SAFECOM

BACKGROUND

SAFECOM was formed in 2001 after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 to improve public safety communications across the nation. Since its formation, SAFECOM has aimed to improve interoperability, allowing emergency responders to communicate through different communication systems to exchange information.

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.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

SAFECOM has played an important role in improving interoperability through a variety of accomplishments and initiatives.

### Communications Unit Leader (COML) Courses

In a joint venture with the Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Office of Emergency Communications (OEC), SAFECOM provided input for the development of the first COML training course. This course trains emergency responders on how to serve as radio communications unit leaders during all-hazards emergency operations. Offered by OEC's Technical Assistance program, the training equips emergency responders with the tools they need to improve communications across the multiple disciplines and jurisdictions responding to an incident.

Grant Guidance

SAFECOM members started providing input and feedback to DHS's grant guidance efforts in 2003. This effort continues to ensure that the emergency response communications related grants process is efficient and effective for State, local, tribal, and territorial recipients. The grant guidance document is updated annually and provides guidance on eligible emergency communications activities and equipment.

Governance Guide

SAFECOM members developed a guide that includes recommendations and best practices to establish or update emergency communications governance structures representing the entire emergency communications ecosystem.

Emergency Communications Governance Guide for State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Officials
September 2015

SAFECOM   NCSWIC
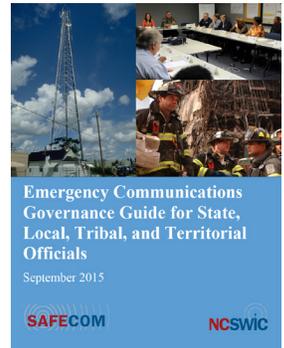
Interoperability Continuum

In 2007, SAFECOM began collaboration with OEC to help states, tribes, regions, and communities assess their current level of interoperability. The interoperability continuum focuses on five key areas: governance, standard operating procedures, technology (voice and data), training and exercises, and usage. The brochure, and its corresponding graphic, depicts what is accomplished at each end of the spectrum under low and high degrees of leadership, planning, and resources. This continuum aids public safety practitioners and policy makers to help them plan for short- and long-term interoperability efforts.

Interoperability Continuum

National Emergency Communications Plan (NECP)

The NECP is the first National plan for emergency communications that outlines key priorities and milestones to help enhance governance, planning, technology, training, exercises, and improvements in disaster communications capabilities. SAFECOM provided a standard review, including the implementation of new technologies and the national public safety broadband network.

Statewide Communication Interoperability Plan (SCIP) Methodology

In 2007, SAFECOM, the National Institute of Justice, and the Commonwealth of Virginia partnered to create the first strategic plan for improving statewide interoperable communications. The SCIP continues to be a critical tool to help states prioritize resources, strengthen governance, and address interoperability gaps. OEC works with the Statewide Interoperability Coordinators to assist states and territories in updating their SCIPs by bringing together key stakeholders to identify and address communications interoperability gaps and enhance emergency communications based on the state's needs.
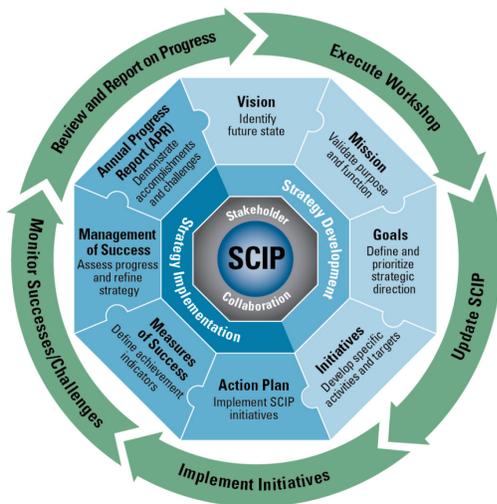
Statement of Requirements (SoR)

Released by SAFECOM in 2004, the SoR helped define baseline communication and interoperability standards for the Nation's 60,000 emergency response agencies.

MEMBERSHIP

SAFECOM uniquely brings together over 50 representatives from state, local, tribal, and territorial emergency responders, appointed and elected officials, and major

intergovernmental and national public safety associations. SAFECOM membership also coordinates other elected and appointed officials, and other key emergency communications stakeholders to provide input on the challenges, needs, and best practices facing emergency communications.

Strategic Priorities

SAFECOM's four committees are organized to address public safety related priorities on a yearly basis and collaborate on products and activities to distribute to the public safety community. Committees include Technology Policy, Funding and Sustainment, SAFECOM Governance, and Education and Outreach. The committees also manage and lead different working groups to further explore different communications issues. For example, the Communications Unit Working Group investigates evolving concerns regarding the current state of the Communications Unit program.

NATIONWIDE PUBLIC SAFETY BROADBAND NETWORK

The Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 authorized the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet) to plan for, build, and deploy a nationwide interoperable broadband network to help public safety responders and officials communicate efficiently during emergencies. FirstNet is an independent authority within the National Telecommunications and Information Administration. FirstNet holds the spectrum license to build, deploy, and operate the network, in consultation with Federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial public safety entities and other key stakeholders. Many SAFECOM members serve on FirstNet's Public Safety Advisory Committee, which provides public safety subject matter expertise to FirstNet.

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