

Tips on Getting Your Credential(s)

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AEC



Tonight's Topics

- Welcome
- My background
- Importance of getting credentialed & meeting's purpose
- C4
- F3
- P3
- MAC



Welcome

- Gain insights and learn from my mistakes.
- Help increase your chances of getting your credential(s) on the first try.
- Least amount of “calories spent.”
- Expose common pitfalls.
- What are the auto-fails vs nit issues.
- What are the things I messed up on, yet still passed.



My Background

- HAM since 1993
- Joined CARES – Nov '16
- Became an AEC in late '20
- C4 – July '22
- MAC – Dec '22
- F3 – Feb '23
- P3 – Mar '23
- Things are still fresh in my memory
- Like the HAM license, it's a pass or fail, score doesn't matter



Importance of Getting Credentialed

- Proficiency during a stressful event, much more than during an orderly exercise.
- Accuracy, even 98% may not be good enough, protocols.
- Speed.
- Performance *standards* & best practices.
- Not good enough to “just do what others will do” because they may be doing it wrong, and I won’t even know it.
- Inactive members are likely to show up.
- SUVs, code of conduct.



Me Preparing for My Evaluation



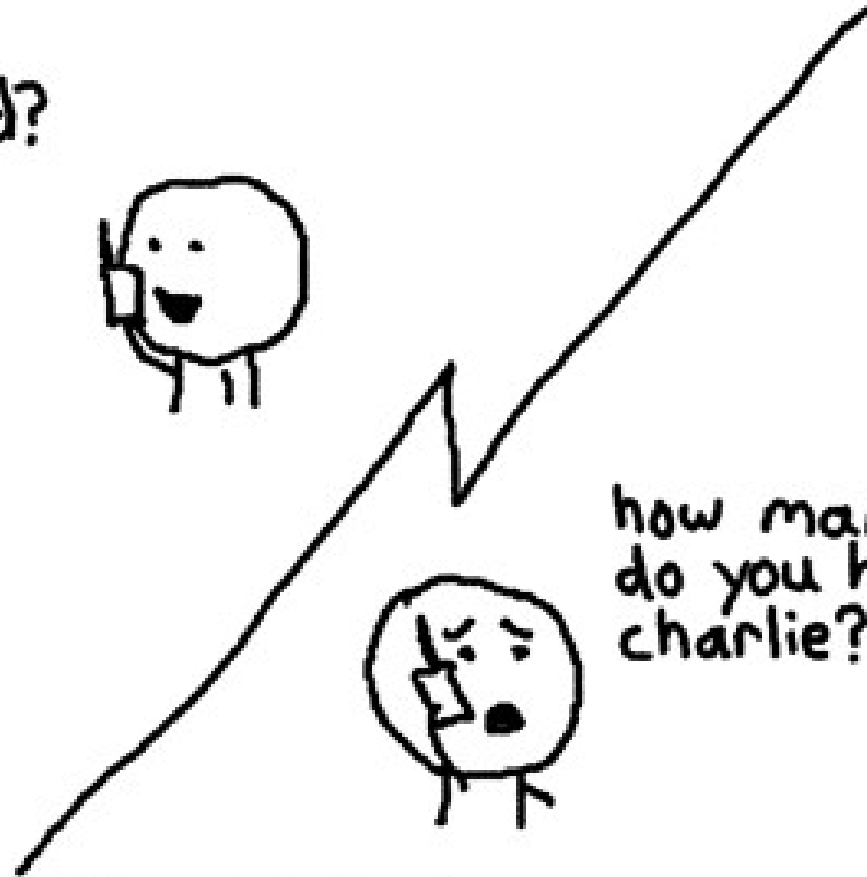
Why Are We Having This Meeting?

- Help you feel like you CAN DO this. If I can do it, so can you!
- Lots of steps, but if you know where each one is, it's not hard.
- Be methodical and use a check-off list approach. Go-kit.
- High anxiety because I wasn't sure what to expect nor how the eval process actually works.
- Focus on the procedural things to look out for, to help you pass on your first attempt.
- We need more CARES members to get credentialed.
- Learn from my mistakes.



Communicating Style

charlie six,
do you read?



how many friends
do you have named
charlie?!



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Communicator Type IV (C4)

- The first is one of the hardest of the 3 credentials I've gotten so far.
- 1 or 2 SCCo classes (depending on your HAM experience, 4 online self-paced courses).
- 12-hour go-kit.
- Know the basic field operation of your HT.
- Meet with Jim/Judy and go down the list, to get the sign-off.
- Some noteworthy things: fuse inside of DC power adapter tip, external antenna (take picture), adapters including N-type, compass.
- Acceptable food/water level.
- Be actively involved (Tues nets, PSEs, follow along to the SVECS nets, etc).



