



## SAFECOM Governance Charter

### Background

SAFECOM, established in 2001 as a Presidential E-Government Initiative, is a mission-guided and stakeholder-supported public safety communications program of the United States (U.S.) Department of Homeland Security (DHS). The Office of Emergency Communications (OEC) supports SAFECOM's development of grant guidance, policy, tools, templates, and provides direct assistance to local, tribal, state, territorial, and Federal practitioners. The Office for Interoperability and Compatibility (OIC) supports SAFECOM's research, development, testing and evaluation, and standards elements. Through collaboration with emergency responders and policymakers across all levels of government, SAFECOM works to improve multi-jurisdictional and intergovernmental communications interoperability. Its membership includes more than 60 members representing local, tribal, and state government, including elected and appointed officials, state emergency responders, and major intergovernmental and national public safety associations, who provide input on the challenges, needs, and best practices involving emergency communications.

OEC develops policy, guidance, and future efforts by drawing on SAFECOM member expertise and recommendations. This process has resulted in several key emergency communications initiatives, including development of the National Emergency Communications Plan (NECP), the Nation's first strategic plan to enhance emergency communications; the SAFECOM Interoperability Continuum; and the Public Safety Communications Evolution brochure.

The purpose of the SAFECOM Charter is to outline the mission, goals, objectives, membership, and operating procedures of SAFECOM.

### Mission

SAFECOM aims to improve emergency response providers' inter-jurisdictional and interdisciplinary emergency communications interoperability across local, regional, tribal, state, territorial, international borders, and with Federal government entities.

### Goals

The goals of SAFECOM are to:

1. Champion and promote the effective integration of technologies, resources, and processes related to emergency communications and interoperability
2. Educate relevant policymakers, stakeholders, and constituents on emergency communications technologies and interoperability related issues
3. Provide input on challenges, requirements, needs, and best practices involving emergency communications
4. Support the implementation of the NECP and Statewide Communication Interoperability Plans (SCIP)
5. Continue to support and provide guidance to OEC, OIC, and DHS regarding legislation, regulatory policy, rules, and regulations needed to support the public safety community
6. Provide feedback and guidance on future technologies to the public safety community, as well as DHS
7. Encourage the development of local or regional Tactical Interoperable Communications Plans (TICP) as well as local or regional field operations guides to match the TICPs

