MATTERS

- **My firefighters work for several fire agencies in different divisions. Do they or, should they have a different Tier 2 credential card for every employing agency?**

ANSWER: MABAS and the statewide CIMS system disallows more than one Tier 2 credentialed card per individual firefighter and/or an individual who is credentialed as a statewide special team member. Accordingly, an individual and their multiple employers must select one, single employer to be credentialed a Tier 2 card. The rationale is to provide accurate resource counts versus where a single person being counted multiple times. The latter creates smoke and mirrors data reflecting the same resource.

- **How does an individual get their Tier 2 credential card revoked due to retirement, dismissal, loss of qualifications, etc.?**

ANSWER: Only two individuals have the authority to revoke or de-activate an individual's Tier 2 credentialed card. The first is the employing fire chief and the second is the MABAS CEO. Revoking or de-activating an individual's Tier 2 credential card occurs in one of the following ways. All of the following removes the Tier 2 card holder from the CIMS database.

Mutual Aid Box Alarm System – Illinois Administration – Standards and Guidelines

Index #: B-07-02

Adopted: 10/14/2015

Revised:

Page 5 of 8

The result is that once the individual is removed from the MABAS database use of the card will be flagged as “not valid” when read in the field by MABAS command kits and hand-held scanner card readers.

The options to revoke or deactivate a Tier 2 credential card, include the following requires coordination with MABAS HQ:

- If on a Statewide Special Operations Team remove the individuals name from the response ready roster through CIMS records.
- If general firefighter/EMS remove their name from the CIMS MABAS credentialing database resource information for their designated employing agency.
- Contact your MABAS Field Operations Branch Chief for assistance and direction.

If an employing chief can recover the Tier 2 card for revocation or deactivation, please do so and destroy the card by cutting the card into unidentifiable pieces. Should someone attempt to use the card the reader will identify the card as “not valid”. The card will be confiscated, and individual denied authorization to proceed with mission assigned resources.

▪ **What should I do if a Tier 2 credentialed card is damaged or made unusable?**

ANSWER: Damaged or unusable Tier 2 credential cards can be replaced by contacting your MABAS Field Operations Branch Chief for assistance. Direct contact with the MABAS Statewide Credentialing Coordinator based out of the MABAS Readiness Center can also be a consideration for assistance. A backup to a damaged Tier 2 credentialed card is the individuals state issued drivers license. Drivers licenses can be read through the scan feature of MABAS field readers. So long as the individual issued the Tier 2 credential card is rostered on the agencies MABAS CIMS profile a drivers license can be used to validate a damaged Tier 2 credential card.

▪ **When I've gone through real world and exercises where the Tier 2 credential card is used in a type scanner I'm given a paper receipt. What is the paper receipt all about?**

ANSWER: The paper receipt you receive is your documentation you have officially checked in, are authorized as an assigned part of the mission and authority for you to enter certain restricted, warm or hot zone areas. The Tier 2 credential is one part of your authority to be involved while the paper receipt validates your official authority as part of the mission assignment. The receipt also further provides documentation for reimbursement of personnel costs.

▪ **Can a firefighter have a Tier 2 card for a statewide special operations team and still be deployed as a firefighter filling a position on a general firefighting resource, like a MABAS fire/EMS task force?**

ANSWER: Yes, a special operations statewide team member listed on a special team's response ready roster can fill a general firefighting deployment assignment. When an individual submits a request for a Tier 2 credential they should list all their state certifications and licenses. A statewide special operations team member is NOT limited to a response position on their specific division special operations team but also may qualify the individual for a general firefighter assignment so long as they have appropriate certification/training to fill the position they are being asked to fill.

▪ **Currently, OSFM certifications for general firefighters has changed regarding what the certifications are titled (such as, firefighter I and II being called basic operations firefighters (BOF) or advanced technician firefighter (ATF)). How does this impact an individual's qualifications in obtaining a Tier 2 credential?**

ANSWER: The important matter with qualification credentialing is that the individual is trained and been recognized through OSFM certification. Whether the individual has a FFI, II, III or BOF/ATF, list the fact on line within the Tier2 credential application.

Mutual Aid Box Alarm System – Illinois Administration – Standards and Guidelines

Index #: B-07-02

Adopted: 10/14/2015

Revised:

Page 6 of 8

The employing fire chief confirms the individual's qualification, certification and training for the assigned deployment position.

