

# SAFECOM

## Meeting Summary

### SAFECOM Meeting

May 2, 2017

Marriott San Antonio Northwest, San Antonio, Texas

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#### Tuesday, May 2, 2017 – SAFECOM Meeting

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##### Meeting Highlights

- SAFECOM members heard from fellow SAFECOM members who have held office on how to better engage with elected officials and elevate the role of SAFECOM
- SAFECOM members discussed advancements related to Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG 9-1-1) and the current 9-1-1 environment
- SAFECOM members reviewed the findings from the SAFECOM Demographics Survey

##### Welcome and New Member Introductions

Chief Gerald Reardon, SAFECOM Chair, and Mark Grubb, SAFECOM Vice Chair, opened the meeting by welcoming participants and thanking everyone for taking time out of their busy schedules to attend the meeting and network with peers. Mark Grubb stated his satisfaction with the work SAFECOM committees have accomplished since the previous in-person meeting in October 2016. He asked members to keep strategic planning and the future of SAFECOM in mind as they continue to work in their committees.



*Figure 1: Chief Gerald Reardon, SAFECOM Chair, providing opening remarks at the beginning of the SAFECOM Meeting held on May 2, 2017.*

Chief Reardon mentioned the evolving nature of the public safety communication field. He expressed a desire to elevate SAFECOM within the public safety community, noting breadth and depth of knowledge and experience comprising SAFECOM members. Chief Reardon tasked SAFECOM with improving upon member's effort to represent SAFECOM and elevate strategic priorities and status in the public safety arena. He encouraged members to further collaborate and take advantage of each other's skills and expertise.

Dusty Rhoads, Public Safety & National Security Emergency Preparedness Governance Branch Chief, provided opening remarks on behalf of Ron Hewitt, the Office of Emergency Communications (OEC)

Director. He emphasized SAFECOM's position to drive emergency communications across DHS, and ultimately, the federal government. The time is now to drive public safety communications forward and lead others in improving challenges related to the public safety emergency communications ecosystem. Dusty believes SAFECOM is uniquely positioned to move the nation forward on all public safety communications fronts.

Chief Reardon and Mark Grubb concluded by introducing new SAFECOM members (Table 1) who have joined since the October 2016 in-person meeting in Norman, Oklahoma.

Table 1. New SAFECOM Members

Name	Affiliation
Brian Howard	National Congress of American Indians (NCAI)*
Chief Johnathan Lewin	Major Cities Chiefs Association (MCCA)*
Brian Schaeffer	National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians (NAEMT)

\*Denotes SAFECOM Executive Committee (EC) Member

### Elevating the Role of SAFECOM

During the December 6, 2016, SAFECOM Leadership Meeting, the Chair, Vice Chairs, and Committee Leads developed 2017 strategic priorities, including the need to improve engagement with traditional and non-traditional public safety entities and personnel on SAFECOM’s mission and priorities driving the public safety communications agenda. As part of this overall goal, SAFECOM leadership identified an opportunity to better educate legislators and other government officials, build relationships with incoming administration officials, utilize associations to message the importance of public safety communications, and establish SAFECOM as a prominent public safety advisory group and established resource in the field. With this in mind, SAFECOM looked internally to identify elected officials among its own membership to glean their perspectives on how best to reach decision makers at the state and local levels. This session also aimed to highlight best practices on supporting and fostering unique relationships.

During the session, Chief Reardon, SAFECOM Chair and SAFECOM at-large member from the City of Cambridge Fire Department, interviewed fellow SAFECOM members and elected officials, Connecticut State Senator Steve Cassano, National Association of Regional Councils, and Sheriff Paul Fitzgerald, National Sheriff’s Association. This targeted question and answer session revealed a number of key points and best practices.

Sheriff Fitzgerald noted the importance of collaboration. To make decisions that are in the best interest of his constituents, elected officials seek personnel with experience and subject matter expertise to stay informed. In that sense, SAFECOM should be considered a valuable commodity and body of knowledge to decision makers seeking information on solving problems from both a policy and operational perspective. The Sheriff encouraged members to promote SAFECOM’s role and the value it brings to enhancing people’s lives.

