

Law Enforcement Agencies Data System (LEADS) Operator Certification Program (LOCP)

BACKGROUND	2
PROGRAM GOALS	2
CERTIFICATION.....	3
Overview	3
Who Must Be Certified.....	4
Registration Procedures	4
Passing Score	5
Length of Certification	5
Examination Failures.....	5
RECERTIFICATION	6
Overview	6
Who Must Be Recertified	8
Registration Procedures	8
Passing Score	8
Length of Certification	8
Examination Failures.....	8
CHANGE OF EMPLOYMENT	9
LESS THAN FULL ACCESS VIDEO TRAINING PROGRAM	9
PRACTITIONER TRAINING - NO DIRECT LEADS/NCIC ACCESS.....	9
SECURITY AWARENESS TRAINING	9
Direct Users	10
Indirect Users (Practitioners)	10
Vendors/IT Staff	11
NexTest.....	11
QUESTIONS	12

I. BACKGROUND

Prior to the use of shared computer systems in 1969, the knowledge and skills possessed by an agency's LEADS operator was a matter of local interest. The impact of an incompetent or inexperienced operator was absorbed, for the most part, by the employing agency with only minor and infrequent repercussions to neighboring departments within radio range. An agency choosing to mismanage communications resources could do so without their communications problems becoming a statewide or nationwide issue.

Today every major police department uses one or several computer systems. Many of these systems have a central computer shared by numerous departments. LEADS is an example of a shared computer into which agencies pool information and, as a result, share records with other participants. The competency of all LEADS operators entering and accessing shared data is a primary concern and responsibility of all participating agencies. The majority of LEADS agencies conscientiously employ, train, and supervise LEADS operators in a manner consistent with their inherent responsibilities.

Experience has demonstrated not all departments share this philosophy. Inaccurate and obsolete records have precipitated lawsuits not only within Illinois, but in many other states. All states are required to initiate a procedure measuring the requisite skills and knowledge of computer operators by the successful completion of prescribed formal training. Operators must demonstrate qualifications by passing an examination. NCIC has mandated training standards for each Illinois agency accessing NCIC. The Illinois State Police (ISP), with the approval of the LEADS Advisory Policy Board, has established a comprehensive training program aligned with NCIC requirements. The ISP Program Administration Bureau, working in concert with the nexTEST training team, is charged with the responsibility of developing and conducting operator certification programs and examinations.

LEADS/NCIC training is only authorized for persons *currently* employed by a criminal justice agency.

II. PROGRAM GOALS

The goal of the LEADS Operator Certification Program (LOCP) is to ensure the safety of officers in the field by:

1. improving the quality of data entered into the LEADS/NCIC files,
2. ensuring compliance with LEADS/NCIC rules and regulations,
3. providing instruction on the use of the LEADS eManual,
4. ensuring instruction on interpreting data received,
5. increasing knowledge and usage of all aspects of LEADS/NCIC,
6. establishing standards of competency for all LEADS operators, and
7. providing a statewide standard of training and testing.

III. CERTIFICATION

A. Overview

1. There are two levels of certification:
 - a) Less Than Full Access Certification
 - 1) Length of course: approximately 2 hours.

Less Than Full Access operator basic certification must be achieved by LEADS operators having limited (primarily inquiry) or restricted use of LEADS. The focus of this course is inquiries/response interpretation, criminal history inquiries, hot file hit interpretation, LEADS policy and procedures, and security awareness training.

Operators requiring Less Than Full Access certification must complete either the Less Than Full Access nexTEST or Less Than Full Access video certification course. If the LTFA video certification method is chosen, the course curriculum must be supplemented with the inclusion of the Security Awareness documentation posted to the LEADS Info site (see Security Awareness section beginning on page 9).

- b) Full Access Certification
 - 1) Length of course: approximately 4 hours.

Full Access certification must be achieved by LEADS operators who enter and maintain Computerized Hot File (CHF) records and respond to requests for hit confirmation. The focus of this course is inquiries/response interpretation, criminal history inquiries, hot file hit interpretation, LEADS policy and procedures, security awareness training, as well as CHF maintenance.

2. There are two types of certification courses:
 - a) nexTEST
 - b) Less Than Full Access Video Certification

NOTE: nexTEST is available for both levels of certification; video certification is available only for Less Than Full Access operators.

