

2020 NCSWIC Annual Summary

A summary of key products, activities, and major meeting outcomes from 2020

NCSWIC Vision and Mission

Vision: *A Nation where public safety responders can effectively communicate*

Mission: *NCSWIC, through the SWIC, promotes and implements strategies for achieving effective public safety communications by developing professional partnerships and collaborating with public safety agencies and policy makers*

Introduction

In 2020, the National Council of Statewide Interoperability Coordinators (NCSWIC), administered by the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), collaborated with a variety of programs, departments, and agencies from all levels of government to advance current and future initiatives affecting public safety emergency communications in the United States and its territories. NCSWIC supported progress toward its strategic priorities, the State Markers, and the National Emergency Communications Plan (NECP) Implementation Activities through its committees and task forces. The NCSWIC Governance Committee and NCSWIC Planning, Training, and Exercise (PTE) Committee membership consisted solely of NCSWIC members; whereas the Funding and Sustainment Committee, Technology Policy Committee (and subsequent working groups), and the task forces included members of SAFECOM and other subject matter experts. A description of the committees, working groups, and task forces to follow below.

This document provides a snapshot of NCSWIC activities and products completed in coordination with its partners in 2020, as well as summaries of the various virtual engagements held with SAFECOM. Final products and full meeting summaries are available on the [NCSWIC website](#) or by contacting the [NCSWIC mailbox](#) for electronic copies.

2020 Impact on Public Safety Communications

NCSWIC EC ACCOMPLISHMENTS
<p>Chair: John Miller, New Jersey Vice Chair: Brad Stoddard, Michigan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 2019 Annual Summary of Accomplishments ✓ 2020 NCSWIC Strategic Plan

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The NCSWIC Executive Committee (EC) serves as the program’s leadership group and provides strategic guidance to the NCSWIC Committees. The EC is also responsible for maintaining programmatic resources, to include the *NCSWIC Strategic Plan* and the *NCSWIC Annual Summary of Accomplishments*. The Strategic Plan outlines the function of NCSWIC and its committees’ current year planned priorities, products, and activities. The

Annual Summary highlights NCSWIC’s previous year accomplishments and activities and outcomes from in-person meetings and virtual engagements.

GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

The NCSWIC Governance Committee published the *NCSWIC Fact Sheet*, which provides a brief history and overview of NCSWIC’s membership, goals, and accomplishments for those who are unfamiliar with the organization. The committee also drafted a new product approval process for all NCSWIC products. The new process outlines steps from idea to publication. Additionally, in an effort to increase collaboration across the Statewide Interoperability Coordinator (SWIC) community, the Governance Committee began developing an interactive SWIC Yearbook to share valuable information about each state, including SWIC contact information, Statewide Interoperability Governing Body (SIGB) Executive Order (EO) and Statute website links, and other helpful information. Committee members also approved the New SWIC Mentorship Program, a voluntary program designed to provide personalized guidance on navigating the SWIC role and learn about the NCSWIC program through

GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE ACCOMPLISHMENTS
<p>Chair: Brad Stoddard, Michigan Vice Chair: Karla Jurrens, Texas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ NCSWIC Fact Sheet ✓ NCSWIC Product Approval Process ✓ SIGB EO and Statute Database

direct interaction and regular communication with experienced SWICs. The Yearbook and Mentorship Program will roll out in early 2021.

PTE COMMITTEE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Chair:** Thomas Gonzalez, Texas
Vice Chair: Michael Sprague, New York
- ✓ [SWIC to STO Engagement Guide](#)
 - ✓ [Initial Response Checklist](#)

PLANNING, TRAINING, AND EXERCISE COMMITTEE

The PTE Committee developed the *SWIC to State Training Officer (STO) Engagement Guide*, which supports SWICs in navigating their relationships with their STOs by providing benefits of and best practices for collaboration. Additionally, the PTE Committee developed the *Initial Response Checklist* and the *Job Aid: SWICs during Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Deployment*. The *Initial Response Checklist*

supports SWICs in initial deployment by providing a list of recommended items to bring during an emergency response. The *Job Aid: SWICs during EOC Deployment* prepares the SWIC and other supporting personnel for duty as an emergency communications coordination point of contact in a state EOC and facilitates readiness actions that promote the improvement of crisis response capabilities (expected publication in 2021).

