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# **NATO STANDARD**

## **ATDLP-5.55**

# **NATO QUALIFICATION LEVELS FOR TACTICAL DATA LINK PERSONNEL**

**Edition A Version 1  
SEPTEMBER 2017**



**NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION**

**ALLIED TACTICAL DATA LINK PUBLICATION**

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**NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION (NATO)**

**NATO STANDARDIZATION OFFICE (NSO)**

**NATO LETTER OF PROMULGATION**

14 September 2017

1. The enclosed Allied Tactical Data Link Publication ATDLP-5.55, Edition A, Version 1 NATO QUALIFICATION LEVELS FOR TACTICAL DATA LINK PERSONNEL, which has been approved by the nations in the C3 BOARD, is promulgated herewith. The agreement of nations to use this publication is recorded in STANAG 5555.
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**1. AIM**

The aim of this agreement is to, within NATO; adopt standard qualification levels for Tactical Data Link (TDL) personnel in order to ensure interoperability regarding the employment of TDLs during Joint and Combined NATO exercises and operations.

**2. AGREEMENT**

Participating nations agree to adopt standard qualification levels for TDL personnel to be employed on NATO units operating at sea, on land, in the air and within shore based establishments during Joint and Combined NATO exercises and operations, based on a common understanding of minimum knowledge and experience required at different operational levels to efficiently employ TDLs. Knowledge and experience has to be provided under national responsibility by participating in theoretical and practical training and in live operations. Competence should be frequently assessed and evaluated to ensure that the requirements of the NATO Qualification Levels for TDL Personnel as specified in this STANAG are met.

**3. TRAINING AND COMPETENCE ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION**

a. TDL personnel must satisfactorily complete theoretical and practical training specified and conducted by national authorities, as a minimum to reach the lowest level, and advanced training to qualify for the higher levels in order to meet multi-national requirements as articulated in the NATO Qualification Levels for TDL Personnel.

b. The minimum standard of initial training required by TDL personnel should be such that each individual should for each incremental level of qualification satisfactorily demonstrate theoretical and practical competence. If it is not intended to employ the individual outside a particular geographic area or environment, the training may be limited to the information relevant to that specific geographic area or operating environment. It is the responsibility of national authorities to evaluate their own personnel in actual theoretical and/or practical competence.

c. Competent national authorities will decide the method by which assessments for the award and retention of NATO Qualification Levels for TDL personnel are conducted. In general, such assessments could be the validation of each individual's knowledge; by theoretical or practical tests, or a combination of both.

d. TDL personnel deployed to an international exercise, training and/or operation, should undergo a local endorsement in which the TDL personnel should be introduced and familiarized with the TDL equipment in place. After the familiarization, a checkout should be conducted in order to evaluate the level of proficiency. Length and intensity of the local endorsement should reflect the experience of the operator as well as the complexity of the operation.

#### **4. INDIVIDUAL KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENTS**

National authorities will be responsible for training its own TDL personnel to be employed on units operating at sea, on land, in the air and within shore based establishments during joint and combined NATO exercises and operations to the following minimum criteria to meet NATO interoperability requirements, such as having:

- a. A working knowledge of the English language applicable to NATO mission instructions and operational messages as they relate to TDL operations.
- b. A general knowledge of the capabilities and limitations of Multi-Link systems, associated communications equipment and the computer based systems used to display the TDL information.
- c. A good knowledge of the capabilities and limitations of various types of TDL systems and the surface, underwater, air and land based units, which use them.
- d. A general knowledge of environmental conditions as they effect TDL operations.
- e. A general knowledge of national and international frequency clearance procedures as they relate to TDL operations.
- f. A knowledge of communications procedures used in planning and conducting Multi-Link operations.
- g. Attendance and successful completion of a standardised training curriculum appropriate to each NATO qualification level

#### **5. NATO QUALIFICATION LEVELS FOR TDL PERSONNEL**

TDL personnel to be employed on units operating at sea, on land, in the air and within shore based establishments during joint and combined NATO exercises and operations specifically requires the following knowledge and experience, qualifying for one of the four levels below:

- a. Level One

Level One TDL Personnel shall have the following knowledge and training experience:

- (1) Knowledge of TDL operations and procedures:
  - i. Ability to operate TDL equipment in live or simulated environment.
- (2) Experience employing TDLs in a simulated environment:
  - i. Complete national training curriculum with an assessment as Satisfactory by national authorities.
- (3) Complete nationally approved introductory training course for Combined Joint Operations using TDL based curriculum:
  - i. Basic awareness of fielded NATO Joint and Coalition TDL systems and capable platforms.

b. Level Two

Level Two TDL Personnel shall have the following knowledge and experience in the area of TDLs:

- (1) Knowledge of TDL network architecture, planning and requirements:
  - i. Thorough understanding of national TDL architecture;
  - ii. Thorough understanding of TDL equipment, communications and their related protocols;
  - iii. Good understanding of National Multi-Link network planning and architecture development to assist a national Multi-Link Coordinator;
  - iv. Good understanding of regional joint equipment and training issues and solutions; and
  - v. Ability to generate periodical training and lessons identified/learnt reports.
- (2) Knowledge of TDL operation and procedures:
  - i. Thorough understanding of capabilities and limitations of national TDLs;