C4 Continued

- Links to where to get the coax adapters.
- A link to ONE download that contains all of the required forms.
- Have softcopies on your phone instead (HAM license, phone numbers, frequencies list, MM report, police/fire #s, etc).
- Putting phone in aircraft mode & show SCCo map offline.
- Use 12-hr go-kit list as a check-off list of all the things you need to take.
- Cash (expect no-op ATMs; \$1s, don't want to pay \$20/bottle).
- Took me 20-30 minutes or so, then you email in the signed doc to the Credential Program Manager for processing.
- Lots of details, but each step is straight forward and no curve balls.



Go-Kit-Related Links

- [All 13 SCCo forms](#) in a single download.
- Coax connectors [1](#), [2](#), [3](#), [4](#), [5](#), [6](#), [7](#).
- 2-part [\\$8 phone message pad](#).
- Covered [\\$12 clipboard](#).
- SCCo [voice](#) & [packet](#) frequency list.
- [DEC/ADEC](#) & [city EC](#) phone numbers.



C4 Requirements Form

SCCo RACES Credential Record

Type IV Communicator

Name: _____ Call Sign: _____ Jurisdiction: _____

All activities must be performed according to the Performance Standards. For specifics of each of these requirements, consult the Credentialing Program Handbook. Instructions are on the next page.

Radio Officer or Designee			Credential Requirements (completed within the last two years)
Date	Call Sign	Initials	
			Administrative
			Work/live/active in Santa Clara County; respond to primary jurisdiction
			18 years of age or older
			Valid Technician class or higher Amateur Radio license
			Valid California driver's license or State-issued ID card
			Reliable transportation for assignments
			Has read "SCCo ARES/RACES Credentialing Program Handbook"
			Has read "SCCo ARES/RACES Perf. Stds. & Best Practices"
			Registered with primary jurisdiction as Disaster Service Worker
			Recommendation from local jurisdiction Radio Officer
			Training
			Santa Clara County ARES/RACES Training
			Intro to Emergency Communications (or equivalent)
			Fundamentals of Emergency Communications*
			Emergency Management Training*
			ICS-100 / IS-100: Intro to ICS
			ICS-200 / IS-200: ICS for Single Resources
			ICS-700 / IS-700: Intro to NIMS
			SEMS G606: Intro to SEMS
			Equipment
			All items in SCCo standard 2-hour Carry Kit
			All items in SCCo standard 12-hour Go Kit
			Knowledge
			Demonstrate personal radio familiarity per Credential handbook
			Participation (or equivalent, as determined by local jurisdiction RO)
			Min 8: Check into weekly city net
			Min 8: Monitor weekly SPECS or SVECS net
			Min 2: Radio oper duty at quarterly drills
			Min 1: Radio oper duty at approved functional or full-scale exercise
			Min 1: Radio oper duty at approved public service event or incident
			Performance
			Functioned effectively & professionally with served agency
			Has maturity and experience to perform according to "SCCo ARES/RACES Performance Standards and Best Practices"
			Ongoing Participation
			Agree to minimum training and participation requirements

Notes:

*See the Credentialing Program Handbook for exceptions to training class completion within the past two years.

SCCo RACES Credential Record

Type IV Communicator

Signatures:

Candidate:

I have completed all of the requirements listed above as described in the Credentialing Program handbook. And I agree to maintain at least the minimum participation level required in the Credentialing Program Handbook and to abide by all methods and procedures defined in the Credentialing Program Handbook and the Performance Standards and Best Practices.

Print Name of Candidate

Signature of Candidate

Call Sign

Date

Radio Officer:

I have reviewed the requirements in the Credentialing Program Handbook for each of the above items and have verified that the candidate has fully completed each requirement as described in the handbook.

Print Name of Radio Officer

Signature of Radio Officer

Call Sign

Date

Usage instructions:

Candidate:

- It is the candidate's responsibility to maintain this record
- This document functions as a confirmation of completion of the credential requirements
- Bring this document with you when you meet with your local jurisdiction Radio Officer
- Have your local jurisdiction Radio Officer (or designee) initial each line item completed
- Retain the document as your "receipt" that you have completed the itemized requirements
- When all items are completed, the candidate and local jurisdiction Radio Officer sign above
- When completed and signed, consult the Credentialing Program Handbook for the submittal procedure

Radio Officer:

- The checklist above is an abbreviation of each requirement. Before initialing each requirement, review the complete requirement in the Credentialing Program handbook.
- The radio officer may delegate the responsibility of initialing the completion of individual requirements to a deputy or assistant.
- Only the radio officer for the jurisdiction can provide the final signature.