FUNDING AND SUSTAINMENT COMMITTEE

The Funding and Sustainment Committee continued to identify innovative funding mechanisms, disseminate information on available funding opportunities, and inform stakeholders on key issues impacting public safety communications budgets. To help agencies determine right-sized solutions that strike a balance between cost and value, the committee first developed the *Emergency Communications Systems Value Analysis Guide*. The guide compiles recommendations, best practices, and considerations for public safety agencies to evaluate cost effectiveness. The accompanying brochure, *Understanding the Value of Public Safety Communications Systems: A Brochure for Elected Officials and Decision-Makers*, provides key considerations and trade-offs between the cost and value of communications systems components, helping agencies to save money and advocate for necessary funding.

Members collaborated with CISA to develop the annual *SAFECOM Guidance on Emergency Communications Grants (SAFECOM Guidance)*. The input and expertise from the committee ensured the *SAFECOM Guidance* provided current information on emergency communications policies, eligible costs, best practices, and technical standards for state, local, tribal, and territorial (SLTT) grant recipients investing federal funds in emergency communications projects.

Additionally, the committee provided a quick and comprehensive analysis of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. Released internally to SAFECOM and NCSWIC members, the document provided information on CARES Act grants and programs relevant to public safety communications. Lastly, the committee focused on refreshing the *Funding Mechanisms Guide for Public Safety Communications* and developing a *Contingency Considerations When Facing Reductions in Emergency Communications Budgets* fact sheet (expected publication in 2021). These timely products were developed to address the growing issue of budget reductions and increased competition, providing members with strategies to mitigate and supplement funding challenges.

FUNDING AND SUSTAINMENT COMMITTEE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- NCSWIC Chair:** Penny Rubow, Arkansas
NCSWIC Vice Chair: Melissa Nazzaro, Massachusetts
- ✓ [Emergency Communications Systems Value Analysis Guide](#) and Talking Points
 - ✓ [Understanding the Value of Public Safety Communications Systems: A Brochure for Elected Officials and Decision-Makers](#)
 - ✓ Contributed to the [SAFECOM Guidance on Emergency Communications Grants](#)
 - ✓ SAFECOM NCSWIC Guidance on CARES Act Grants
 - ✓ [Funding Mechanisms Guide for Public Safety Communications](#)

**TECHNOLOGY POLICY COMMITTEE
ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

NCSWIC Chair: Chris Maiers, Iowa

- ✓ [SAFECOM-NCSWIC RF Interference Best Practices Guidebook](#)
- ✓ [Essentials of AWN](#)
- ✓ [Best Practices for Planning and Implementation of P25 ISSI and CSSI: Volume II](#)
- ✓ [ICAM Value Proposition Suite](#)
- ✓ [Encryption Key Management Fact Sheet](#)
- ✓ [Operational Best Practices for Encryption Key Management](#)
- ✓ [Public Safety Communications Dependencies on Non-Agency Infrastructure and Services](#)
- ✓ [NG911 Self-Assessment Tool](#)
- ✓ [Cyber Risks to NG911](#)
- ✓ [GIS Lifecycle Best Practices Guide for NG911](#)

TECHNOLOGY POLICY COMMITTEE

The Technology Policy Committee promotes the use of technologies, resources, and processes related to emergency communications and interoperability in coordination with SAFECOM and NCSWIC members. The committee continues to support land mobile radio (LMR) systems, promote broadband technology and deployment, encourage public safety information sharing, and work with all government partners to further the use and security of various technologies within the emergency communications ecosystem—Identity, Credential, and Access Management (ICAM), Next Generation 911 (NG911), advanced technologies, and cybersecurity.

The committee released a variety of products in 2020. The *SAFECOM-NCSWIC Radio Frequency (RF) Interference Best Practices Guidebook* summarizes active and passive sources of RF interference (“jamming”) and outlined several best practices to prevent or mitigate jamming of RF resources. The *Essentials of Alerts, Warnings, and Notifications (AWN)* outlines the fundamentals of AWN systems and the evolving AWN landscape, future considerations, and examples of existing systems. The *Best Practices for Planning and Implementation of Project 25 (P25) Inter-RF Subsystem Interface (ISSI) and Console*