**Objectives**

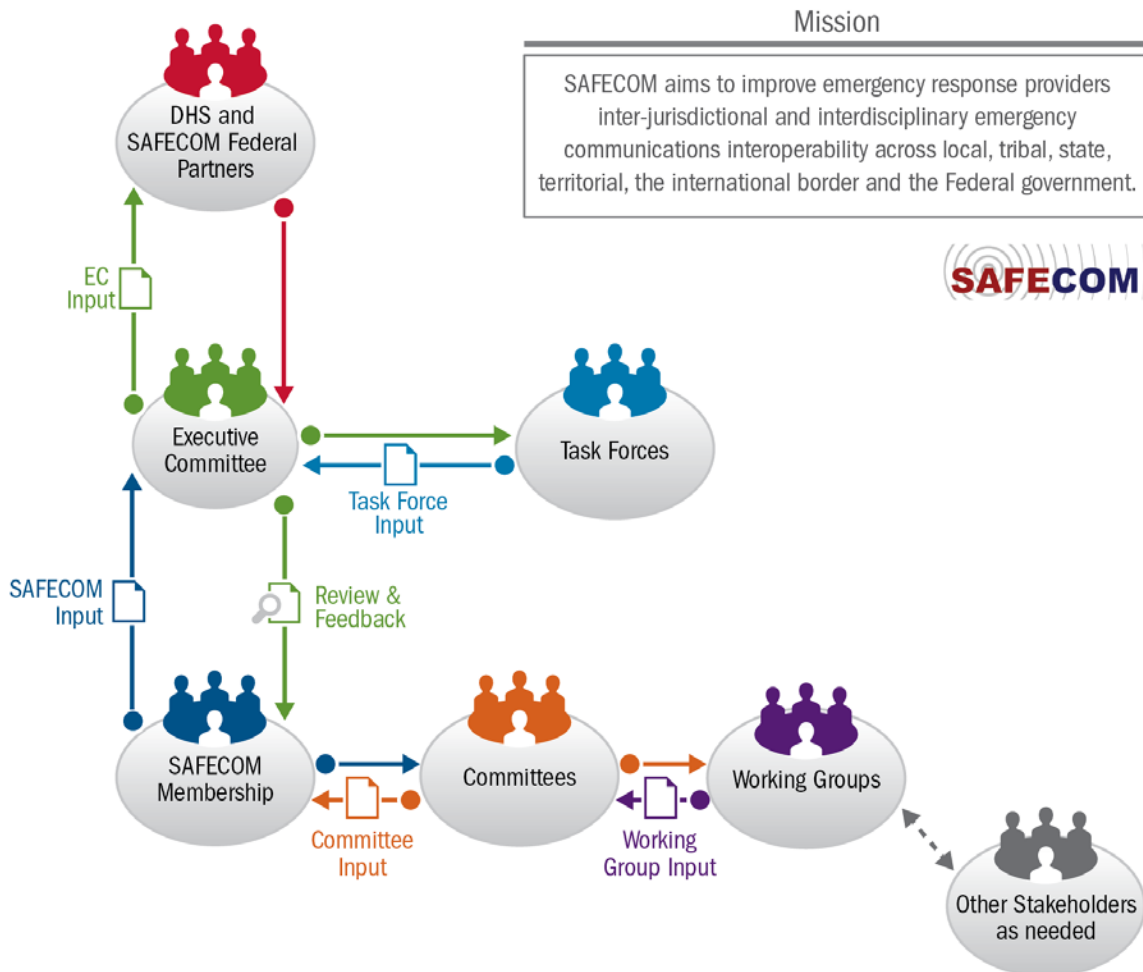
SAFECOM pursues the following objectives to achieve its goals:

1. Convene regularly scheduled meetings to promote the exchange of knowledge and resources among members of the public safety emergency communications community
2. Develop resources and tools to be used by the SAFECOM community and beyond to further emergency communications efforts
3. Leverage and promote training and exercise opportunities
4. Establish ad hoc working groups to address specific issues

**Governance**

SAFECOM adheres to a bottom-up approach, which means the program relies heavily on local and state emergency response stakeholders and policymakers for input and guidance as it works to define and implement interoperability solutions. SAFECOM recognizes successful solutions must be based on the input of emergency response stakeholders and policymakers across diverse disciplines, jurisdictions, and levels of government.

