

Fact Sheet



National Public Safety Telecommunications Council

Background

The National Public Safety Telecommunications Council (NPSTC), a federation of organizations, was organized to encourage and facilitate implementation of the findings and recommendations of the Public Safety Wireless Advisory Committee (PSWAC), established in 1994 by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) to evaluate the wireless communications needs of local, tribal, state, and federal public safety agencies through the year 2010, identify problems, and recommend possible solutions.

In 1997, thirteen national-level organizations set aside individual agendas to unite in support of vitally important issues that affect public safety telecommunications. "For the first time in my 30 years of public safety communications experience, all of the key associations are working together within NPSTC, with one voice, to bring about change" says Douglas M. Aiken, NPSTC Vice Chair, International Municipal Signal Association (IMSA). NPSTC has since added two organizations to increase its membership to fifteen.

MISSION: To improve public safety communications and interoperability through collaborative leadership.

VALUE: There is no other forum that includes all of the key national-level public safety organizations that collaborates and develops consensus positions for legislative and regulatory bodies, along with addressing a broad range of topics impacting public safety communications. NPSTC provides an unquantifiable benefit to local and state public safety organizations, federal agencies, regulatory bodies, and industry.

NPSTC's fifteen organizational members are represented by a voting Governing Board. In addition, NPSTC includes two non-voting, associate organizational members. The NPSTC Charter identifies goals and objectives of the Governing Board, along with policies pertaining to accomplishing these goals. The Governing Board governs the affairs of NPSTC, subject to the provision of the Charter.

Approach

NPSTC pursues the role as a resource and advocate for public safety organizations in the United States on matters relating to public safety telecommunications. NPSTC explores technologies and public policies involving public safety telecommunications, analyzes the ramifications of particular issues and submits comments to governmental bodies with the objective of furthering public safety telecommunications worldwide.

NPSTC's responsibility is to provide a collective voice on communications issues for the approximately 2.5 million public safety first responders in the United States working for 18,000 local



and state law enforcement agencies, 26,000 fire departments, and more than 6,000 rescue departments, plus federal law enforcement, tribal law enforcement, and other agencies, such as transportation and the public utilities who need to talk to one another during critical incidents. These objectives are accomplished by:

- Developing and making recommendations to appropriate governmental bodies regarding public safety communications issues and policies, promoting greater interoperability and cooperation between local, state, tribal, and federal agencies.
- Serving as a standing forum for the exchange of ideas and information, and works to identify and promote methods for funding development of public safety communications systems.
- Monitoring new technology research, supports studies of public safety communications, and uses research to stay abreast of user needs.
- Communicating information on technology, research, and policy issues to the field through its website, www.NPSTC.org and through its quarterly newsletter, spectrum.

DHS OIC Coordination

NPSTC has played a key role in providing input to the Department of Homeland Security regarding the issues of public safety wireless communications and interoperability. Its members have been involved in helping to form several organizations with DHS to address these issues and continue serve on these organizations' Executive and Steering Committees.

The Department of Homeland Security's Office of Interoperable Communications (OIC), within the Directorate for Science and Technology, carries out interoperability related research, development, testing, evaluation, and standards efforts. OIC evaluates and assess new technology in real-world environments to achieve interoperable emergency communications capabilities; encourages more efficient use of existing resources, including equipment; tests public safety communications systems; coordinates with the private sector to develop solutions to improve emergency communications capabilities and achieve interoperable emergency communications capabilities; and conducts pilot projects.

Projects

Four NPSTC Committees, through Working Groups, are responsible for conducting research and studies, writing position papers, and giving presentations at various meetings and conferences at the request of the Governing Board. Working Groups interact with each another and the member organizations to provide details of their findings, by reaching out to subject matter experts and developing positions for the Committee Chairs, who in turn forward those positions with their comments to the Governing Board for approval. Committee Chairs are responsible for FCC filings on issues pertaining NPSTC's objectives and upon receiving approval from the Governing Board.



The following shows each NPSTC Committee and its respective Working Groups.

INTEROPERABILITY COMMITTEE

- Border Issues
- Emergency Medical Services
- Emergency Support Function (ESF)-2
- Channel Naming
- Software Defined Radio (SDR)
- Monitoring Topics: COML, NECP, Plain Language, Project 25, Project Mesa

OUTREACH COMMITTEE

- Participant Development (Volunteers)
- Website Review
- Editorial Review
- National Interoperability Information eXchange (NIIX) Steering Committee

SPECTRUM MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

- 470-512 MHz
- 700 MHz
- Airborne Video
- Wireless Alerting
- Monitoring Topics: 800 MHz Rebanding, Narrowbanding Below 512 MHz

TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

- In-building Radio Coverage
- Public Safety Spectrum Requirements: Assessment of Future Spectrum & Technology
- Technology Education
- Monitoring Topics: Broadband & New Technologies

Members

The following fifteen member organizations participate in NPSTC:

- American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials
- American Radio Relay League
- Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
- Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials – International
- Forestry Conservation Communications Association
- International Association of Chiefs of Police
- International Association of Emergency Managers



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- International Association of Fire Chiefs
 - International Municipal Signal Association
 - National Association of State Chief Information Officers
 - National Association of State Emergency Medical Services Officials
 - National Association of State Foresters
 - National Association of State Technology Directors
 - National Emergency Number Association
 - National Sheriffs' Association

Several federal agencies are liaison members of NPSTC. These include the Federal Communications Commission, Department of Homeland Security (the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Office of Emergency Communications, the Office of Interoperability and Compatibility); Department of Commerce (National Telecommunications and Information Administration); Department of the Interior; and the Department of Justice (National Institute of Justice, CommTech Program). NPSTC also has liaison relationships with associate members, the Telecommunications Industry Association and the Canadian Interoperability Technology Interest Group.

NPSTC Congressional Testimony

NPSTC's success is in providing a forum for discussion and finding consensus within the community. The following link is from OEC/OIC testimony and reflects our relationship with them:
<http://homeland.house.gov/SiteDocuments/20080916102858-00091.pdf>

Summary

For over 10 years, the National Public Safety Telecommunications Council has played a key role in influencing national policy and regulatory issues regarding wireless communications and interoperability. The nation has come a long way throughout these years and much has been accomplished; however, a great deal of work lies ahead before our country achieves a robust public safety communications infrastructure. NPSTC is sure to play a significant leadership role in the years ahead in helping to advance our nation's emergency communication systems which have proven so vital to the protection of lives and property in events such as the terrorist acts of Oklahoma City and 9/11, the devastation of Hurricane Katrina, and just as important, the day to day events that require collaboration of our public safety servants.