Subsystem Interface (CSSI): Volume II describes technology, stakeholder, and long-term planning elements of P25 ISSI/CSSI implementation. The *Encryption Key Management Fact Sheet* and *Operational Best Practices for Encryption Key Management* summarize encryption key management and provide several best practices and recommendations at the operational level to optimally manage the use of encryption and encryption keys. The *ICAM Value Proposition Suite* underscores the value of Federated ICAM in responding to four emergency response scenarios: hurricanes, drug epidemics, school shootings, and serial bombings. The *Public Safety Communications Dependencies on Non-Agency Infrastructure and Services* describes communications dependencies on third-party providers for infrastructure or services, challenges associated with such dependencies, and best practices to mitigate or prevent system downtime due to dependencies outages or failures. The Technology Policy Committee also began development of the *Public Safety Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) Resource Guide* (expected publication in 2021), which provides an overview of several documents or resources to aid public safety stakeholders when developing UAS programs for public safety purposes.

NG911 Working Group: The NG911 Working Group utilizes stakeholder feedback from multiple levels of government to identify short- and long-term priorities which will support efforts to fund, assess readiness, and complete the transition to NG911. In 2020 the Working Group promoted the *NG911 Self-Assessment Tool*, published on 911.gov. The tool helps 911 center administrators and oversight personnel evaluate a system’s NG911 maturity state and understand the next steps to continue NG911 deployment progress. In January 2020, the working group presented on the National 911 Program’s [State of 911 Webinar Series](#) to raise awareness about the *Tool* within the 911 community. To promote cybersecurity for NG911 systems, the working group published an update to the *Cyber Risks to Next Generation 911* white paper, which provides an overview of the cyber risks that will be faced by NG911 systems, mitigation strategies, and education and training resources. The group also presented on cyber threats to 911 centers at the International Association of Chiefs of Police Virtual Conference and Expo. The presentation provided public safety stakeholders with actionable steps to enhance the cybersecurity posture of NG911 systems and highlighted SAFECOM, NCSWIC, and CISA cybersecurity resources.

To support stakeholders in the transition to NG911, the working group published the *Geographical Information Systems (GIS) Lifecycle Best Practices Guide for NG911*, which provides an overview of the GIS lifecycle, best practices for each phase of the lifecycle, and resources for GIS support, along with a companion document, *California Statewide NG911 GIS Use Case* (expected publication in 2021). Public safety administrators, managers, and officials can use this document to familiarize themselves with GIS lifecycle best practices to help ensure they have implemented essential

GIS components for NG911. The working group also developed the *NG911 Incident-Related Imagery Impacts 101*, to help public safety stakeholders familiarize themselves with emerging technologies in 911 centers and plan for incident-related imagery (expected publication in 2021).

P25 User Needs Working Group: The P25 User Needs Working Group (UNWG) is a forum in which a broad range of public safety users and user representatives may participate in order to provide user input into the P25 standards development process. In 2020, the P25 UNWG initiated the Global Positioning System (GPS) Focus Group to gather input from users on their current and planned uses of GPS in their LMR systems to develop a formal recommendation for consideration into the P25 standards development to comply with the Natural Resources Management Act.

COMMUNICATIONS SECTION TASK FORCE

The Communications Section Task Force (CSTF), a joint undertaking between NCSWIC and SAFECOM, addresses challenges associated with supporting information and communications technology (ICT) within the National Incident Management System (NIMS) Incident Command System (ICS). The CSTF continues to work towards developing a nationwide federated governance framework through the Incident Communications Advisory Council (ICAC), a focus group created to review and validate the CSTF's recommendations for enhancing the functionality of NIMS.

Communications Section Task Force Accomplishments
<p>Chair: Chief Chris Lombard, SAFECOM Vice Chair: John Miller, NCSWIC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ NIMS ICS Refresh Recommendation ✓ FEMA NIC Re-engagement Plan ✓ <i>Communications Incident Management Presentation</i> ✓ ITSL Refresh (<i>Ongoing</i>) ✓ <i>ICT Recruitment and Retention Plan</i>

In January 2020, CISA presented the CSTF's NIMS ICS Refresh Recommendation to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Administrator to propose a series of updates to better align NIMS ICS with the changing communications environment. These recommendations included creating new positions and modernizing the ICS structure. Throughout the remainder of 2020, CISA and the CSTF participated in the FEMA National Integration Center (NIC) Coordination Group Communications and Technology Sub-Groups to continue engaging with FEMA NIC and its stakeholders to reinforce the need for modifying NIMS ICS to better manage incident information and communications technology. The task force also engaged with stakeholders during its *Communications Incident Management* presentation at the International Wireless Communications Expo's virtual conference in August 2020.