Field Communicating



Field Communicator Type III (F3)

- Knowledge checks + proficiency demonstrations.
- Purpose/usage of county nets is where I stumbled. Forgot to study that page, but I thought I knew, but I really didn't. Realized later how important it is to know the differences.
- Goal: pass the first time w/out needing a follow-up, but you MAY get a chance to re-do a portion of the knowledge part.
- Have your MM scale on your phone.
- I used to think I had enough skills (didn't know, what I didn't know). Now realize what I didn't know prior to my F3.
- Proficiency, confidence, fluidity. Lead, not just follow others.



F3 Continued

- First thing before you forget: Display your operating position sign.
- Practice, practice, practice, with the radio off. Then OTA with a CARES buddy (Tac 3). Lots of sample messages available.
- Monthly message passing drills OTA are much more helpful than they seem.
- Tackle the Med and Hard practice messages too. The Hard ones aren't all that much harder, usually different form.
- **MUST** get up and take incoming messages to the SS, otherwise you may fail!



F3 Requirements Form

Check off list

SCCo RACES Credential Record

Field Communicator Type III (F3)

Name: _____ Call Sign: _____ Jurisdiction: _____

All activities must be performed according to the Performance Standards. For specifics of each of these requirements, consult the Credentialing Program Handbook.

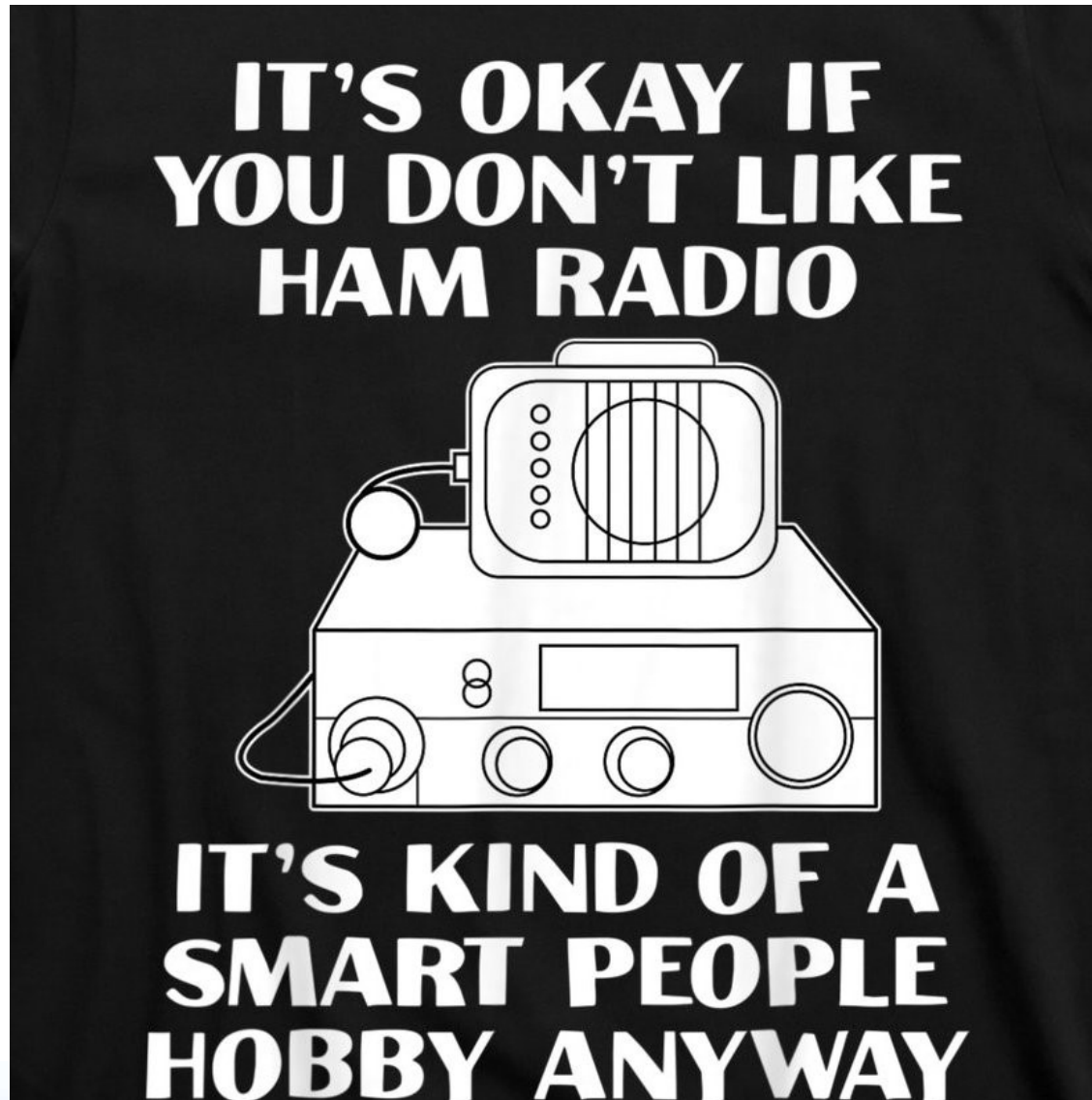
Evaluator			Credential Requirements
Date	Call Sign	Initials	
			Prerequisites
			Communicator Type IV
			Training
			Santa Clara County ARES/RACES Training
			Level-specific training (see handbook)
			Participation
			Min 8: monitor weekly SPECS or SVECS
			Min 8: check-in on weekly city net
			Min 1: field comm duty at approved drill/exercise
			Min 1: field comm duty at approved public service event or incident
			Equipment
			Communicator Type IV equipment
			Level-specific equipment
			Knowledge
			Radio familiarity
			Purpose and usage of county nets
			Mike-Mike scale for field communicators
			Managing problems
			Operator Skill
			County mobilization process
			Traffic handling: low-to-medium rate
			Traffic handling: 3 rd party
			Traffic handling: operator-to-operator
			Logs and Records: 211A, 214, 309, other