Each student will be administered an examination at the conclusion of the course. All questions on the examination may be formulated from the LEADS eManual and course curriculum.

A student achieving certification via nexTEST will be issued a certificate (printed upon successful completion of exam). A student achieving certification via Less Than Full Access video certification will be issued a certificate once the course information is entered into the nexTEST by the agency's Group Administrator.

After obtaining certified status, an operator will remain as such for a period of two years from the date of exam. The operator must successfully complete the appropriate recertification course by his/her expiration date to maintain certified status. Operators who fail to recertify by their certification expiration date are no longer considered certified and will have their LEADS access revoked. Moreover, agencies with operators accessing LEADS without a valid LEADS certification risk termination of the agency's LEADS access.

B. Who Must Be Certified

3. Full Access Operator Certification:
 - a) LEADS Agency Coordinators (LAC) of Full Access agencies
 - b) LEADS operators responsible for responding to record status inquiries (confirmation), AND/OR
 - c) LEADS operators who enter or perform file maintenance on CHF records.
4. Less Than Full Access Operator Certification:
 - a) LACs of Less Than Full Access agencies.
 - b) LACs of mobile data computer only agencies.
 - c) LEADS operators having limited or restricted use of LEADS, i.e., those operators primarily responsible for Secretary of State file inquiries, administrative messages, and criminal history inquiries. Course includes instruction on response interpretation.
 - d) LEADS operators accessing LEADS via mobile data computers

NOTE: This is a minimum requirement. Less Than Full Access operators may complete Full Access certification.

B. Registration Procedures

1. LEADS operators must achieve the appropriate level of LEADS certification within six months of employment or assignment.
2. Each agency's LAC is responsible for ensuring all computer operators achieve certified status at the appropriate level.
3. When registering students for nexTEST, agencies must determine what type of certification is needed; Full Access or Less Than Full Access.
 - a) LEADS operators responsible for hit confirmation and CHF maintenance must complete the Full Access certification course.
 - b) Less Than Full Access or mobile data computer LEADS operators must complete, at a minimum, the LTFA course to ensure appropriate certification. Operators may complete a course above what is required to attain certification. For example, a mobile data computer operator may complete the Full Access operator certification course to become certified, if so desired.

c) nexTEST is available 24 hours a day. For agencies participating in the Less Than Full Access Video Training Program, the video may be administered on an as needed basis at a time determined by the agency.

d) An operator must complete the entire course in order to be considered certified. Partial completion will not be allowed.

4. Upon successful completion of a certification course, the student will be provided with documentation of certification. A student achieving certification via nexTEST will be issued a certificate (printed upon successful completion of exam). A student achieving certification via Less Than Full Access video certification will be issued a certificate once the course information is entered into nexTEST by the agency's Group Administrator.

C. Passing Score

Operators must achieve a minimum score of 80 percent to attain certification.

Length of Certification

A LEADS operator will be certified for two years from the date of exam.

D. Examination Failures

Students failing a certification examination at either level will be allowed to retake the exam one additional time. If the student fails the exam on the second attempt, he/she must retake the complete certification course. The student must contact their agency's nexTEST Group Administrator to reset their exam attempts. In order to retake the Less Than Full Access video certification exam, the video curriculum must be readministered by the agency's Video Training Program instructor.

IV. RECERTIFICATION

A. Overview

1. There are two levels of recertification:

a) Less Than Full Access Recertification

1) Less Than Full Access operator recertification must be achieved by all LEADS operators who currently hold the Less Than Full Access certification level by their certification expiration date

- b) Full Access Recertification
 - 1) Full Access operator recertification must be achieved by all LEADS operators who currently hold the Full Access certification level by their certification expiration date

2. There are two types of recertification courses:

- a) nexTEST
 - 1) Full Access Operator Recertification. Length of course: approximately 1 hour.
 - 2) Less Than Full Access Operator Recertification. Length of course: approximately 1 hour.
- b) Less Than Full Access Video
 - 1) Less Than Full Access operators may also recertify via the Less Than Full Access video certification course. Length of course: approximately 2 hours.

(a) *If the LTFA video certification method is chosen, the course curriculum must be supplemented with the inclusion of the Security Awareness documentation posted to the LEADS Info site (see Security Awareness section beginning on page 9).*

- 2) Full Access operators may only recertify via nexTEST.

nexTEST recertification consists of a review of any new LEADS files, hit procedure review, an update on policy/procedure changes, security awareness training, and administration of a recertification examination. Recertification may also be achieved through successful completion of an appropriate basic certification course.