The CSTF assisted the CISA Interoperable Communications Technical Assistance Program (ICTAP) Subdivision with revising the Information Technology Service Unit Leader (ITSL) curriculum. Units 1-15 were revised based on instructor and participant feedback. The completed ITSL Refresh is expected to be finalized in Spring 2021. Finally, the CSTF developed an *ICT Recruitment and Retention Plan* to serve as a strategic plan for recruiting, training, supporting, and retaining a pool of candidates to support information and communications management at planned events and incidents.

Information Sharing Framework Task Force Accomplishments
<p>Chair: Sheriff Paul Fitzgerald, SAFECOM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ ISF Revision 2.0 ✓ <i>SAFECOM Guidance on Emergency Communications Grants</i> for Fiscal Year 2021 Submission for Appendix B – Technology and Equipment Standards and Resources

INFORMATION SHARING FRAMEWORK TASK FORCE

The Information Sharing Framework Task Force (ISFTF) develops a data interoperability framework. This framework expands beyond "single organization" information sharing, develops technical/operational standards to enable secure information flow between disparate public safety systems, and defines best practices for data/icon security and interoperability in an Internet Protocol (IP) environment based on standards and/or other solutions. In 2020, the ISFTF developed final specifications of the Information Sharing Framework (ISF) Revision 2.0 structure. The ISF included an example of ISF customization use case from the National Public Safety Telecommunications Council, as well as further developed Appendices A (Baseline Technological Assessment), B (Use Cases), and C (Regulatory, Legal, Contractual, and Financial Considerations). The task force also assessed existing data exchange and information sharing

of ISF customization use case from the National Public Safety Telecommunications Council, as well as further developed Appendices A (Baseline Technological Assessment), B (Use Cases), and C (Regulatory, Legal, Contractual, and Financial Considerations). The task force also assessed existing data exchange and information sharing

documents for synergies, including the *NG911 Standards Compendium* used for the *NG911 Cost Study*, and Information Sharing Assessment Tool (ISAT). Additionally, ISFTF provided resources for the annual update of the *SAFECOM Guidance*, helping grant applicants to evaluate data exchange and information sharing solutions.

PROJECT 25 COMPLIANCE ASSESSMENT PROGRAM TASK FORCE

In coordination with SAFECOM and NCSWIC, the P25 Compliance Assessment Program Task Force (CAPTF) provides public safety community input into the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) P25 Compliance Assessment Program (CAP), which assesses compliance of communications equipment to the P25 Suite of Standards. In 2020, the P25 CAPTF reviewed and provided input on the *ISSI/CSSI Conformance Test Tool Compliance Assessment Bulletin (ICC Test Tool CAB)* developed by the DHS Science and Technology Directorate (S&T). The document provides the verification procedures for test tool products that are designed to perform conformance testing of P25 ISSI and CSSI equipment in accordance with P25 CAP ISSI and CSSI Conformance Test Cases and Pass/Fail documents, creating a robust and repeatable verification program in accordance with applicable DHS S&T and P25 CAP technical and reporting requirements.

Project 25 Compliance Assessment Program Task Force Accomplishments

Chair: Chief Gerald Reardon, SAFECOM

- ✓ Provided input on the *ISSI/CSSI Conformance Test Tool Compliance Assessment Bulletin (ICC Test Tool CAB)*

Virtual Engagements

Due to health crisis-imposed travel restrictions throughout 2020, the traditional in-person meetings hosted by CISA were held as virtual engagements. Regardless, this series of virtual meetings continued to promote collaboration and networking among members, as well as facilitated solutions to some of the Nation’s most pressing issues on emergency communications interoperability. Below are summaries of the larger virtual meetings. Full summaries for these and other in-person meetings may be found under the *Joint Meetings* section of the [NCSWIC website](#). In addition to these larger meetings, NCSWIC’s sub-groups also met virtually throughout the year. Across 12 sub-groups, NCSWIC held a total of 90 virtual committee, working group, and task force meetings in 2020, and one in-person engagement for the NCSWIC EC prior to travel restrictions.

