



**Homeland
Security**

**G&T Information Bulletin
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TO: All State Administrative Agency Heads
All State Administrative Agency Points of Contact
All State Homeland Security Directors
All Urban Area Core City/Core County Points of Contact

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SUBJECT: Update – Tactical Interoperable Communications Plan Review Process and Exercise Validation

Government at all levels has recognized the critical importance of tactical interoperable communications. In support of this priority, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Preparedness Directorate, Office of Grants and Training (G&T) continues to work with States and local communities to enhance the ability of our Nation's first responders' to communicate quickly and effectively during a catastrophic event, man-made or natural. This priority is also reflected in Information Bulletin #192, which requires Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI)-designated Urban Areas and other State-designated metropolitan areas (hereafter "sites") to develop and test their Tactical Interoperable Communications Plan (TICP) with a full-scale exercise (FSE). These exercises will identify State and local needs that should guide future investments.

In continuing recognition of the immediate and critical need to increase interoperable communications capabilities throughout the country, the deadline for validating the TICP through an FSE (previously established in the Fiscal Year [FY] 2005 Homeland Security Grant Program Guidance) has been accelerated. FSEs must be conducted by **September 30, 2006**. This adjusted timeline for FSEs will ensure that sufficient time is allocated to complete the After Action Report/Improvement Plan (AAR/IP) process. The validation process, including the final AAR/IP, must be completed by **December 31, 2006**.

TICP Review Process

As previously identified, Tactical Interoperable Communication Plans must be submitted to appropriate G&T Preparedness Officers by May 1, 2006. Please find attached to this bulletin, information regarding the TICP review process and the Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP) Incident Command System (ICS) Communications Unit Leader (COML) competencies.

Attachment #1: TICP Review Process

This attachment summarizes the process that G&T will use to evaluate submitted TICPs. The review process is designed to validate TICPs, or to make grantees aware of

any deficiencies in their plans. Grantees will also be advised of next steps according to the outcome of the TICP review. This review process document also provides information to grantees on the following:

- TICP Submittal Process;
- Peer Review Process;
- Composition of Review Panel;
- TICP Acceptance Checklist; and
- Notification of Review Results Process.

Attachment #2: COML Core Competencies

This attachment provides detailed information regarding COML Core Competencies. In accordance with National Incident Management System (NIMS) standards, the FY 2005 HSGP guidance requires grantees to designate and train a COML to support TICP execution. Currently, the NIMS COML training curriculum is incomplete; therefore, the requirement that a COML receive NIMS-compliant training has been temporarily waived. Grantees are still responsible for designating a COML for their TICP, and the attached "COML Core Competencies" document identifies 19 required core competencies for jurisdictions to reference in developing, equipping, and training a TICP COML. Each jurisdiction's designated COML will be required to follow up with the relevant NIMS certification training when it becomes available.

Exercise Requirement

In recognition of the need for greater interoperable communications capabilities throughout the country, the deadline for validating the TICP through an FSE (previously established in the Fiscal Year [FY] 2005 Homeland Security Grant Program Guidance) has been accelerated. FSEs must be conducted by **September 30, 2006**. This adjusted timeline for FSEs will ensure that sufficient time is allocated to complete the After Action Report/Improvement Plan (AAR/IP) process. The validation process, including the final AAR/IP, must be completed by **December 31, 2006**.

G&T recognizes the additional efforts required on your part to meet the new deadline. Therefore, if sites already have their FSE scheduled and/or planned to be conducted prior to the September 30 deadline, they may use that exercise to meet the requirement as long as it meets the following:

- The TICP has been submitted to G&T via the State Administrative Agency (SAA) and has been reviewed and approved by the TICP Review Board prior to exercise conduct
- The planning, conduct, and evaluation of the exercises is consistent with the requirements of the Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP)

SAs must notify their Preparedness Officer of the exercise conduct date, so that G&T can provide an assessment team to independently validate the site's TICP during the exercise.

Tactical Interoperable Communications Conference

In an effort to accommodate the accelerated exercise timeline, G&T will host a Tactical Interoperable Communications Conference in early May 2006. This conference will lay the foundation for each site's FSEs by:

- Discussing key interoperable communications initiatives
- Providing information on TICP review process
- Determining overarching exercise capabilities and objectives
- Providing guidance for planning, conducting, and evaluating the exercises
- Outlining an independent assessment and validation approach for each exercise
- Scheduling each site's FSE

Specific feedback on each site's TICPs will not be provided at the conference. The TICPs will be reviewed by a panel of subject matter experts and feedback provided directly at a later time. Additional information about the conference, including the date and location, will be sent to you in the very near future.

G&T is aware that a large number of the personnel that will be participating in the TICP Conference are also currently involved in the planning process for the Hurricane Preparedness Exercises occurring in FEMA Regions I, II, III, IV, and VI in mid-May (to include participation from all Gulf Coast and Eastern Seaboard States). While this conference may not be ideal in its timing, it is imperative that G&T hold the conference during May in order to give the Urban Areas and metropolitan areas a sufficient amount of time to plan their respective FSEs.

G&T Support Services

In addition to the conference, G&T will provide assistance in developing the TICP and direct support for the design, development, and conduct of the exercise.

TICP Support

Assistance in developing the TICP is available through G&T's Interoperable Communications Technical Assistance Program (ICTAP) on a first-come, first-serve request basis. The technical assistance request must be submitted through the SAA. To inquire further about this support please, contact your G&T Preparedness Officer or the Centralized Scheduling and Information Desk at 1-800-368-6498 or askcsid@dhs.gov.

Direct Exercise Support

Through the Direct Support Program, G&T utilizes multiple Exercise Support Teams that have significant experience in designing, developing, and conducting exercises. Direct support is available for those sites that have not started the planning process for their respective exercise. Direct exercise support may be requested to assist with exercise related activities such as:

- Developing exercise documentation;
- Designing exercise scenarios;
- Facilitating planning meetings and exercise conduct; and
- Developing After Action Reports/Improvement Plans (AAR/IPs).

The 'Exercise Direct Support Application and Users' Handbook' can be accessed by visiting <http://hseep.dhs.gov>. These applications must be sent through each entity's respective SAA and be submitted to G&T via email (hseep@dhs.gov).

Additional Information

For more information on how to plan, conduct and evaluate an exercise in accordance with HSEEP, please refer to HSEEP Volumes I-IV located at: <http://hseep.dhs.gov>.

States and Urban Areas may use any existing HSGP or UASI Exercise funds to attend the Tactical Interoperable Communications Conference in May.

Additional questions may be directed to your Preparedness Officer or the Centralized Scheduling and Information Desk (CSID) at askcsid@dhs.gov or 1-800-368-6498.

Urban Areas and metropolitan areas are reminded that they must first submit their TICP to the SAA and then G&T for approval prior to conducting an exercise.

Critical Milestones

May 1, 2006	Tactical Interoperable Communications Plan submission deadline
May 2006	Tactical Interoperable Communications Conference
September 30, 2006	Exercise Conduct completed
December 31, 2006	Final AAR/IP submitted