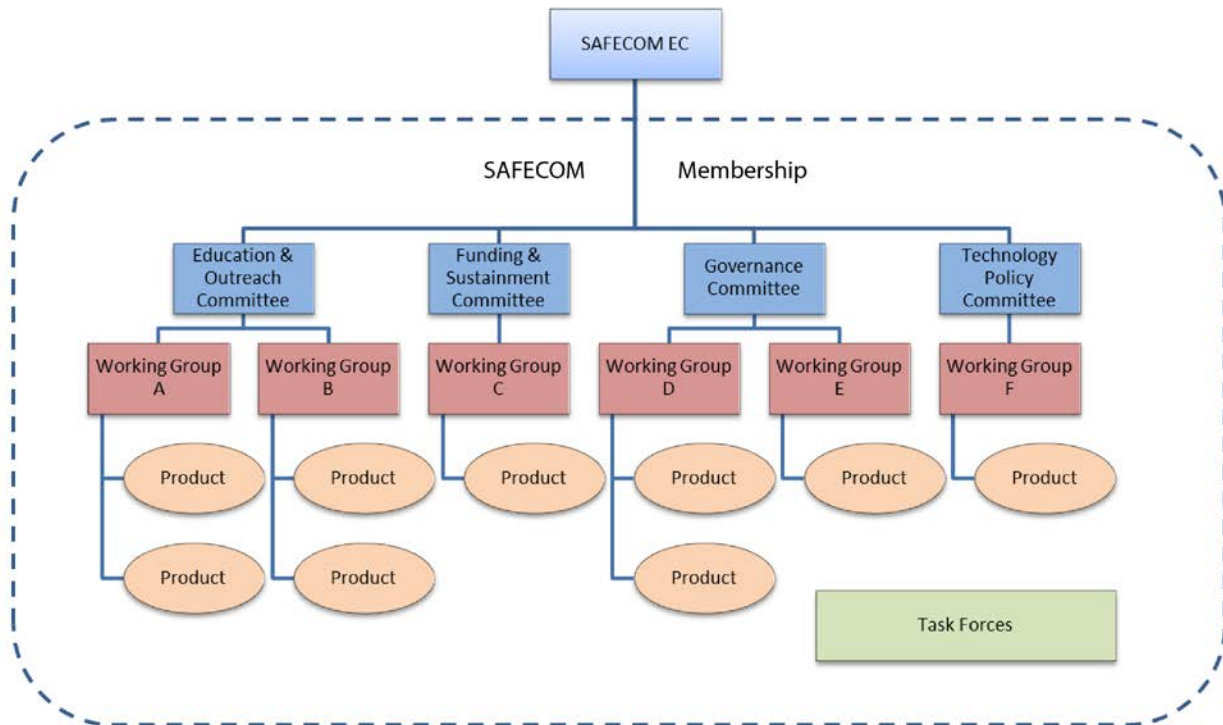
**SAFECOM: Practitioner Supported**



**Figure 1: SAFECOM Governance Structure**

To support this approach, SAFECOM developed a governance structure that facilitates input of state, local, tribal, and territorial emergency response stakeholders and policymakers, including elected and appointed officials. Working with the Nation’s leading public safety associations and state, local, tribal, and territorial government associations, SAFECOM follows a strategic direction developed with diverse input from the public safety community.

In 2013, SAFECOM reorganized to better facilitate the way work products are developed, which is outlined below.



**Figure 2: SAFECOM Organizational Structure**

The SAFECOM structure consists of the following components:

- *Standing Committees:* Committees are long-term, standing groups with a sustained focus on particular topics, such as education and outreach or the sustainment of emergency communications funding. Committee Chairs serve on the Executive Committee (EC) and Committee Vice Chairs serve as their alternates.
- *Working Groups:* Working groups exist for a pre-determined period of time (e.g., 12 months) as a subset of a committee.
- *Task Forces:* Unlike standing committees, task forces are created to work for a short period of time, creating one defined product or executing one specific activity. Task forces are ad hoc and established at the direction of the DHS OEC, the EC, or SAFECOM Chair, and have a Chair who is responsible for leading the coordination of product development.



**Homeland  
Security**

As a part of the reorganization, SAFECOM established four standing committees, which are detailed below.

- *Education and Outreach Committee:* The Education and Outreach Committee will promote the role of SAFECOM and its impact on public safety communications nationwide. The Education and Outreach Committee will lead the communication effort with other SAFECOM committees and member organizations in order to accomplish common identified initiatives and avoid duplication.
- *Funding and Sustainment Committee:* The Funding and Sustainment Committee will concentrate on identifying innovative ways to fund emergency communications systems and activities (i.e., training, personnel, etc.) pertinent to stakeholders at the state territorial, tribal, and local levels. The group also prepares and disseminates information on appropriations and new funding sources to the public safety community at all levels of government. The Funding and Sustainment Committee are joint efforts, conducted in coordination with the National Council of Statewide Interoperability Coordinators (NCSWIC).
- *Governance Committee:* The Governance Committee will focus on emergency communications governance, both internal to SAFECOM as well as external governing bodies. This includes management of and providing modifications to the SAFECOM Charter and Strategic Plan. As recommended in the 2014 NECP, the Committee will update governance structures and processes to address the evolving operating environment, review SAFECOM initiatives, and identify best practices and lessons learned.
- *Technology Policy Committee:* The Technology Policy Committee promotes the use of technologies, resources, and processes related to emergency communications and interoperability. Specifically, the Technology Policy Committee will continue to support land mobile radio (LMR) systems, promote broadband technology and deployment, and work with Federal partners to further various technologies within the emergency communications ecosystem (e.g., Next Generation 9-1-1, alerts and warnings, cybersecurity). The Technology Policy Committee are joint efforts, conducted in coordination with NCSWIC.