An elected official before getting involved in Public Safety, Senator Cassano had only been in his locally-elected post for eight days when a fire broke out on a county line in Connecticut. This incident enlightened him on the importance of ensuring good communication, not only among response personnel, but between public safety and elected officials, especially when negotiating time-sensitive solutions across district borders. In addition to keeping lines of communication open during periods of heightened response, local and state public safety communications entities should continue to engage elected officials on needs related to maintaining, upgrading, or building public safety communications systems. This keeps elected officials informed on how equipment life cycles influence local and state budgets, setting standards and expectations for funding requirements in the state. Fostering long-term relationships with elected officials leads to



Figure 2: Chief Gerald Reardon, interviewing fellow SAFECOM members and elected officials, Connecticut State Senator Steve Cassano and Paul Fitzgerald

greater advocacy for the issues. Sheriff Fitzgerald agreed on the importance of getting board members and elected officials involved early in the process. As funding continues to decrease supporting interoperability, Senator Cassano noted Connecticut's strategy combining funds to build out their statewide system with long-term maintenance needs. Sharing resources across borders also acts as a strategy protecting multiple regions within a state, initiating efforts toward greater cooperation and stretching funds.

Finally, Sheriff Fitzgerald and Senator Cassano suggested using committee materials, such as those produced by the [Education and Outreach](#) and [Governance](#) Committees, to educate elected officials, decision makers, and budget personnel. Sheriff Fitzgerald noted his efforts to share committee materials regularly at board meetings and with board supervisors. Senator Cassano often distributes SAFECOM information and documents to the regional council directors and chiefs of police, fire, and emergency medical service (EMS) personnel as well.

### **Where in the World is SAFECOM Information? Website Trivia Session**

Jay Kopstein, SAFECOM At-Large Member with the New York State Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Services, Chris Lombard, Interagency Board and SAFECOM Education and Outreach Committee Chair, and Michael Murphy, SAFECOM At-Large Member with the Baker, Louisiana, Police Department, hosted an interactive trivia game to educate SAFECOM members on SAFECOM's website content and to promote awareness for some of the committees' important documents. In a fun and interactive session, the audience was quizzed on their understanding of where products and resources are available online. After each question, the SAFECOM website was displayed and a navigation tutorial was provided to ensure members clearly understood where to find information.

Final scores from members' answers indicated familiarity with certain webpages over others. However, the positive feedback received from members expressing their new website knowledge validated the purpose of the session. The SAFECOM Education and Outreach Committee will continue to develop the website, making information more streamlined, easier to locate and easier to access.

### **Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG 9-1-1): Where Are We Now?**

SAFECOM members Terry Hall, National Associations of Counties (NACo), Mark Buchholz, SAFECOM At-Large Member for Willamette Valley 9-1-1 Director, Oregon, and Michael Davis, SAFECOM At-Large Member for Ulster County 9-1-1 Emergency Communications, Emergency Services Dispatcher, New York, spoke on a panel regarding advancements related to Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG 9-1-1) and the current 9-1-1 environment. Panelists agreed states uniquely define NG 9-1-1 depending on challenges and how those are handled within the state. For instance, panelists reside in three different states, from three different parts of the country—Virginia, Oregon, and New York—and each alluded to varying approaches to integrating new technologies and capabilities.

Virginia is collecting a surcharge enacted through a state law. Terry Hall noted the state now collects the tax, rather than localities. In 2015, the state utilized grant money to develop a comprehensive plan through a series of town halls, which provided the public safety answering point (PSAP) and 9-1-1 community with a voice. In Virginia, 80% of emergency calls come from wireless devices and the call volume continues to increase. The state performed data analytics to record calls that come into PSAPs and the results led to the establishment of a Regional Advisory Council (RAC) to advise on and advocate for funding allocations for 9-1-1 projects. Terry noted this has been an effective advisory body, composed of 141 PSAPs suggesting recommendations, all of which have so far been accepted by the state. The RAC includes representation from the following fields and organizations: geographic information systems (GIS), information technology, Virginia Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials (APCO), the Virginia National Emergency Number Association (NENA), and

seven regional representatives from around the Commonwealth. Through several face-to-face meetings, the RAC identified several tasks on which to focus:

- Develop a 9-1-1 stakeholder communications plan comprised of policies and processes on how communications take place between stakeholders
- Conduct staffing analysis with a focus on staff training levels and the number of staff in each PSAP
- Develop baseline of capabilities services budget to determine costs
- Develop a baseline level of services to understand the minimum requirements to deploy an NG 9-1-1 system
- Establish a 9-1-1 deployment and sustainment strategy to identify how to fund both new and old technologies and create a clearinghouse of 9-1-1 best practices
- Develop a standard 9-1-1 capabilities and services report<sup>[1]</sup>

Virginia suggested 150 PSAPs may require \$69 million over five years to deploy NG 9-1-1. The sustainment plan requires the state to deploy NG 9-1-1 in a NENA i3 architecture standard for open compatibility. Virginia will still require general assembly to fill funding gaps.