Usage:

- It is the candidate's responsibility to maintain this record
- This document functions as a confirmation of completion of each credential requirement
- Bring this document with you to each evaluation attended for this credential
- Have the evaluator sign-off on each line item completed
- Retain this document as your personal record in case of error or loss of county records



Packet Operator



Packet Operator Type III (P3)

- Beg/borrow/steal a table: ~\$40 from Amazon or Home Depot
- Before you forget: Put your Radio Communicator sign out
- Know your laptop's discharge pattern when OUTDOORS. It'll be different than when indoors. Ask me how I know.
- Screen glare is real!
- Typos are easier outdoors.
- Have a way to recharge your laptop *during* the eval. Battery running the radio and TNC should also be able to power the laptop.



P3 Continued

- Battery should be large enough to last 4 hrs. Not just 2 during the eval's operational period. Unless you like unnecessary stress, aim for 6 hrs straight operation outdoors.
- Mark's monthly drills are VERY similar to the eval process + knowledge checks.
- Memorize just a handful Kantronics-specific TNC commands (isn't as hard as I had thought).
- MUST get up and take incoming messages to the shelter manager/SS, otherwise you might auto-fail!
- Even though this is a packet eval, your voice 309 will be checked too. Remember to note your H&W checks in your 309 also!



P3 Continued Again

- Sign your PRINTED 309 also (there will be two 309s).
- Double check for typos in all that you type. Easier to miss them in the bright outdoors light.
- USB drive is so that you can print out the messages you've received. Central printer will be provided.
- Know how to change your message sequence number.
- Remember to reference other message # if appropriate.
- Turn in all paperwork, including any messages you received, *prior* to the operational period.



P3 Requirements Form

SCCo RACES Credential Record

Packet Operator Type III (P3)

Name: _____ Call Sign: _____ Jurisdiction: _____

All activities must be performed according to the Performance Standards. For specifics of each of these requirements, consult the Credentialing Program Handbook.