SWIC COVID-19 Status Calls- (March – June)



In March 2020, NCSWIC began holding weekly calls in response to the public health crisis. SWICs continued to meet on a regular basis through June 2020 to share best practices and lessons learned as they confronted communications challenges on a level never seen before. Conversations focused on emergency communications issues related to the pandemic response and managing resources as SWICs balanced day-to-day operations and responses to the public health crisis, weather events, and civil unrest throughout the country. As the country scrambled to establish alternate care sites, the calls noted a critical need to identify best practices for establishing communications capabilities at the sites. As a result, NCSWIC, SAFECOM, and CISA worked together to develop the *Emergency Communications Best Practices for Establishing Alternate Care Sites* document that has been widely shared (Figure 1).

In addition to establishing and managing alternate care sites, states noted concerns with ensuring staffing levels and instituting COVID-19 protocols at public safety answering points (PSAPs). As a result, SWICs shared best practices on planning for redundancies and remote staffing options and securing enough personal protective equipment for PSAP personnel and first responders. Some of these conversations lead to the development of CISA’s *Guidelines for 911 Centers: Pandemic* suite of documents, which aimed at assisting public safety partners across all levels of government when developing plans and actions regarding governance, procedures, staffing, and cleaning and disinfecting in

Figure 1: Front page of the *Emergency Communications Best Practices for Establishing Alternate Care Sites*

response to a pandemic. Furthermore, feedback from the NCSWIC membership played a direct role in ensuring workers at emergency communications centers, PSAPs, public safety communications centers, emergency operation centers, and 911 call centers were officially designated as essential critical infrastructure workers.

With most of the country under stay-at-home orders, states noted an uptick in network congestion as teleworking and virtual schooling became the norm. However, overall commercial networks held throughout the country, in part because of the amazing work our groups have accomplished over the last decade. There was also increased demand for Government Emergency Telecommunications Service (GETS) and Wireless Priority Service (WPS) accounts during the pandemic and SWICs worked with CISA to ensure any issues were corrected in a timely manner. States in the western region reported increased requests for communications assistance and coordination with tribal nations, with requests frequently involving setting up alternate care sites. Some states also faced challenges related to conspiracy theories regarding 5G, including the destruction of tower sites.

Overall, SWICs noted the benefit of increased communications coordination among and between states and telecommunications providers to manage the changing crisis. SWICs also noted the need to reexamine budgets, identify gaps in resources required for future response, and prepare for potential service disruptions as many states are experiencing the effects of decreased budgets going forward after loss of state revenue.

CISA Support during the Health Crisis Webinar (May 15)

Former CISA Deputy Director, Matthew Travis, provided opening remarks to kick off the first in a series of joint SAFECOM and NCSWIC webinars. Deputy Director Travis emphasized CISA's continued support of public safety stakeholders during and after the pandemic by utilizing a variety of virtual engagements including presentations, trainings, and forums for sharing best practices and lessons learned. The NCSWIC Co-Chairs of the joint SAFECOM-NCSWIC Funding and Sustainment Committee provided state perspectives on impacts of the ongoing pandemic, including balancing an increased need for resources during a time of decreased revenue and budget cuts. CISA showcased its yearly publication of the [SAFECOM Guidance on Emergency Communications Grants](#) and provided information on the annual [List of Federal Financial Assistance Programs Funding Emergency Communications](#). Additionally, CISA published guidance on the [CARES Act](#) released on March 27, 2020. Members also received an overview of the Priority Telecommunications Services offered by CISA, including GETS, WPS, and Telecommunications Service Priority. CISA's priority services programs provided additional direct support during the pandemic, including facilitating virtual private network access to United States Navy ships utilized as alternate care sites, assisting 3M in expediting communications to support the manufacturing of personal protective equipment, and supporting medical research and testing at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center.

To assist states, territories, and tribes during this time, ICTAP shifted its focus to transitioning several of its technical assistance offerings to a virtual format. ICTAP also provided support to stakeholders on the front lines through direct support by CISA Emergency Communications Coordinators on Emergency Support Function #2 task forces in Regions I, II, and IX. Specific to the pandemic, Coordinators actively monitored PSAP call volume and supported the deployment and decommissioning of alternate care sites. Other efforts included supporting the Democratic and Republican National Conventions and preparations for the presidential inauguration in Washington, DC.

Cybersecurity 101 Webinar (May 29)

The Cybersecurity 101 Webinar addressed how to create a better cybersecurity posture in agencies, cybersecurity in a pandemic environment, how to engage with CISA Regional Offices, as well as available CISA guidance and resources. CISA uses a regional structure to provide resources, including training and direct coordination with partners, to defend against today's threats and to build more secure and resilient infrastructure for the future. Each region is led by a regional director who oversees coordination with critical infrastructure partners, along with assigned local Protective Security Advisors (PSAs), technical advisors, Cyber Security Advisors (CSAs), Emergency Communications Coordinators, and other CISA support deployed into the regions.

