

KQS Credentialing Ceremony 31 July 2025



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July 31, 2025

State Emergency Operations Center,
Frankfort, KY

Members of Kentucky Emergency Management hosted the second credentialing ceremony for the Kentucky Qualification System (KQS) today. The ceremony celebrated Chief Matthew Swiderski for successfully completing the prerequisite training and education needed to earn his KQS credentials.

Chief Swiderski is now certified to serve on Incident Management Teams (IMTs) as a Planning Section Chief. These teams help manage large disasters and big public events by keeping things safe, organized, and running smoothly. It takes a lot of knowledge and experience to do that—and thanks to KQS; Kentucky has added one more member to its officially qualified team.

KQS is a relatively new program in Kentucky; it represents the Commonwealth's implementation of the National Qualification System (NQS). It began with the formation of an Advisory Committee in 2023 of state and local partners. The goal was to establish and maintain fully trained persons for service on IMTs and Emergency Operation Center Assistance Teams that can assist within the Commonwealth or, if requested, outside the state.

These teams usually assist with the management of operational, logistical, informational, planning, fiscal, community, and safety issues associated with large public events and complex emergency incidents. Specifically, IMTs are a rostered group of qualified personnel consisting of an Incident Commander; Command and General staff such as Finance, Operations, and Planning Section Chiefs, Public Information and Safety Officers; along with other key positions.

“KQS ensures leaders are ready to manage disasters in Kentucky’s darkest days,” said the KQS Program Manager, Dr. Charlie Harris. “Chief Swiderski is the third professional credentialed in KQS and the first Planning Section Chief.”

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Chief Swiderski currently serves as a District Chief in the Lexington Fire Department. Recently, he deployed in February 2025 on an Incident Management Team to Southeastern Kentucky to assist with the response to the flooding.

Eric Gibson, Director of the Kentucky Division of Emergency Management, presented a framed certificate of accreditation and two official KQS patches for their uniforms. A qualification review board, composed of first responders, emergency management, emergency response, law enforcement, and other professionals review all certification packets.



Congratulations to Chief Swiderski on this exciting achievement. We are proud to call you KQS credentialed professionals!

For more information about KQS contact the Program Manager, Dr. Charlie Harris, at (502) 607-5707, charlie.harris@ky-em.org, or visit the program's website at: <https://kyem.ky.gov/programs/Pages/Kentucky-Qualification-System.aspx>