All questions on the recertification examination may be formulated from the LEADS eManual and course curriculum.

Upon successful completion of a certification course, the student will be provided with documentation. A student achieving recertification via nexTEST will be issued a certificate (printed upon successful completion of exam). A student achieving certification via Less Than Full Access video certification will be issued a certificate once the course information is entered into nexTEST by the agency's Group Administrator.

The agency's LAC is responsible for ensuring that operators recertify.

Operators who fail to recertify by their certification expiration date are no longer considered certified

and will have their LEADS access revoked. Operators must successfully complete the appropriate level basic certification course in order to have their LEADS access activated.

B. Who Must Be Recertified

1. Full Access operators including:
 - a) LACs of Full Access agencies.
 - b) LEADS operators responsible for responding to record status inquiries (confirmation), AND/OR
 - c) LEADS operators who enter or perform file maintenance on CHF records.
2. Less Than Full Access operators including:
 - a) LACs of Less Than Full Access agencies.
 - b) LACs of mobile data computer only agencies.
 - c) LEADS operators having limited or restricted use of LEADS, i.e., those operators primarily responsible for Secretary of State files inquiries, administrative messages, and criminal history inquiries. Course includes instruction on response interpretation.
 - d) LEADS operators accessing LEADS via mobile data computers.

NOTE: This is a minimum requirement. Less Than Full Access operators may complete Full Access certification.

C. Registration Procedures

1. LEADS operators must maintain the appropriate level of LEADS certification throughout employment or assignment.
2. Each agency's LAC is responsible for ensuring all LEADS operators maintain certification at the appropriate level throughout the operator=s employment or assignment.

D. Passing Score

A student must achieve a minimum score of 80 percent to attain recertification.

E. Length of Certification

A LEADS operator will be certified for two (2) years from the date of exam.

F. Examination Failures

Students failing a recertification examination are no longer considered certified and must successfully complete the basic certification course at the appropriate level.

V. CHANGE OF EMPLOYMENT

A certified LEADS operator who changes employment from one user agency to another agency shall retain certified status until recertification is necessary. If an operator's duties change and now require a higher level of certification, he/she must achieve the appropriate level of certification within thirty days of reassignment.

VI. LESS THAN FULL ACCESS VIDEO TRAINING PROGRAM

ISP provides a LEADS Less Than Full Access Video Training Program which allows agencies to submit one or more employees for authorization and certification by ISP as a LEADS Less Than Full Access Video Instructor. The candidate employee must attend a Less Than Full Access Video Training Orientation Session hosted by ISP in order to be authorized as a Video Instructor. Only authorized Instructors who maintain their own LEADS certified status may proctor the video and exam.

VII. PRACTITIONER TRAINING - NO DIRECT LEADS/NCIC ACCESS

Certification via nexTEST is not mandated; however, this training must be provided in some form. The benefit to using nexTEST is to assist with confirmation that training has been provided and maintained in nexTEST. Also, the user will receive an email notification from nexTEST when their certification is due to expire.

NCIC mandates that users who do not directly access LEADS/NCIC data (i.e., directly key the inquiry identifiers into LEADS) receive LEADS training within six (6) months of employment to ensure they understand the LEADS/NCIC data and its content. Responsibility for providing this training lies with the agency's LAC. This responsibility includes training users for any nonterminal agencies that the agency may provide LEADS service. This training may be provided in many forms (nexTEST, class instruction, one-on-one, manual/course book, etc.).

To assist with providing this training, ISP has developed two nexTEST courses: Practitioner of LEADS Data for Administrators (i.e., agency heads) and Practitioner of LEADS Data for Officers and Other Criminal Justice Personnel.

It is the responsibility of the LAC to coordinate training of all agency personnel on LEADS/NCIC capabilities, procedures, regulations and policies, and maintain an accurate record/list of employees who have been trained. Any new information applicable to the indirect user should be provided as it becomes available, provided by ISP usually through the LEADS Daily Briefing.

VIII. SECURITY AWARENESS TRAINING

NCIC mandates that security awareness training be provided at least once every two (2) years to all personnel with access to LEADS/NCIC (FBI CJIS) and its related data, equipment, networks, routers, etc.

