



FEMA

R0254

Dear National Fire Academy Student:

By now you should have received an email notification from the National Emergency Training Center (NETC) Admissions Office. This notification indicates your acceptance into the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA), National Fire Academy (NFA) “Special Operations Program Management and Leadership” (SOPML) course.

Congratulations on your acceptance into the USFA’s/NFA’s SOPML course.

Please review the pre-course assignment checklist that is included and complete the assignments. These are essential for you to succeed in the course.

You are encouraged to bring a laptop to class for use during activities, but this is not a requirement to participate in the class.

This is a six-day class that starts on Sunday at 8 a.m. Subsequent classes will begin at 8 a.m. All departing travel arrangements should be made so that you do not leave campus prior to the class graduation.

The course materials are now available in a Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) format that will function on any electronic device. If you own an electronic device (laptop computer, tablet, etc.) and are familiar with its document reader functions, we are asking you to download the Student Manual (SM) **before you travel to Emmitsburg** and bring the preloaded device with you. Please see the page following this letter for complete instructions on successfully downloading your course materials. Please note: If you plan to bring/use an iPad, you may experience issues saving/storing/printing course assignments because there is no USB/thumb drive capacity for these devices.

Students and instructors bringing laptop computers or other electronic devices to campus are responsible for the security and maintenance of their equipment. The NFA cannot provide computer software, hardware (which includes disks, printers, scanners, monitors, etc.), or technical support for your device. For your convenience, we do provide surge protector power strips at each classroom table.

If you need additional information related to your course’s content or requirements, please contact Ms. Tammy Pimentel-Matthews, Hazardous Materials Curriculum training specialist, at 301-447-1871, or by email at tammy.pimentel-matthews@fema.dhs.gov. Good luck, and I hope to see you on campus.

Sincerely,

Eriks J. Gabliks, Superintendent
National Fire Academy
U.S. Fire Administration

Enclosures

June 2025

National Fire Academy Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) Course Materials/Download Instructions

If you own an electronic device (laptop computer, tablet, etc.) and are familiar with its document reader functions, we are asking you to download the Student Manual (SM) before you travel to class and bring the preloaded device with you.

The **first step** is to download Adobe Acrobat Reader to your device. This will enable you to read and manipulate the course materials. Adobe Acrobat Reader can be used to comment and highlight text in PDF documents. It is an excellent tool for note-taking purposes.

For laptops and computers

Adobe Acrobat Reader can be downloaded from www.adobe.com/downloads/. It is a free download. Please note that depending on your settings, you may have to temporarily disable your antivirus software.

For tablets and other similar hand-held devices

Adobe Acrobat Reader can be downloaded onto devices such as iPads, Android tablets, and other hand-held devices. The application can be found in the device's application store using the search function and typing in "Adobe Acrobat Reader." Follow the instructions given. **It is a free application.**

After you have successfully downloaded the Adobe Acrobat Reader, please use the following web link to download your SM. You may copy/paste this link into your web browser.

https://apps.usfa.fema.gov/ax/sm/sm_0254.pdf

Note: In order to have the editing capabilities/toolbar, the document needs to be opened with Adobe Acrobat Reader. There should be a function on your device to do this.

If you need assistance, please contact nfaonlinetier2@fema.dhs.gov.

PRE-COURSE ASSIGNMENT CHECKLIST

In this course, you will create a special operations program proposal based on the needs of your community, which you will then present to your leadership. Completing the following pre-course assignments is essential for you to succeed in the course.

Materials to bring with you to the class

Collect the following information from your jurisdiction and bring with you to class:

- ☐ Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA) or other documentation to help justify your need for a special operations team.
- ☐ Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP).
- ☐ Hazard Vulnerability Assessment (HVA).

You are encouraged to bring a laptop to class for use during some of the group activities; however, having a laptop is not a requirement for participation in these activities. Classroom computers are also available.

Materials to review before class

- ☐ Comprehensive Preparedness Guide (CPG) 101, “Developing and Maintaining Emergency Operations Plans” (https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/2020-05/CPG_101_V2_30NOV2010_FINAL_508.pdf).
- ☐ CPG 201, “Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA) and Stakeholder Preparedness Review (SPR) Guide” (<https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/2020-04/CPG201Final20180525.pdf>).
- ☐ Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Resource Typing Library Tool (RTLTL) (<https://rtlt.preptoolkit.fema.gov/Public>).

Materials to submit 10 days prior to the start of class

- ☐ A list of current challenges, issues and problems facing your special operations team or organization (based on the THIRA, CEMP and HVA).
- ☐ A copy of your enabling legislation.
- ☐ A pre-course survey to introduce yourself and your goals.

Make an appointment!

- ☐ Schedule a 30-minute appointment with your leadership to brief them about what you learned about the special operations program planning process along with appropriate sections of your Learning Journal.