The PSA program's mission is to proactively engage with mission partners to protect critical infrastructure. PSAs serve as critical infrastructure security specialists with a focus on building relationships and sharing information. The CSA program's mission is to promote and advance cybersecurity preparedness, risk mitigation, and incident response

capabilities of public and private sector owners and operators of critical infrastructure, and SLTT governments, through stakeholder partnerships and direct assistance activities. To promote the security and resilience of critical infrastructure, the CSA program conducts assessments; promotes best practices, such as the *National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) [Cybersecurity Framework](#)*; builds communities of interest; shares trends and security practices; listens to stakeholders and collects requirements for CISA action; and coordinates incident response.

[Federal Virtual Training Environment \(FedVTE\)](#) is a free online, on-demand cybersecurity training system available at no charge for government personnel, including contractors and veterans. Managed by CISA, FedVTE contains more than 800 hours of training on topics such as ethical hacking and surveillance, risk management, and malware analysis. CISA designed the [Cyber Essentials](#) to enhance the Nation's collective defense against cyber threats. This resource is a starting point for small businesses and local governments that do not have abundant resources to address cybersecurity risks. These essential elements are meant to outline the actions that leaders should take to create a culture of cyber-readiness in their organization.

CISA engaged a three-pronged approach in response to the pandemic, beginning with better fortifying the defenses of health sector organizations, distributing alerts on scams related to the financial stimulus package, and supporting and strengthening organizational telework efforts. Additionally, the Multi-State Information Sharing and Analysis Center (MS-ISAC), funded by CISA, serves as a central resource for situational awareness, information sharing, and incident response for SLTT governments. More information on joining the MS-ISAC can be found at learn.cisecurity.org/ms-isac-registration.

Preparing for 2020 Real-World Events Webinar: Lessons Learned for Public Safety Communications (August 12)

During this virtual roundtable, SAFECOM and NCSWIC members shared best practices and lessons learned for balancing response efforts to real-world events during the public health crisis, including natural disasters, cyber incidents, unplanned large-scale demonstrations, and planned events. Speakers discussed their experiences responding to many of the events that occurred in 2020 and highlighted key areas where they focused efforts to ensure the continuity and resiliency of their agency's public safety communications. Speakers touched on several events to include: the tornado outbreak in Tennessee, the national health crisis, widespread civil unrest, the T-Mobile outage, Hurricane Hanna, and Hurricane Isaias. Figure 2 on the following page is an extensive, but not all-inclusive, snapshot of 2020 events that demonstrates the wide array of incidents impacting public safety communications and first responders.

During the roundtable, best practices emerged as speakers noted similarities in response efforts across the country. Several of the most common factors include:

- Ensuring proper resource management
- Maintaining a healthy and robust workforce through preventive measures
- Focusing on training
- Updating or developing plans and procedures
- Ensuring resiliency and cybersecurity in a virtual environment
- Applying responsible fiscal choices due to budget limitations
- Providing accessible educational and mental health services to personnel