Lessons learned from the 2005 Hurricane Katrina deployment indicated that only trained, certified and capable individuals should be allowed to a statewide (inter or intra) disaster deployment. Regardless of the OSFM firefighter certification title, list what you have on the Tier 2 credential regardless of the title. All will be accepted as an appropriately qualified individual for a general firefighting position within a deployment.

- **Does a person providing backfill overtime coverage for a special team member or general firefighter on a statewide deployment, exercise or training activity have to have a Tier 2 credential?**

ANSWER: No, individuals filling an overtime/backfill position within an agency for a Tier 2 credentialed individual on a statewide deployment, exercise or training activity does not need a Tier 2 credential to qualify to be eligible for reimbursable overtime and/or backfill from their employing agency.

- **What if my fire chief feels no one from their agency will ever be deployed to a statewide deployment because their civilian full-time employer (volunteer or paid on call applicable) would never allow the volunteer/POC to be away from their full-time employment for a week, two weeks or more? Accordingly, this fire chief doesn't feel the need for firefighters to have any OSFM certifications or Tier 2 credentialed cards.**

ANSWER: The fire chief of each authority having jurisdiction has the prerogative to make that call. No state law exists in Illinois requiring firefighters to have OSFM certifications. The requirement for firefighter certifications is a MABAS-Illinois standard. Should an AHJ fire chief make the call no certifications or Tier 2 credentials are required they should NOT accept a mobilization or deployment assignment nor should their MABAS division ask the department to contribute to the MABAS deployment or mobilization. Participation is voluntary but if accepted, participants must meet the MABAS standard.

- **Our fire chief says we don't have Tier 2 credential cards because they can't afford the \$5.00 charge per Tier 2 card issued by MABAS.**

ANSWER: MABAS-Illinois is aware of financial hardships as defined within MABAS statewide annual dues waiver system, if a validated financial hardship is being experienced by an agency as determined by that agency's MABAS division. Should a MABAS division support a waiver for an agency with a financial hardship regarding the Tier 2 credential card fee of five dollars (\$5.00) per card, it is probable MABAS statewide leadership will grant the waiver.

- **Do Tier 2 credentialing cards have an expiration date?**

ANSWER: No, Tier 2 credential cards do not have an expiration date due to the time and cost it would take to maintain a renewal system. Tier 2 credential cards can be cancelled or revoked by the employing fire chief due to a host of reasons.

Mutual Aid Box Alarm System – Illinois Administration – Standards and Guidelines

Index #: B-07-02

Adopted: 10/14/2015

Revised:

Page 7 of 8

Section 6 Procedures for Obtaining a Tier 2 Card Credential

1. Before a person can apply for a Tier 2 card, they must first be invited into the CIMS System (Contact Information Management System) by their Chief or Team Leader.
2. They will then respond to the invitation by applying for access.
3. They must select that they are part of a MABAS-IL division, select the proper division and then the department or team. They then submit the request.
4. They will be given a user name: mabas\jjones or mabas\jjones1, which is mabas\ (their first initial and last name, it could have a number after the name); and password at this time. This is not an automatic process. MABAS staff reviews each application before authorizing access. Wait for the approval and do not re-apply.
5. Once approval has been received, they will then create an online profile.
6. After the profile is created, they must update their profile and now they can apply for a Tier 2 card (left side of CIMS screen).
7. The Tier 2 card application will appear on the screen. All qualifications must be entered in the qualifications pull down screen. Additional qualifications can be entered at this point by clicking the down arrow under the initial qualifications box
8. The requester then reads and agrees to the terms and conditions of deployment and checks the box at the end of the agreement.
9. The requester then clicks the submit button. If the button is not highlighted, make sure that the agreement box is checked.
10. When the requester submits the request, it will now be sent via e-mail to his/her Fire Chief or Team Leader for approval.
11. The Fire Chief/Team Leader will verify that the information is correct on the request and will accept the terms/conditions of deployment and then upload a photograph of the applicant and then submit the request.

Mutual Aid Box Alarm System – Illinois Administration – Standards and Guidelines

Index #: B-07-02

Adopted: 10/14/2015

Revised:

Page 8 of 8