Mike Davis is an Emergency Services Dispatcher for Ulster County, New York, 9-1-1 Emergency Communications New York is currently looking into the operational timeline for receiving data (texts, video, etc.) through call centers. Call center personnel would need to be trained and staffed to properly receive, process, and respond to certain types of information. New York has established an NG 9-1-1 Board and Working Group. Funding continues to be the state's biggest challenge. New York is starting to collect revenue from pre-paid cell phones and will use the funds for PSAPs. The state hopes to develop a statewide NG 9-1-1 system in place of a regional one.

Mark Buchholz is the Director of the Communications Division for the Salem, Oregon, Police Department. Salem has chosen to be a contractor service agency for 9-1-1. They provide 9-1-1 service for three counties and many police and fire departments. The state of Oregon is responsible for upgrading the network to NG 9-1-1 and has been faced with several complications preventing it from happening thus far. Oregon is comprised of 36 counties and 43 PSAPs, which have been reduced through consolidation from 280 over the past 30 years. The state contracted a study, which recommended even fewer PSAPs (9) over the next 10-15 year period. 9-1-1 tax revenue is collected per access line at 75 cents per month. Currently, the 9-1-1 tax collected represents only about 22% of cost to operate a 9-1-1 center. The State collects access line revenue from the carriers into a single pool of funds with two-thirds of the revenue allocated to PSAPs by service population and the remaining allocated to pay for the 9-1-1 network. Since there has been strong public pressure to expand to NG 9-1-1 services such as Text-to-911 and the State thus far unable to upgrade the 9-1-1 network, some PSAPs have begun hiring private vendors to provide those services and bypass the state 9-1-1 network.

Terry, 9-1-1 Director in the County of York, Virginia, noted transitions are an evolutionary process, and advised that states ensure their next purchase is cross-compatible and standards-based, and includes GIS representation. In terms of long term sustainment, states should begin to consider what comes after NG 9-1-1, including the advancement of social media. Information relevant and useful for response will be coming into PSAPs in all forms, including social media.

Mark advised applying the same records retention procedures to new these capabilities. There is a need to have the ability to import information into the Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) system to streamline

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<sup>[1]</sup> Available on the [VITA Website](#) after May 22, 2017

information to a single location—a costly endeavor. Collaboration among fire, emergency medical services, and law enforcement is necessary to reduce redundancies and costs.

Eddie Reyes, International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), was concerned not enough focus is being placed on personnel requirements. He predicted PSAPs will need to increase staff by 10%. Virginia developed data requirements, but still need to develop and adopt a process for archiving information. As a result of this paradigm shift, PSAPs will need to post, fill, and support new positions to analyze video and text, which may lead to difficulties managing expectations. Several SAFECOM members have expressed a desire to establish an NG 9-1-1 Working Group and clearinghouse. Interested members who were unable to sign up during the meeting should email the [SAFECOM Inbox](#).

### Demographics Survey Findings

In November 2016, the SAFECOM Education and Outreach (E&O) Committee led an effort to collect additional information about SAFECOM’s membership. The purpose was to better understand the unique qualities contributing to an aggregate skillset among members. Additionally, the effort aimed to identify gaps in current membership or areas where the program could expand its expertise. Captain Chris Lombard, Interagency Board and E&O Committee Chair, and Battalion Chief Don Bowers, SAFECOM At-Large for Fairfax County Fire and Rescue, Virginia, and Governance Committee Chair, provided members with an update on the SAFECOM Membership Demographics Survey findings. Chris also noted participation requirements for SAFECOM membership, which includes participation in the survey.



Figure 3: Chris Lombard reviewing the Demographics Survey Findings

The E&O Committee was very pleased by the response rate and appreciated everyone’s time and effort. Approximately, 80% of primary members responded to the survey, including a 72% response rate among association representatives and 100% response rate among SAFECOM At-Large Members. Primary membership hails from 25 states, including at least one state from each of the 10 regions. There are currently no SAFECOM primary members located outside of the contiguous United States. SAFECOM



members serve in a number of related disciplines, with the most commonly-reported including emergency technology, emergency services, law enforcement, fire and rescue, wireless communications, and grants. Additionally, 6 members are retired, 4 of whom represent retired law enforcement and 2 of whom represent retired fire.

The Governance Committee is working with the Education and Outreach Committee to determine how best to market the most pertinent information in the most

appropriate manner. In addition to analyzing the survey results, the Governance Committee, through the Membership Working Group, has been utilizing survey information to identify new SAFECOM

members. Results of the survey show there are no specific critical gaps requiring targeted recruitment based on current membership. However, the Membership Working Group is considering reaching out to individuals working with dams, pipelines, and freight railways, or in cyber-related positions and institutional professionals (e.g. universities, penal) to join SAFECOM. The Membership Working Group will continue to identify potential members, conduct outreach through the development of a unified message regarding the criteria SAFECOM is looking to fill through new members, and offer SAFECOM membership.

