



FEDERAL EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATION

Emergency Communications Preparedness Center

OneDHS Emergency Communications Committee

Canada-United States Communications Interoperability Working Group

Federal departments and agencies rely on emergency communications to support mission critical operations, such as law enforcement, homeland defense, and response to man-made or natural disasters. Lessons learned from the 9/11 terrorist attacks, Hurricane Katrina, and Super Storm Sandy illustrate the need for improved emergency communications coordination across the Federal Government and among state, local, tribal, and international agencies. To address these issues, Congress created the Emergency Communications Preparedness Center (ECPC). In turn, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) established the One DHS Emergency Communications Committee, a sub-group of the ECPC, to coordinate intra-DHS emergency communications activities. The DHS Office of Emergency Communications (OEC) administers both the ECPC and the One DHS Emergency Communications Committee. To address interoperability issues along the U.S.-Canada border, DHS and Public Safety Canada established the Canada-United States (CANUS) Communications Interoperability Working Group (CIWG). OEC serves as Co-Chair of the CANUS CIWG.

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS PREPAREDNESS CENTER (ECPC)

Improving Federal Emergency Communications

The ECPC is the federal focal point for interoperable and operable emergency communications coordination. The 14 ECPC member Federal Departments and Agencies represent the Federal Government's broad role in emergency communications, including regulation, policy, operations, grants, and technical assistance. The mission of the ECPC is to improve coordination and information sharing amongst federal emergency communications programs in support of interoperability, and the ability to provide emergency responders and officials with continued communications during incidents.

ECPC Members	
	U.S. Department of Agriculture
	U.S. Department of Commerce
	U.S. Department of Defense
	U.S. Department of Energy
	Federal Communications Commission
	General Services Administration
	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
	U.S. Department of Homeland Security
	U.S. Department of the Interior
	U.S. Department of Justice
	U.S. Department of Labor
	U.S. Department of State
	U.S. Department of Transportation
	U.S. Department of Treasury

It is comprised of an Executive Committee and a Steering Committee. The Executive Committee establishes the goals and priorities of the ECPC and provides overall governance and strategic direction for the group, while the Steering Committee implements the Executive Committee direction. The Steering Committee also establishes, oversees, and disbands permanent or temporary focus groups to support ECPC activities as appropriate.

ECPC Focus Groups include the FirstNet Consultation Group (FCG), Research and Development (R&D) Focus Group, and Grants Focus Group. The R&D Focus Group has focused on baseline and roadmap efforts.

The Grants Focus Group provides consistent grant guidance for emergency communications investments; promotes consistency in policy across federal financial assistance programs that fund emergency communications; coordinates across federal agencies and financial assistance programs to support the advancement of emergency communications; and improves the understanding of emergency communications funding. The ECPC FCG supports FirstNet by coordinating the collection of data and requirements related to federal users and assets, which can be leveraged in building the Nationwide Public Safety Broadband Network (NPSBN).

ECPC Strategic Agenda

The ECPC's strategic agenda lays the foundation for continued improvements in federal emergency communications coordination. The ECPC's strategic objectives include:

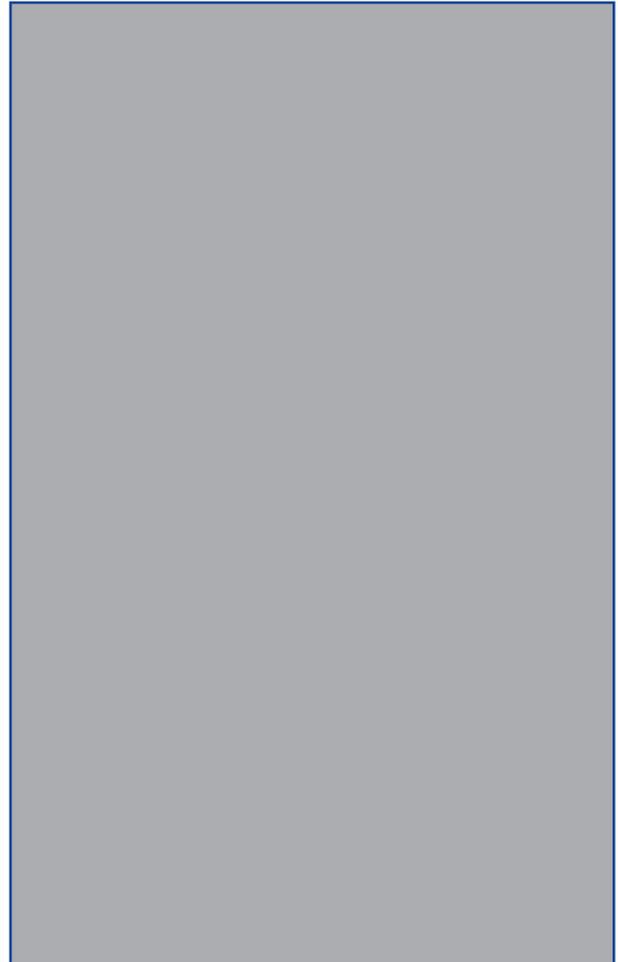
- Increasing efficiencies at the federal level through joint investment and resource sharing.
- Improving alignment of strategic and operational emergency communications planning across levels of government.
- Improving alignment of federal investments in state, local, and tribal capabilities to ensure focus on critical gaps and priorities.
- Leveraging collective resources to drive R&D and standards for existing and emerging technologies.