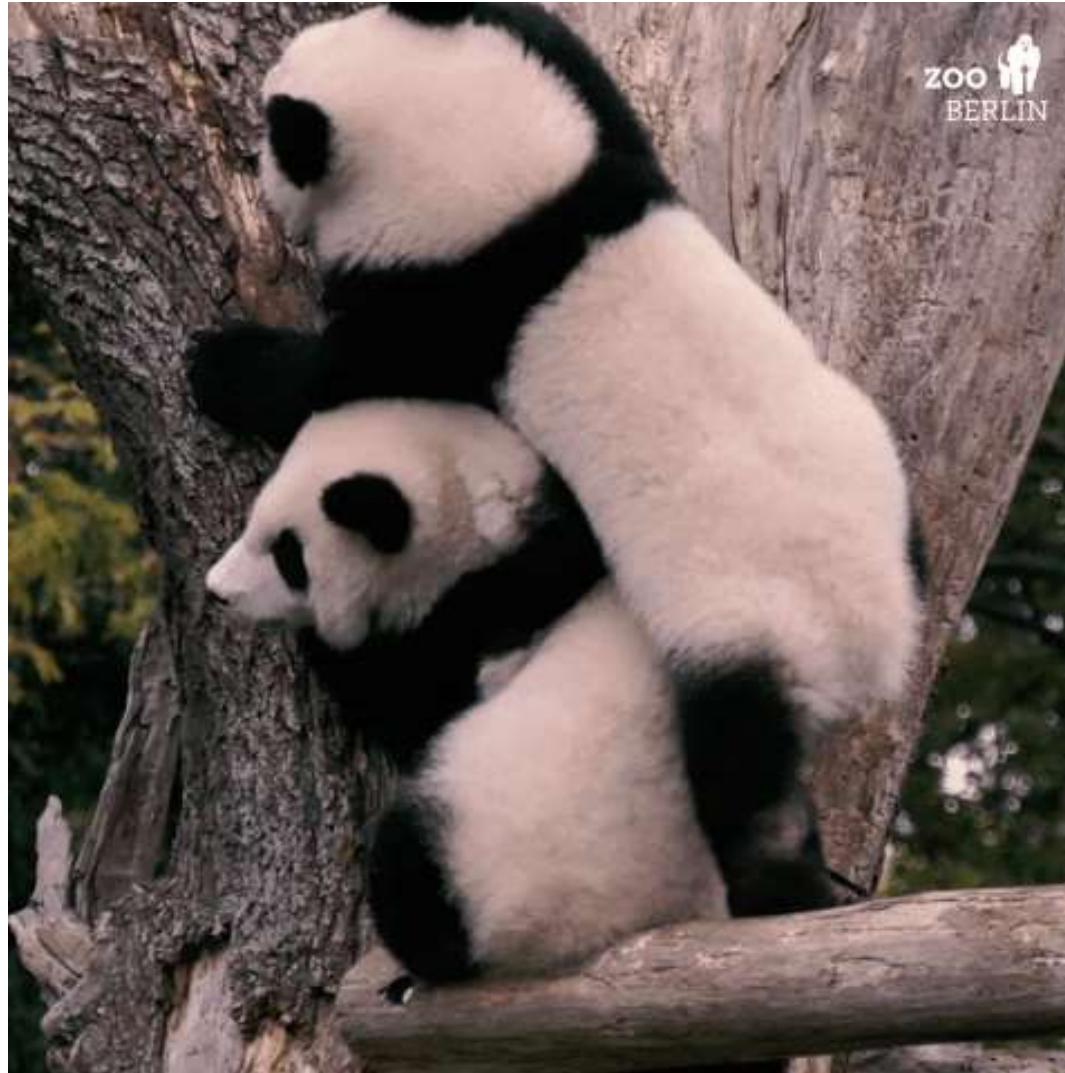
Evaluator			Credential Requirements
Date	Call Sign	Initials	
			Prerequisites
			Field Communicator Type III
			Training
			Santa Clara County ARES/RACES Training
			Level-specific training (see handbook)
			Participation
			Min 4: weekly packet practice
			Min 2: monthly packet practice
			Min 1: packet op at approved drill/exercise, public service or incident
			Equipment
			Field Communicator Type III equipment
			Knowledge
			Radio familiarity
			Packet station familiarity
			Managing problems
			Operator Skill
			Traffic handling: low-medium rate
			Traffic handling: 3 rd party
			Traffic handling: operator-to-operator
			Logs and Records: 211A, 214, 309, other

Usage:

- It is the candidate's responsibility to maintain this record
- This document functions as a confirmation of completion of each credential requirement
- Bring this document with you to each evaluation attended for this credential
- Have the evaluator sign-off on each line item completed
- Retain this document as your personal record in case of error or loss of county records



MAC Endorsement



MAC Endorsement

- I wanted the *option* to be able to help nearby cities, IF Cupertino is ok and others are not.
- You have to have this *before* an incident.
- Just state your desire to Jim + SCCo full background check.
- SCCo LiveScan background check is required even if you've passed the Federal background check.
- Exception review and other docs were required from me, due to not having my birth certificate.
- I doubt this would happen, but there's a SCCo statement that states that should one fail the background check, one may be barred from participating at the city level also.