## **Membership**

SAFECOM members serve as a vehicle to provide a broad base of public safety community input on user needs for emergency communications to the SAFECOM Program. This group provides a mechanism for individuals with specialized skills and common interests to share best practices and lessons learned so interested parties at all levels of government can gain from one another's experience.

Consistent with SAFECOM Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) exemption, members must be an official designee of a SAFECOM association (association members) or currently employed (including volunteer status) or designated by a local, tribal, state, or territorial government (at-large members).

### *Meeting Participation Guidelines*

One member of each association shall attend all SAFECOM meetings. Both primary and alternate members may, but are not required to, attend all meetings. DHS OEC will fund the attendance of either the primary or an alternate association member and all at-large members at in-person SAFECOM meetings and, if the member serves on the EC, all EC meetings. Associations may elect to fund the attendance of the alternate member at any SAFECOM meeting.

All SAFECOM members' meeting attendance and participation will be reviewed to keep membership up to date. Attendance audits will be used to track and inform at-risk members on an as-needed basis.



Participation in SAFECOM will be re-evaluated if a member has two unexplained absences in a row during any of the following: a bi-monthly<sup>1</sup> EC teleconference call (for EC members only), a committee meeting or call in which the committee member is designated as primary, from the bi-annual in-person meetings, or when members are unresponsive to surveys. In such an event, OEC shall:

1. Inform the EC of the situation
2. Contact at-risk member directly and inquire as to status of membership
3. If applicable, alert the representative's association that the designated representative has not attended meetings and provide the association with an opportunity to appoint another representative
4. Evaluate representation based on the association's response

#### *SAFECOM Member Associations*

All SAFECOM associations shall appoint one primary representative to SAFECOM and may identify one alternate member. All alternates must have equal authority to formulate advice and make recommendations in the absence of the primary member.

Associations have 45 days from receipt of the SAFECOM membership invitation to accept. Associations have 90 days from receipt of the SAFECOM membership invitation to assign a representative and alternate to serve on SAFECOM and/or the EC. If a representative and alternate are not assigned by written notification to OEC within 90 days, OEC and the SAFECOM EC will reevaluate the membership offer.

#### *SAFECOM At-Large Members*

At-large members are selected for their personal experience and expertise as government employees or volunteers within the public safety community. At-large members have 30 days from receipt of the SAFECOM membership invitation to accept.

#### *SAFECOM EC*

The SAFECOM EC serves as the leadership group and as SAFECOM's primary resource for access to public safety stakeholders and policymakers. The EC also provides strategic leadership and guidance to the SAFECOM Program on emergency responder user needs. The EC consists of the SAFECOM Chair, two SAFECOM Vice Chairs, the chairs of each of the four standing committees, 15 member associations<sup>2</sup>, and four at-large members.

For the purposes of conducting business, a quorum of the SAFECOM EC shall be defined as fifty (50) percent plus one member of the voting eligible associations and at-large members.

#### *Federal Members*

U.S. Federal department and agency members are selected based on their experience and involvement in issues related to public safety communications. Federal members do not have voting rights and must be a Federal employee. Costs of participating on SAFECOM and the EC will be borne by each member. OEC will make every effort possible to minimize travel and related expenses.

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<sup>1</sup> EC calls occurring every two months unless postponed or canceled

<sup>2</sup> For a complete list of associations represented on the EC, please see Appendix B.



### *International Observers*

SAFECOM has a long-standing relationship with a number of international responder groups and has greatly benefited from cross-border partnerships. As such, from time-to-time, international observers may be invited to participate in either the EC or general SAFECOM meetings, or both.

### *SAFECOM Member Terms*

All SAFECOM members are expected to participate for a three-year term. Each member is eligible for reappointment at the end of their term.