This includes direct and indirect LEADS Users (practitioners), as well as IT/Network and vendor employees (criminal justice or noncriminal justice). All new employees who have access to LEADS/FBI CJIS systems and all appropriate IT/vendor personnel shall receive security awareness training within six (6) months of their appointment or assignment

A. *Direct Users*

Security Awareness has been added as a module to the Full Access and Less Than Full Access (LTFA) nexTEST courses, both initial and recertification, so direct Users will achieve this training when they complete their normal LEADS certification. They should not take Security Awareness as a separate course.

NOTE: LTFA Users achieving LEADS certification via the LTFA Video Certification Program must have the video curriculum supplemented by the inclusion of the Security Awareness documents posted on the LEADS Info site (further explanation below).

B. *Indirect Users (Practitioners)*

There are two Security Awareness training options for Practitioners:

1. Security Awareness through nexTEST

a) To take the Security Awareness course, the agency's nexTEST Group Administrator must ensure that the Security Awareness course has been assigned to the Learner as a certification course. Once the Learner completes the Security Awareness course, the certification path will be set up to place the Security Awareness course - not the Practitioner course - in his Mandatory Training for him to take again in two years.

1) *Practitioners taking the Practitioner course for the first time (must be done within 6 months of employment or assignment)*

(a) Security Awareness has been added as a module to both nexTEST LEADS Practitioner courses. Those Learners who are taking a Practitioner course for the first time will achieve this training when they complete the LEADS Practitioner course in nexTEST.

2) *Practitioners who are already Practitioner trained*

(a) Users who are already practitioner trained need only complete the Security Awareness course every two years. It is not necessary to take the whole Practitioner course again, unless a Learner would like to as a refresher.

C. Security Awareness not through nexTEST (applies to LTFA Video Training Program)

As an alternative to nexTEST, the Security Awareness course has been posted to the LEADS Information site (LEADS 2000 Main Page > LEADS Information) as a .pdf, a powerpoint, and as document containing the powerpoint screen captures. It is acceptable for those who are already Practitioner trained to complete the Security Awareness course by reading one of the documents and signing the Security Awareness Confirmation Signature form (also available on the Info Site). The form must be kept on file at the agency as proof the Security Awareness training was completed.

D. Vendors and IT staff

Vendors and IT persons (criminal justice or noncriminal justice) with access to LEADS/NCIC equipment, networks, routers, etc. must be Security Awareness trained once every two years. The initial training must be completed within 6 months of employment or assignment and every two years thereafter.

1. Vendors/IT staff who are employed by the criminal justice agency

Those persons who are employed by the criminal justice agency may either complete the Security Awareness training through nexTEST or by reading the documents posted on the LEADS Information site and signing the Security Awareness Confirmation Signature form. The form must be kept on file at the agency as proof the Security Awareness training was completed. If they prefer to use nexTEST and do not currently have a nexTEST account, one must be created by the agency's Group Administrator.

2. Vendors/IT staff who are not employed by the criminal justice agency

Those persons who are not employed by the criminal justice agency (i.e., a person who is employed by the village or county IT department or works for a private company/vendor contracted to provide IT service for the CJ agency) must complete the Security Awareness course by reading the documents that are posted on the LEADS Information site and signing the Security Awareness Confirmation Signature form. The form must be kept on file at the agency as proof the Security Awareness training was completed. These persons should not be entered into nexTEST. Vendors/IT persons not employed by the criminal justice agency should not have access to LEADS/NCIC data and should not certify at the Full Access, Less Than Full Access, or Practitioner level.

If the IT and/or Vendor employees provide IT service to more than one criminal justice agency, the Security Awareness training completed at one agency will also apply to the others. It is not necessary for the employee to achieve this training at each agency. Proof of completion should be shared with each agency.

IX. NEXTEST Instructions

Instructions on accessing nexTEST, as well as instructions for an agency's Group Administrator's duties, can be obtained via LEADS 2000 > Field Specialists > nexTEST Instructions or via the internet at www.isp.state.il.us/leads/leadspub

X. QUESTIONS

For questions concerning LEADS training and/or certification, contact the LEADS Integrated Help Desk at - 866/LEADS-00 (866/532-3700) or 217/782-4155.