The member organizations of the National Public Safety Telecommunications Council are grateful to the Department of Homeland Security’s Science and Technology Directorate, Office for Interoperability and Compatibility (OIC) and the National Protection and Programs Directorate, Office of Emergency Communications (OEC) Points of view or opinions expressed are those of the originators and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.
NPSTC is a federation of organizations whose mission is to improve public safety communications and interoperability through collaborative leadership.

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Incident Communications 2.0

A plan for meeting current and future needs within NIMS

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November 27, 2018
Purpose

- Introduce SAFECOM, The National Council of Statewide Interoperability Coordinators (NCSWIC)
- Discuss communications and information technology (IT) challenges experienced within the Incident Command System (ICS) structure
- Review the stakeholder-driven process for developing recommended solutions
- Present the Communications Section Task Force’s solution
- Discuss Next Steps
Emergency Communications Landscape

Interoperable Communications Capabilities

- Governance
- Standard Operating Procedures
- Technology
- Training & Exercises
- Usage

Incident Response and Coordination

Governmental Agencies
(Federal, State, Local, Tribal, Territorial)

Notifications, Alerts & Warnings

Public, NGOs, Private Sector

Reportimg, & Requests for Assistance

Public Information Exchange

Governmental Agencies
(Federal, State, Local, Tribal, Territorial)

Public, NGOs, Private Sector
SAFECOM™

• SAFECOM was formed in 2001 as part of the Presidential E-Government Initiative to improve public safety interoperability, allowing emergency responders to communicate effectively before, during, and after emergencies and disasters.

• SAFECOM’s mission is to improve emergency response providers’ inter-jurisdictional and inter-disciplinary emergency communications interoperability through collaboration with emergency responders across Federal, State, local, tribal, and territorial governments, and international borders.

• SAFECOM members represent 48 public safety and intergovernmental associations.
• ECD partners with Statewide Interoperability Coordinators (SWICs) to help advance communications capabilities at the state level

• SWIC Responsibilities include:
  • Statewide Plan program management
  • Outreach
  • Grants coordination
  • Policy development
  • Measurement

• ECD supports the NCSWIC in providing a forum for SWIC collaboration and improved coordination across States
The Problem

• The demand for technology has exceeded the capability of the ICS

• The use of IT to support incident response is inconsistent at best

• Communications staff are regularly excluded from planning and general staff meetings

• Lack of a unified, typed approach is inconsistent with ICS

• In absence of systems, freelancing is rampant
ICS functions in a wide variety of incidents that need technical specialists. Technical specialists have special expertise and skills, and they are activated only when needed. No specific qualifications are prescribed, as technical specialists normally perform the same duties during an incident that they perform in their everyday jobs, and they are typically certified in their fields or professions.
Process

- SAFECOM and NCSWIC formed the Communications Section Task Force (formerly the COMU Working Group) to address gaps within the ICS through the development of:
  - A nationwide, federated, governance framework to promote and provide consistent recruitment, training, retention, and support for all-hazards incident communications
  - National standards for qualification, certification, and credentialing
  - Updated training courses and curriculum
  - Clarification of existing ICS position descriptions including the Communications Unit Leader (COML), Communications Technician (COMT), and Radio Operator (RADO) to include the all-hazards environment
  - Develop structural changes within the NIMS structure to support incident communications evolving complexity
Communications Section Task Force

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Notional Communications Section

IT Service Unit Positions
The IT Service Unit includes six standardized ICS positions to support information technology equipment and infrastructure, information management, cybersecurity and help desk operations during planned and unplanned events.
What’s been done to date / Next Steps

- ECD is working to facilitate the development of recommendations to FEMA to modify and enhance the National Incident Management System (NIMS) Incident Command System (ICS) regarding the role of communications within ICS

- ECD has stood up the Incident Communications Advisory Council (ICAC)
  - ICAC Membership
  - Positions
  - Roles
  - Responsibilities
  - Functional Changes in ICS

- First Meeting of ICAC – November 7 and 8 in Seattle
  - Second Meeting of ICAC – Early February
  - Third Meeting of ICAC- With new FEMA Governance Group - April
Questions

Send any follow up questions to –

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Or
Wes.Rogers@hq.dhs.gov
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Next Meetings

NPSTC Governing Board Meeting
Thursday, January 10, 2019

Interoperability Committee
Tuesday, January 22, 2019

Broadband Emerging Technologies
Wednesday, January 23, 2019