The Task Force’s Purpose and Charge

The SAFECOM and National Council of Statewide Interoperability Coordinators (NCSWIC) Communications Section Task Force was established to address gaps within the Incident Communications Unit through the development of: 1) nationwide federated model for the Communications Section to promote and provide consistent recruitment, training, retention, and support for all-hazards incidents; 2) national standards for qualification, certification, and credentialing; 3) updated training courses and curriculum; 4) clarification of existing position descriptions (COML, COMT, RADO, etc.) to include the all-hazards environment; and 5) new IT positions.

Communications Section Task Force Goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Governance and Outreach</th>
<th>Establish a nationally-agreed upon governance framework to promote consistent recruitment, stakeholder engagement, training, credentialing, retention, and support for all-hazards incidents across levels of government.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Training, Curriculum, and Delivery</td>
<td>Establish agency agreements on minimum requirements for training; update courses to include voice, broadband, and video capabilities training; and implement new positions to support the Incident Command System (ICS) structure.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Qualification, Certification, and Credentialing</td>
<td>Establish framework for qualification, certification, and credentialing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Standards and Processes</td>
<td>Establish minimum requirements for experience, instructor, curriculum, position, and currency standards; develop cadre of qualified Communications Section personnel to support all-hazards incident requirements; and develop blueprint for certification and credentialing nationwide.</td>
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Recent Achievements

An Unmet Need: National-Level Governance for the NIMS/ICS Communications Unit White Paper

The white paper investigates the communications environment and addresses concerns put forth by the emergency communications community of responders.

National Incident Management System (NIMS) Refresh Letter

The Communications Section Task Force delivered a letter to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), National Integration Center (NIC) providing a recommendation for a revision of the COML position within the Incident Command System and the National Incident Management System (NIMS). The letter was submitted during the public comment period for the NIMS Refresh.

Outreach

The Communications Section Task Force continues to expand its membership to include subject matter experts outside of SAFECOM, NCSWIC, FEMA, All-Hazards Incident Management Teams Association (AHIMTA), FirstNet, and the National Coordinating Center for Communications (NCC).
Communications Section Vision

Need for Stakeholder Buy In

- Public safety is often reticent to modify a standardized system already in place.
- Many stakeholders are unaware of the increasing expectations for more diverse communications capabilities at incidents, anticipated demands for broadband connectivity, and the need for improved processes concerning governance, training, qualification, and certification.
- Stakeholder organizations need the flexibility to develop and use policies, practices, and procedures for qualifying Communications Section personnel to meet internal needs, while achieving agreement on variations supporting external requests for skilled people and technology to support the greater good.

Need to Integrate IT Stakeholders

- The demand for new and evolving communication technologies for incident response exceeds the capabilities of the current ICS structure.
- Many of the stakeholders involved typically have LMR-centric backgrounds.
- Subject matter experts are needed to help map out opportunities for evolving technologies for the Communications Section.

Communications Section

Sustained, Federated Governance Model

Sustainable, Credible Qualification Models

Stakeholder Engagement with Partnering Agencies

Course Refresh for Policies, Mechanisms, and Processes

New Comms Functions Supporting Emerging Technology

Accepted Curriculum Standards

Repeatable Processes for Curriculum Creation

Quality Assurance Processes Inclusive of Entire Lifecycle

Metrics-based Evaluation and Gap Analyses

From a communications incident management perspective, multiple organizations have different operational requirements and conflicting expectations of the Communications Section roles and responsibilities, but these conflicts must be resolved with a unified approach for the future Communications Section.

A forum is needed to build relationships to address challenges and opportunities, such as qualification, curriculum development, and continuing education across impacted organizations.

Need for Unified Approach with Partners

Need for Flexibility for Future Evolution

As communications in incident response continues to evolve, a process is needed to address new tools, curriculum updates, and managing Communications Section personnel in an all-hazards environment.

Additional Communications Section Functions

Essential Functions

IT Service Management

Network Management

Help Desk

Infrastructure & Device Management

Information Management

Cybersecurity

Identity Management

Bandwidth Management

System Administration

IT Support for First Responders

LMR Support for First Responders

Change Management

Plans & Engineering

Application Management

Scalability

Incident Type III

Incident Type II

Incident Type I