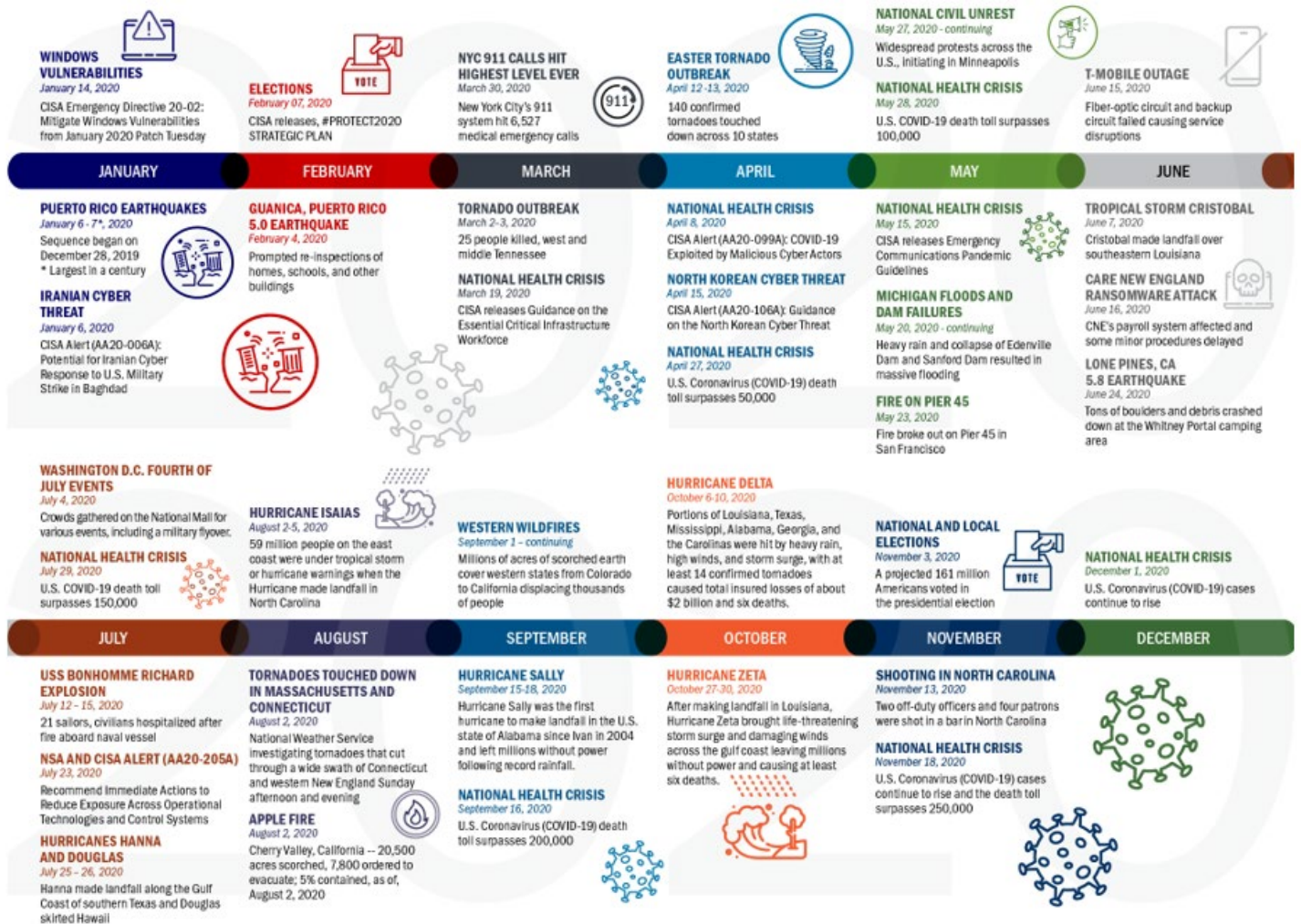


Figure 2: 2020 Events Graphic

Virtual Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs) Webinar: Lessons Learned from Hurricane Isaias (October 1)

EOCs are a critical component of incident response for planned (e.g., presidential inauguration, sporting events) or unplanned (e.g., hurricanes, wildfires, civil unrest) events. In today's environment, where social distancing requirements limit in-person interactions, the public safety community must consider options for remote coordination. Jurisdictions are now exploring the costs and benefits of augmenting traditional brick-and-mortar EOCs with a virtual environment. While most agree new digital or hybrid models will never replace face-to-face interaction during emergencies, the incorporation of a virtual EOC (vEOC) model should be considered as agencies attempt to navigate changes to the public safety communications ecosystem created by the pandemic.

During this webinar, participants heard from NCSWIC members and colleagues from North Carolina and South Carolina, who shared their experiences implementing a vEOC in response to Hurricane Isaias and subsequent planned events. Speakers also shared best practices, and highlighted digital platforms utilized in their virtually coordinated response activities, including WebEx, Bridge 4 Public Safety, Adobe Connect, and SharePoint. Visit the full summary to view a checklist for implementing a vEOC, complete with unique considerations an agency should review.

Fall 2020 Virtual Engagement (December 1-3; 8-10)

SAFECOM and NCSWIC kicked off their bi-annual meeting, conducted virtually for the first time, with multiple informative and productive sessions over the course of a two-week period. CISA Acting Director Brandon Wales served as the keynote speaker helping to kick off the event and provided opening remarks and CISA updates. Members of both organizations selected topics for this year's engagement series, focusing on the groups' most pressing priorities. Plenary session topics included public safety cybersecurity awareness, complicating factors impacting communications response to this year's fire season, communications challenges and strategies surrounding the presidential inauguration, computer-aided dispatch system interoperability, and more. Both groups also met individually to discuss and vote on current work products and conduct strategic planning for 2021 activities. View the full summary on SAFECOM's website. Virtual Engagement session recordings can also be found on the Homeland Security Information Network (log in required).

