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NATIONAL EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Charting the Nation's Course towards Interoperability

The Department of Homeland Security's Office of Emergency Communications (OEC) developed the National Emergency Communications Plan (NECP) in 2008 to serve as the Nation's first strategic plan for strengthening emergency communications capabilities nationwide. With a focus on governance, standard operating procedures, technology, usage, training and exercises, the NECP is designed to enhance communications operability among State, Local, Tribal and Territorial jurisdictions. To assist in this effort, the NECP includes three major goals, seven objectives, and 92 milestones to help emergency responders and government officials make measurable improvements in interoperable emergency communications capabilities.

A STAKEHOLDER DRIVING APPROACH

Establishes a Framework

DHS, through the OEC, used a stakeholder-driven approach to develop the NECP, which included input from more than 150 representatives from the Federal, State, Local and Tribal governments, public safety officials, first responder communities and the private sector. As a result, the NECP was developed as a framework for nationwide emergency communication through direct feedback and input from stakeholders at the Federal, State, local, and tribal levels of government. This framework provided guidance on implementation of effective policies and support for the improvement of emergency communications nationwide.

Purpose

- Set national goals and priorities for addressing deficiencies in the Nation's emergency communications posture
- Provide recommendations and milestones for emergency response providers, relevant government officials, and Congress to improve emergency communications capabilities

Builds on Progress

The intent of NECP was to build on the substantial progress that has been made over the last decade as a Nation, such as:

- Statewide Communication Interoperability Plans (SCIPs) in place in every State and Territory to serve as a framework to strengthen interoperable communications at the State level and support efforts at the National level
- Statewide Interoperability Coordinators (SWICs) responsible for implementing and continually updating each State's plan
- State Interoperability Governing Bodies (SIGBs) that develop policies and procedures to support the needs of public safety within the States and,
- The creation of the Emergency Communications Preparedness Center (ECPC) to improve Federal coordination across 14 Federal departments and agencies, as well as the One DHS Emergency Communications Committee focusing on improving internal coordination across DHS component offices with emergency communications missions.

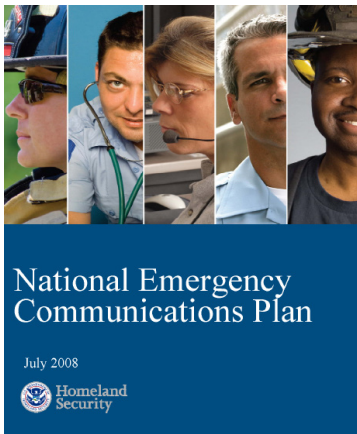
NECP IMPLEMENTATION AND GOAL MEASUREMENT

The NECP outlines three strategic Goals for emergency response situations with established performance metrics for interoperable communications.

Goal 1 - By 2010, 90 percent of all high-risk urban areas designated within the Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) are able to demonstrate response-level emergency communications within one hour for routine events involving multiple jurisdictions and agencies.

Goal 2 - By 2011, 75 percent of non-UASI jurisdictions are able to demonstrate response-level communications within one hour for routine events involving multiple jurisdictions and agencies.

Goal 3 - By 2013, 75 percent of all jurisdictions are able to demonstrate response-level emergency communications within three hours, in the event of a significant incident as outlined in national planning scenarios.



To measure NECP Goal 1, OEC worked with the UASI regions and evaluated their use of emergency communications during a simulated real-world incident. Based on the capabilities documented during each exercise, all

60 UASIs were able to demonstrate the ability to establish response-level communications in accordance with the NECP metrics. Similarly in 2011, OEC worked closely with State and Local officials to collect data from counties or county-equivalents (such as parishes) nationwide to measure NECP Goal 2. In its assessment, OEC found that over 3,000 jurisdictions were able to demonstrate response-level emergency communications within one of an incident. Moving forward, OEC continues to work with State, Local, and Tribal jurisdictions in order to ensure that NECP Goal 3 will be achieved by the end of 2013.

UPDATING THE NECP

In 2013, OEC initiated a national effort to update the NECP. Using the same stakeholder driven approach for the last plan, OEC has engaged more than 300 stakeholders from public safety organizations; emergency management agencies; Federal, State, Local, and Tribal governments; the private sector; partnership groups and associations; and secondary responders such as utilities, nongovernmental organizations, and auxiliary sources. Through these meetings, as well as through lessons learned from real world incidents, the convergence of people, processes, and technologies is transforming the emergency communications landscape has been documented.

As a result, the updated NECP continues to stress the importance of improving current emergency communications, such as Land Mobile Radio (LMR) networks, but encourages the adoption, migration and use of emerging technologies, such as broadband. In addition, the NECP emphasizes the need for enhanced coordination among stakeholders, processes, and planning activities across the “whole community.”

OEC recently completed an initial draft of the NECP and will begin to formally vet the draft NECP with its DHS, Federal, State, Local, Tribal and industry partners in early 2014.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Please contact OEC@dhs.gov or visit www.dhs.gov (keyword OEC).