Notable achievements in advancing ECPC's strategic objectives include:

- Coordinating federal programs that support emergency communications grant funding and developing program guidance to improve alignment of federal investment in state, local, and tribal capabilities. *The ECPC Recommendations for Federal Agencies on Financial Assistance for Emergency Communications* provides guidance for grant policy across more than 40 federal emergency communications grant programs to address critical gaps and emerging priorities.
- Coordinating federal involvement in broadband planning to align strategic and operational planning across all levels of government.
- Identifying intergovernmental sharing and

coordination opportunities by improving the visibility of federal resources and efforts among member agencies.

- Preparing and submitting to Congress an annual strategic assessment regarding the coordination efforts of federal departments and agencies towards advancing emergency response capabilities.



ONE DHS EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

DHS Focal Point

DHS relies heavily on communications interoperability to exchange critical information among partnering public safety organizations and with operational personnel in the field. Enabling and maintaining this type of information sharing in a complex operating environment is challenging. To meet this need, the Department established the One DHS Emergency Communications Committee to coordinate intra-Departmental emergency communications programs, activities, and challenges. As new and emerging technologies such as broadband have become more prevalent, interdependencies within

the Department and stakeholder groups has grown, further increasing the need for coordination.

The Committee aligns these efforts and provides a forum to identify priorities and synergies.

The Committee's key functions are:

- Identifying critical gaps and priorities across emergency communications domains.
- Developing cross-cutting strategic plans to guide emergency communications efforts.
- Coordinating development and implementation of DHS emergency communications policy.
- Ensuring DHS interests are comprehensively represented in external emergency communications forums.
- Enabling sharing of information and improved visibility across emergency communications domains.
- Providing Department-level input and guidance to the ECPC.

The One DHS Emergency Communications Committee consists of senior executives from the 22 DHS Components. The Committee developed the Department's first holistic emergency communications strategy to guide DHS activities towards ensuring access to, and exchange of, mission-critical information across the Homeland Security enterprise anywhere, anytime, through unified capabilities. The Committee serves as a leader in intradepartmental broadband planning, interoperability planning, and common architecture development.

CANADA-U.S. COMMUNICATIONS INTEROPERABILITY WORKING GROUP (CANUS CIWG)

Beyond the Border

Public safety and homeland security agencies from Canada and the United States routinely cooperate to maintain security and safety along the 5,500 mile joint border that is a diverse array of geographies, communities, and operational environments. These considerations pose unique challenges to the federal, provincial/territorial, state, local, and tribal responders in the region.

The ability of these agencies to rapidly respond to incidents, and to recover from disasters, is a key component of maintaining security and economic competitiveness along the border. Maintaining cross-border coordination to enable radio and other public safety communications interoperability, including examining the spectrum approval processes within the coordination zone and mutual aid channel assignments across disciplines and jurisdictions, is central to successfully fulfilling critical missions. The international border adds layers of complexity, as regulatory, legal, and policy differences compound operational and tactical communications hurdles. Overcoming these interoperability challenges requires ongoing coordination to identify capability gaps and collaborative solutions.

In February 2011, the President of the U.S. and the Prime Minister of Canada issued *Beyond the Border (BTB): A Shared Vision for Perimeter Security and Economic Competitiveness*, to solidify this security commitment between the United States and Canada. The BTB Action Plan, released in December 2011, mandated the establishment of a bi-national working group focused on harmonizing cross-border interoperable emergency communications. DHS and Public Safety Canada worked with representatives from both governments to establish the CANUS CIWG to achieve this goal.

Established in October 2012, the CANUS CIWG is comprised of federal representatives from various agencies within the United States and Canadian governments. Office of Emergency Communications (OEC) represents the U.S. Government and is the Co-Chair of the CANUS CIWG together with a Public Safety Canada representative. Members work together to ensure that inter-agency collaboration and coordination efforts advance daily and emergency interoperable communications along the border.

The CANUS CIWG also addresses critical cross-border communication issues related to governance, standard operating procedures, technology, and training and exercises. A five-year work plan that includes validation metrics guides the group's efforts.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Please contact OEC@dhs.gov or visit www.dhs.gov/oec.