2020 NCSWIC Elections

In accordance with the *NCSWIC Charter*, Regional Interoperability Council Chairs serve as EC members for two-year terms. In September 2020, an election for the even-numbered regions was held. The results of the election are as follows:

- Region II: John Miller, New Jersey (primary); Felix Garcia, Puerto Rico (alternate)
- Region IV: Greg Hauser, North Carolina (primary); Michael Nix, Georgia (alternate)
- Region VI: Penny Rubow, Arkansas (primary); Nikki Dallas, Oklahoma (alternate)
- Region VIII: Nate Smolinski, Wyoming (primary)
- Region X: Brian Shields, Idaho (primary); William Chapman, Oregon (alternate)

In December 2020, NCSWIC members held an election for the NCSWIC Vice Chair position. Brad Stoddard, Michigan SWIC and current Vice Chair, was reelected as Vice Chair for an additional two-year term.

Resources

NCSWIC Executive Committee	
Resource	Link
2019 Annual Summary of Accomplishments	https://www.cisa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/2019_NCSWIC_Annual_Summary_Approved%20-%20508.pdf
Governance Committee	
Resource	Link
NCSWIC Fact Sheet	https://www.cisa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/NCSWIC%20Fact%20Sheet_FINAL.pdf
Planning, Training, and Exercise Committee	
Resource	Link
SWIC to STO Engagement Guide	https://www.cisa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/SWIC%20to%20STO%20Engagement%20Guide_Final_508.pdf
Initial Response Checklist	https://www.cisa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/NCSWIC%20PTE_Initial%20Response%20Checklist_Final_508.pdf
Funding and Sustainment Committee	
Resource	Link
Emergency Communications Systems Value Analysis Guide and Talking Points	https://www.cisa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/Value_Analysis_Guide_FINAL_05-26-2020_508.pdf
Understanding the Value of Public Safety Communications Systems: A Brochure for Elected Officials and Decision-Makers	https://www.cisa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/Value_Analysis_Brochure_FINAL_05-26-2020_508.pdf
Funding Mechanisms Guide for Public Safety Communications	https://www.cisa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/21_0621_funding_mechanisms_guide_final_508.pdf
Technology Policy Committee	
Resource	Link
SAFECOM-NCSWIC RF Interference Best Practices Guidebook	https://www.cisa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/safecom-ncswic_rf_interference_best_practices_guidebook_2.7.20_-_final_508c.pdf
Essentials of AWN	https://www.cisa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/CISA%20Essentials%20of%20AWNs_4.27.20%20-%20FINAL%20%28508c%29.pdf
Best Practices for Planning and Implementation of P25 ISSI and CSSI: Volume II	https://www.cisa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/07-02-2020_P25-ISSI-CSSI-Best-Practices-Vol2_FINAL_508c.pdf
ICAM Value Proposition Suite	https://www.cisa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/ICAM%20Public%20Safety%20Value%20Proposition%20Overview_07-29-20_508c.pdf
Encryption Key Management Fact Sheet	https://www.cisa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/Encryption%20Key%20Management%20Fact%20Sheet_FINAL_05-12-20_508.pdf

Operational Best Practices for Encryption Key Management	https://www.cisa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/08-19-2020_Operational-Best-Practices-for-Encryption-Key-Mgmt_508c.pdf
Public Safety Communications Dependencies on Non-Agency Infrastructure and Services	https://www.cisa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/Public%20Safety%20Communications%20Dependencies%20on%20Non-Agency%20Infrastructure%20and%20Services_10-21-20_508c.pdf
NG911 Self-Assessment Tool	https://www.911.gov/project_ng911tool.html
Cyber Risks to NG911	https://www.cisa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/NG911%20Cybersecurity%20Primer.pdf
GIS Lifecycle Best Practices Guide for NG911	https://www.cisa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/SAFECOM-NCSWIC_GIS%20Lifecycle%20Best%20Practices%20Guide_9.22.20%20-%20FINAL_%28508c%29.pdf