### *Guidelines for Inviting New Associations and Members*

New associations or at-large members may be considered for membership to SAFECOM. If there is a gap determined in representation, SAFECOM will review its current membership to consider new associations, members, and/or at-large positions. New membership recommendations originating from outside the Governance Committee (e.g., Technology Policy Committee members) need to be submitted to the Membership Working Group, then to the full Governance Committee, and finally to the EC for approval. Nomination of new associations or members will be determined based on the following criteria:

1. Possess practical, technical, or functional experience with communications and interoperability with the desire to learn
2. Members must be an official designee of a SAFECOM association (association members) or currently employed (including volunteer status) or designated by a tribal, territorial, local, or state government (at-large members)
3. Members must also meet one or more of the following criteria to be a member of SAFECOM:
  - a. Represent a relevant discipline within the public safety community
  - b. Currently serve on statewide and/or regional interoperability governing body or represent an association
  - c. Possess expertise in a specific area relevant to the public safety community that provides a specific contribution to the SAFECOM program
4. Current location, to ensure diversity among membership

SAFECOM will also review “pre-membership” activities (e.g., provide presentations/briefs to working groups as a way to show interest in becoming an official SAFECOM member) before voting or granting full SAFECOM membership to new associations/members.



## **Election of SAFECOM Officers**

### *Election of SAFECOM Chair and Vice Chair(s)*

The SAFECOM Chair and Vice Chairs are elected from the EC membership by a vote of the entire SAFECOM membership. The elections will occur on a staggered, two-year term cycle during the fall/winter meeting to provide overlap and continuity (on even years the Chair and one Vice Chair are elected and on odd years the other Vice Chair is elected). To implement the two-year term cycle, both Vice Chair positions will be elected in fall 2016, with one serving a one-year term, and one serving a two-year term.

OEC will solicit nominations for the SAFECOM EC Chair and Vice Chair positions from the entire SAFECOM membership. Nominees for Chair and Vice Chair positions must be members of the EC and may be self-nominated or nominated by another SAFECOM member. Nominations are submitted by the interested party along with a brief biography and statement of interest in the Chair and/or Vice Chair position. There is no limit to the number of terms that the Chair or Vice Chair may serve.

Members of SAFECOM will vote to elect the Chair and Vice Chairs by secret ballot. Each primary member may only cast one vote; if the primary member is not able to attend, the alternate shall vote. If neither the primary nor the alternate member is able to attend, they may designate a proxy in writing to vote in his/her absence. A vote may only be conducted when a quorum is present.

### *Chair/Vice Chair Succession Planning*

In the event a Chair or Vice Chair must step down from the position, the following may occur:

- 1) *Special Election.* If the general election (held during the fall/winter meeting) is more than 90 days away from the date the seat was vacated, a special election may be held by members of the EC to elect a succeeding Chair/Vice Chair.
- 2) *Vice Chair Assumes Responsibility.* If the general election is less than 90 days away from the date the seat was vacated, the Vice Chair will assume responsibility for the roles of the Chair (*see Appendix A*).

### *Election of SAFECOM Committee Chairs and Vice Chairs*

SAFECOM committee Chairs and Vice Chairs are elected by the members of that committee for two-year terms on a rotational basis during the fall/winter meeting. Members of the Education and Outreach Committee and the Funding and Sustainment Committee will elect Chairs and Vice Chairs on odd numbered years (e.g., 2015) and members of the Governance Committee and Technology Policy Committee will elect Chairs and Vice Chairs on even numbered years (e.g., 2016). Nominees may be self-nominated or nominated by members of that committee. Nominees may provide the committee with a brief biography and statement of interest in the Chair or Vice Chair positions. There are no limits to the number of consecutive terms committee Chairs and Vice Chairs may hold.

### *Appointment of SAFECOM Member Associations on the EC*

Representatives are appointed by their associations. Associations on the EC will not have term limits.

### *Election of SAFECOM At-Large Members on the EC*

Four at-large members will be elected to the EC. Nominees may be self-nominated or nominated by other SAFECOM members. At-large members will be elected by the entire SAFECOM membership.



The at-large members will serve a two-year term on the EC. Elections will occur on a staggered, two-year term cycle by the fall/winter meeting to provide overlap and continuity (i.e., on even years, two at-large SAFECOM members are elected, and on odd years, the other two at-large SAFECOM members are elected). To implement the two-year term cycle, all four positions will be elected in fall 2016, with two serving a one-year term, and two serving a two-year term. At-large members elected after the first year will assume a two-year term to promote staggering. There are no term limits for at-large members on the EC.