Terry Hall, NACo, asked if OEC has the funding to afford an increase in SAFECOM membership. Dusty Rhoads, OEC, noted that OEC Director Ron Hewitt has identified SAFECOM membership as a target for OEC funding. Tom Roche, IACP and SAFECOM At-Large, questioned the association alternate representative response rate, noting that in future iterations, there should be a way to capture the responsibilities of active alternates. Dan Wills, SAFECOM At-Large, noted that there may also be membership demographic gaps through a lack of functional representation from federal agencies, including border patrol and the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI).

### **SAFECOM Executive Committee (EC) Meeting**

Following the SAFECOM meeting, the SAFECOM Executive Committee (EC) held an in-person meeting to share committee updates, review and approve documents, and discuss community updates. Chris Lombard, SAFECOM Education and Outreach Committee Chair, kicked off the discussion, updating the group on Committee and Communications Unit (COMU) Working Group activities and accomplishments. He mentioned the Education and Outreach Committee has stepped up its outreach efforts including sending SAFECOM members to different conferences to either present to an audience or staff the information table to educate attendees about SAFECOM. The committee also revised the *SAFECOM Introduction Presentation* and the *SAFECOM Fact Sheet* to ensure information provided was still relevant to SAFECOM's mission and initiatives. The COMU Working Group is planning to hold an in-person meeting in August 2017. With support from the EC, the Working Group plans to create sub-groups enabling the working group to accomplish specific tasks focused on exploring program governance and credentialing/certification practices as well as to review the OEC-developed communications training courses to ensure lesson plans are up-to-date and accurately cover evolving technology.

Tom Roche, International Association of Chiefs of Police and SAFECOM Funding and Sustainment Co-Chair, provided updates on the Joint SAFECOM and National Council of Statewide Interoperability Coordinators (NCSWIC) Funding and Sustainment Committee. The Committee continues to work on developing its suite of life cycle planning documents. In addition, the Committee continues to work on materials to educate elected officials, budget personnel, and grantees on Project 25 (P25) standards and compliance.

Chief Reardon, SAFECOM Technology Policy Committee Chair, shared updates from the Joint SAFECOM and NCSWIC Technology Policy Committee and the Identity, Credential, and Access Management (ICAM) Working Group. The Committee is considering standing up a Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG 9-1-1) Working Group to address pressing NG 9-1-1 issues. Members suggested letting the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials International (APCO) and the National Emergency Number Association (NENA) drive this initiative with SAFECOM's support.

During committee updates, members reviewed and approved the following documents:

- Joint Funding and Sustainment Committee *Project 25 Frequently Asked Questions*
- ICAM Working Group *Trustmark Framework Position Paper*
- ICAM Working Group *Trustmark Framework Tri-fold Brochure*

- ICAM Working Group *Identity, Credential, and Access Management 101 Executive Briefing*

These documents are now available on the [SAFECOM Resources webpage](#). Members agreed these documents are important and need to be shared with constituents as well.

### Action Item Review

Table 2. Action Items Review

#	Description	Status	Affiliation
1	Send Fall 2017 meeting agenda topics to the <a href="#">SAFECOM Inbox</a>	Not Started	SAFECOM

### Upcoming Meetings

Table 3. Upcoming SAFECOM / EC Meetings

Meeting	Date	Location
Public Safety Communications Research (PSCR)	June 12-14, 2017	San Antonio, TX
SAFECOM EC	July 13, 2017	Conference Call
COMU Working Group	August 17-18, 2017	Denver, CO
SAFECOM EC	September 14, 2017	Conference Call
Joint SAFECOM and NCSWIC	November 6-10, 2017	Norman, OK
SAFECOM EC	December 7, 2017	Conference Call

The SAFECOM Committees and Working Groups convene monthly as determined by the following schedule:

Table 4. Monthly Committee and Working Group Meeting Schedule

Meeting	Date & Time
SAFECOM Governance	2 <sup>nd</sup> Wednesday at 2pm ET
SAFECOM Education and Outreach	Last Wednesday at 2pm ET
COMU Working Group	2 <sup>nd</sup> Monday at 2pm ET
Joint Funding and Sustainment	3 <sup>rd</sup> Wednesday at 3:30pm ET
Joint Technology Policy	3 <sup>rd</sup> Tuesday at 3pm ET
ICAM Working Group	3 <sup>rd</sup> Tuesday at 2pm ET