- ii. Good understanding of capabilities and limitations of international TDLs;
  - iii. Working knowledge of international TDL interoperability capabilities and limitations for Information Exchange Requirements (IERs);
  - iv. Good understanding of regional standard operating procedures within area of responsibility (AOR);
  - v. Proficiency in drafting joint regional operational messages related to TDL operations; and
  - vi. Proficiency in disseminating and implementing joint rules and regulations as detailed by National Data Link Management Centres.
- (3) Complete nationally approved training in Advanced Combined Joint Operations using TDL based curriculum as well as training on standardized military messages used to disseminate Joint and Coalition Multi-Link operation coordination, initialization, and operational maintenance messages (i.e. OPTASK LINK, etc.):
- i. Knowledge of capabilities and limitations of more than one fielded NATO Joint and Coalition operational Multi-Link operations systems and capable platforms, their Tactics, Techniques and Procedures (TTPs); and
  - ii. Basic working knowledge and fluency in standard approved NATO message formats applicable to Multi-Link operations.
- c. Level Three
- Level Three TDL Personnel shall have the following knowledge and experience:
- (1) Knowledge of TDL network architecture, planning and requirements:
- i. Advanced understanding of Multi-Link planning; and
  - ii. Adept in briefing Command on units role in Multi-Link architecture.
- (2) Knowledge of TDL operations, and procedures:



- i. Thorough understanding of units TDL equipment and their capabilities and limitations;
  - ii. Thorough knowledge of national and NATO procedures; and
  - iii. Ability to assume responsibility for unit TDL operations and training;
  - iv. Ability to draft unit TDL messages and to assist with regional message requirements; and
  - v. Ability to interpret orders and directives related to units TDL equipment and its operational applications.
- (3) Complete nationally approved training in Advanced Combined Joint Operations using TDL based curriculum as well as advanced training on standardized military messages course(s):
- i. Advanced Knowledge of capabilities and limitations of fielded NATO Joint and Coalition Multi-Link operation systems and capable platforms, their Tactics, Techniques and Procedures (TTPs), and Multi-Link operation planning considerations including NATO Information Exchange Requirements (IERs); and
  - ii. Advanced working knowledge and fluency in a standard approved NATO message format applicable to Multi-Link operations.

d. Level Four

Level Four TDL Personnel shall have the following knowledge and experience in the area of TDLs:

- (1) Knowledge of TDL network architecture, planning and requirements:
- i. Advanced understanding of multilink architecture;
  - ii. Thorough understanding of international TDL interoperability issues;
  - iii. Thorough understanding of national TDLs; and
  - iv. Advanced knowledge of Multi-Link network planning and architecture development.

- (2) Knowledge of TDL operations and procedures:
  - i. Ability to generate all command media related to Multi-TDL network planning and architecture;
  - ii. Ability to prepare and provide briefs to Warfare Commanders as required;
  - iii. Ability to dictate and enforce standing TDL operating regulations and procedures nationally and within own operation or exercise AOR;
  - iv. Ability to prepare and provide Flight Information Region (FIR) and AOR analysis of operational network functionality;
  - v. Ability to coordinate and deconflict TDL operations with appropriate national and multi-national agencies;
  - vi. Ability to coordinate IERs between multinational forces for mission execution;
  - vii. Ability to identify and obtain Multi-Link network requirements; and
  - viii. Ability to identify required Allied keymat for appropriate networks.
  
- (3) Complete nationally approved training for Data Link Manager/Interface Control Officer (DLM/ICO) leadership based curriculum training course(s):
  - i. Lead the Data Link Management Cell (DLMC) organization as the DLM/ICO and/or be responsible for Joint DLMC operations and active management of the Multi-Tactical Data Link Network as a Joint DLMC Watch Officer;
  - ii. Determine the IER for the Multi-Link operation, exploit/enable platform Capabilities and Limitations with respect to TDL employment; provide Multi-Link operation guidance in the OPTASK LINK and direct reconfiguration of the Multi-Link operation as situations dictate;
  - iii. Analyze the components of the Multi-Link operation and be able to make proactive decisions in support of operational and/or exercise objectives relative to the exchange of tactical data over the Multi-Link environment;

- iv. Present Multi-Link operation planning briefings to senior leadership and other Multi-Link operation operators as well as conduct daily Joint DLMC operations briefings;
- v. Relate the supported commander's objectives and intentions through other directive documents such as the OPLAN, Air Tasking Order, Airspace Control Order, etc. to the Multi-Link operations plan contained in the OPTASK LINK; and be able to provide real-time, expert advice to the supported commander in reaction to mission changes; and
- vi. Function as part of the supported commander's staff for Multi-Link operations planning and operational considerations.

## **6. RETENTION OF NATO QUALIFICATION LEVELS FOR TDL PERSONNEL**

National authorities will be responsible to ensure their TDL personnel remain current to ensure they meet NATO interoperability requirements for Joint and Combined Operations.

- a. To retain proficiency, it is recommended that TDL personnel be assessed periodically, not exceeding three years, by a competent national authority. This assessment may be conducted in a simulated or live environment, and is designed to ensure that each individual meets the requirement of its qualification level in both theoretical knowledge and practical application.
- b. If during an assessment or at any other time an individual(s) displays a need for more training or display a lack of knowledge of their duties and responsibilities, a competent national authority may review the individual(s) qualifications.
- c. Upon completion of a review, a competent national authority may rescind, reinstate or upgrade the qualification of its TDL personnel to be employed on units operating at sea, on land, in the air and within shore based establishments during joint and combined NATO exercises and operations.

## **7. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGREEMENT**

This Allied Publication is implemented when the national orders bringing ATDLP-5.55 into effect, have been issued to the forces concerned.

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