

PUBLICATION IN *TEXAS REGISTER*

The Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (Commission) adopts new 37 Texas Administrative Code §221.48, Public Information Officer Certificate, with changes to the proposed text as published in the March 13, 2026 issue of the *Texas Register* (51 TexReg 1585). The rule will be republished.

This adopted new rule conforms with the addition of Texas Government Code §418.333 made by House Bill 33 (89R). The adopted new rule establishes the requirements for obtaining and maintaining a public information officer certificate. This includes successful completion of an initial course to obtain the certificate and annual continuing education hours required by the Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM) to maintain the certificate. If the certificate becomes invalid due to failure to complete the required continuing education hours, the holder may renew the certificate by completing all outstanding continuing education hours. In consultation with TDEM, minor changes were made to subsections (c) and (d) of the proposed rule to accurately reflect TDEM's role and operations regarding continuing education, which will be more lenient and provide more options for certificate holders than what was initially proposed.

The public comment period began on March 13, 2026, and ended on April 16, 2026, at the conclusion of the public meeting of the Commission. Four public comments were received.

Public Comment No. 1 from the Falls County Constable Precinct 1: Commenter is opposed to the requirement of needing the certificate and having to renew the certificate every year.

Commission Response: These requirements are imposed by the additions of Texas Government Code §§411.3735 and 418.333 as made by House Bill 33 (89R).

Public Comment No. 2 from the Rockport Police Department: Commenter is opposed to the requirement of having to renew the certificate every year and suggests aligning the renewal with other current Commission certificates.

Commission Response: This requirement is imposed by the additions of Texas Government Code §§411.3735 and 418.333 as made by House Bill 33 (89R).

Public Comment No. 3 from the Eastland County Constable Precinct 2: Commenter is opposed to the requirement of having to renew the certificate every year and suggests making the certificate valid for life or aligning the renewal with the four-year training cycle.

Commission Response: This requirement is imposed by the additions of Texas Government Code §§411.3735 and 418.333 as made by House Bill 33 (89R).

Public Comment No. 4 from the Houston Christian University Police Department: Commenter is opposed to the requirement of having to renew the certificate every year and suggests aligning the renewal with the two-year training unit.

Commission Response: This requirement is imposed by the additions of Texas Government Code §§411.3735 and 418.333 as made by House Bill 33 (89R).

The new rule is adopted pursuant to Texas Government Code §418.333, Certification and Continuing Education, and Texas Occupations Code §1701.151, General Powers of Commission; Rulemaking Authority. Texas Government Code §418.333 requires an applicant for a public information officer certification to complete minimum education and training requirements for initial certification and to complete continuing education to maintain the certificate. Texas Occupations Code §1701.151 authorizes the Commission to adopt rules for the administration of Occupations Code Chapter 1701.

The new rule as adopted affects or implements Texas Government Code §418.333, Certification and Continuing Education, and Texas Occupations Code §1701.151, General Powers of Commission; Rulemaking Authority. No other code, article, or statute is affected by this proposal.

The adopted new rule has been reviewed by legal counsel and found to be a valid exercise of the Commission's legal authority.

§221.48. Public Information Officer Certificate.

- (a) To obtain a public information officer (PIO) certificate, an applicant must:
 - (1) successfully complete an initial PIO course approved by the commission; and
 - (2) report completion of this course to the commission.
- (b) A certificate is valid for one year from issuance.
- (c) To keep the certificate valid, the holder must successfully complete the PIO continuing education hours required by the Texas Division of Emergency Management prior to each anniversary of the issuance of the certificate.
- (d) If the certificate becomes invalid, a holder may renew the certificate by completing all outstanding continuing education hours.
- (e) The effective date of this section is June 1, 2026.