### **EC Voting Procedures**

A quorum of fifty (50) percent plus one member of the voting-eligible associations and at-large members must be present for purposes of conducting business. Upon establishing the meeting quorum, the SAFECOM Chair will state the number of votes needed to carry a motion. When the EC votes on SAFECOM-related issues, each association and at-large member will have one vote. An alternate may vote only in the absence of the primary EC association member. The alternate can contribute if the primary is in attendance; however, each association receives only one formal vote. EC members can abstain from voting on any issue after they inform the EC Chair of the reason. Members may also give another EC member permission to serve as a proxy on any vote. In the event of a tie vote, the SAFECOM chair will flip a coin to determine the final result of the vote.

### **Additional Policies**

*Roles for SAFECOM and EC Observers:* Additional participants may be asked to attend SAFECOM and EC meetings in an observer role. These individuals do not participate as voting members, and are invited by OEC or the SAFECOM Chair based on current, important, and timely issues as appropriate.

#### *Costs:*

- Local, tribal, state, and territorial stakeholders and associations: OEC will fund the support and travel of these representatives subject to the availability of funding

This Governance Charter is subject to review by OEC and the EC on an as needed basis.





**APPENDIX A – SAFECOM Member Roles, Responsibilities, and Eligibility Requirements**

Group	Roles and Responsibilities	Membership Eligibility Requirements
<b>SAFECOM EC</b>	<b>EC</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide strategic leadership and guidance on emergency responder user needs</li> <li>• Communicate decisions, plans, and results to relevant constituencies and stakeholders</li> <li>• Define and articulate the needs of the public safety community in order to inform the development of materials targeted at that community</li> <li>• Participate in quarterly meetings, monthly teleconferences, and on at least one committee each year to provide more in-depth input into SAFECOM activities</li> <li>• Build relationships with SAFECOM members to leverage their subject matter expertise</li> <li>• Share information gleaned through SAFECOM with public safety community</li> <li>• Assist SAFECOM in identifying additional organizations for inclusion, as appropriate</li> </ul>	<p>Members must meet all of the following criteria to be a member of SAFECOM:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Possess practical experience with communications and interoperability and the desire to learn</li> <li>• Members must be an official designee of a SAFECOM association (association members) or currently employed (including volunteer status) or designated by a tribal, territorial, local or state government (at-large members)</li> </ul> <p>Members must also meet one or more of the following criteria to be a member of SAFECOM:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Represent a relevant discipline within the public safety community</li> <li>• Currently serve on Statewide and/or regional interoperability governing body or represent an association</li> <li>• Possess expertise in a specific area relevant to the public safety community that provides a specific contribution to the SAFECOM program</li> </ul>
	<b>Chair</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preside over EC and SAFECOM meetings</li> <li>• Oversee the coordination of EC and SAFECOM meetings</li> <li>• Work with OEC to create and distribute agendas, relevant read-ahead materials, and reports for all EC/SAFECOM meetings and teleconferences</li> <li>• Serve as the official spokesperson of the EC</li> </ul>	
	<b>Vice Chair</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assume the responsibilities of the Chair when he or she is absent</li> <li>• Accept any other duties the Chair requests, as appropriate</li> </ul>	



Group	Roles and Responsibilities	Membership Eligibility Requirements
SAFECOM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide general guidance and recommendations on emergency communications</li> <li>• Participate in at least one committee each year to develop work products and user needs requirements</li> <li>• Communicate decisions, plans, and results to relevant constituencies and stakeholders</li> <li>• Participate in bi-annual meetings or notify OEC when unable to attend</li> </ul>	
OEC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Host regular meetings to solicit the input of SAFECOM’s governance groups in accordance with the mission guided and stakeholder supported philosophy</li> <li>• Ensure deliverables are of high quality and address SAFECOM’s goals by incorporating stakeholder input and review throughout the deliverable process</li> <li>• Implement practices to ensure meaningful engagement of the public safety community and keep governance groups aware of SAFECOM issues and activities</li> <li>• Monitor membership and make adjustments based on participation rates, discipline diversity, and geographic diversity and ensure the group is constituted in accordance with governmental regulations and practices</li> <li>• Work with the SAFECOM EC Chair to develop meeting schedules and agendas</li> <li>• Help establish working groups, as appropriate</li> <li>• Assist EC and SAFECOM members in preparing materials, presentations, issues summaries, etc. for SAFECOM sponsored events</li> <li>• Design and support meetings, serve as a facilitators and consensus builders when appropriate</li> <li>• Facilitate communications between SAFECOM and EC members as appropriate</li> <li>• Coordinate programs within DHS and with other Federal agencies as appropriate regarding public safety communications and communications interoperability</li> </ul>	N/A