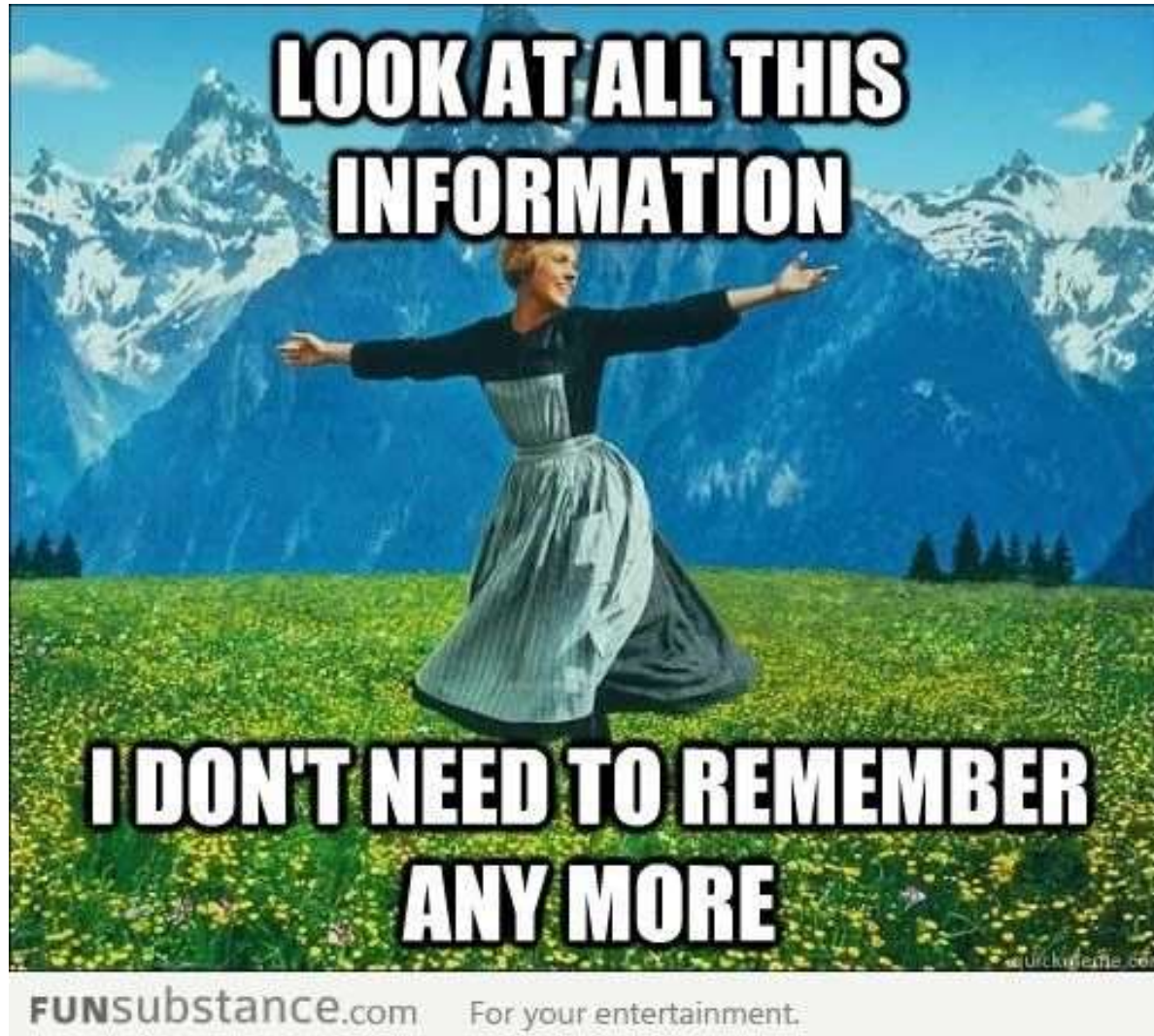


Summary

- Evaluators *want* you to pass.
- They can answer questions prior to the start but once the eval period starts, your questions/behavior will be counted.
- Show that you know what you're doing. Evaluators want to see that you generally "get it."
- Nits can stack but there are certain things that can be "auto fail" items.
- We need more credentialed CARES Members.
- Ping me closer to your eval time if you want a "refresher" then.



Finally...



Thank you

Any Questions?