## **APPENDIX B – SAFECOM Representation**

### **SAFECOM Executive Committee**

- Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials International (APCO)
- International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP)
- International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC)
- Major Cities Chiefs Association (MCCA)
- Metropolitan Fire Chiefs Association (Metro Chiefs)
- National Association of Counties (NACo)
- National Association of State EMS Officials (NASEMSO)
- National Congress of American Indians (NCAI)
- National Council of Statewide Interoperability Coordinators (NCSWIC)
- National EMS Management Association (NEMSMA)
- National Governors Association (NGA)
- National League of Cities (NLC)
- National Public Safety Telecommunications Council (NPSTC)
- National Sheriffs' Association (NSA)
- US Conference of Mayors (USCM)
- SAFECOM Governance Committee Chair
- Education and Outreach Committee Chair
- Funding and Sustainment Committee Chair
- Technology Policy Committee Chair
- (4) At-Large Members

### **SAFECOM Member Associations**

- American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials
- American Public Works Association
- Forestry Conservation Communications Association
- Interagency Board
- International Association of Emergency Managers
- International Municipal Signal Association
- Major County Sheriffs' Association
- National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians
- National Association of Regional Councils
- National Association of State 9-1-1 Administrators
- National Association of State Chief Information Officers
- National Association of State Technology Directors
- National Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors
- National Criminal Justice Association
- National Emergency Management Association
- National Emergency Number Association
- SEARCH, National Consortium for Justice Information and Statistics



**SAFECOM At-Large Members<sup>o</sup>**

- Fairfax County Fire and Rescue, Battalion Chief (Virginia)
- Willamette Valley 9-1-1, Director (Oregon)
- Fire Department New York, Incident Communications Commander (New York)
- Ulster County 9-1-1 Emergency Communications, Emergency Services Dispatcher I (New York)
- Merrionette Park Fire Department, Fire Chief (Illinois)
- NYS Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Services (New York)
- New Hampshire Department of Resources and Economic Development, Chief of Communications (New Hampshire)
- Many, Louisiana Police Department, Commissioned Officer (Louisiana)
- Miami-Dade Police Department, Police Captain (Florida)
- Port of Houston Authority, Emergency Manager (Texas)
- Monroe County, New York Interoperability Coordinator (New York)
- Fairfax County Fire and Rescue, Lieutenant Operations (Virginia)
- San Diego Sheriff Department, Assistant Communications Systems Manager (California)
- Arkansas Wireless Information Network, Program Manager (Arkansas)
- Statewide Interoperability Coordinator (Wyoming)
- Office of Statewide Emergency Telecommunications, Emergency Telecommunications Manager (Connecticut)
- Michigan Department of Community Health, EMS, and Trauma; Communications Coordination (Michigan)
- Arizona State Forestry, Communications Coordination (Arizona)

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<sup>o</sup>All at-large members represent a relevant discipline within the Public Safety Community

**SAFECOM Federal Agency Members<sup>+</sup>**

- Department of Agriculture
- Department of Commerce<sup>+</sup>
- Department of Homeland Security<sup>+</sup>
- Department of the Interior
- Department of Justice<sup>+</sup>
- Department of Transportation
- Federal Communications Commission
- Department of Treasury

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<sup>+</sup>Denotes SAFECOM EC non-voting member

**APPENDIX C – Amendment of Charter**

Amendments of the SAFECOM Governance Charter may be made by a 2/3 majority vote of the SAFECOM Executive Committee. Proposals to amend the Charter shall be submitted to the SAFECOM Governance Committee for review and recommendation to the Executive Committee prior to voting.