



Homeland
Security

Fact Sheet

National Emergency Communications Plan

Background

Title XVIII of the Homeland Security Act of 2002, as amended, requires the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Office of Emergency Communications (OEC) to develop a National Emergency Communications Plan (NECP) that provides short- and long-term guidance to address national emergency communications deficiencies. National studies, assessments, and after action reports from September 11, 2001, Hurricane Katrina, and other natural and man-made disasters in the last decade have underscored the critical need for improved emergency communications nationwide. These documents show that the lack of emergency communications interoperability across disciplines and jurisdictions hinders situational awareness, command and control, and the overall management of response and recovery efforts.

NECP Vision and Goals

The vision of the NECP is to ensure that emergency response personnel at all levels of government, and across disciplines, can communicate as needed, on demand, and as authorized. To achieve this vision, the NECP identifies the capabilities and initiatives needed for communications operability, interoperability, and continuity of communications for emergency responders nationwide.

The NECP sets strategic goals and identifies national objectives to enhance governance, planning, technology, training and exercises, and disaster communications capabilities. The NECP provides recommendations and milestones to guide emergency responders and relevant government officials to make measurable improvements in emergency communications over the next three years. To achieve this end, the NECP defines three goals that establish a minimum level of interoperable communications and milestones for Federal, State, local, and tribal agencies to achieve that level.

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 communications¹ 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 emergency communications within one hour for routine events involving multiple jurisdictions and agencies.

¹ *Response-level emergency communications is the capacity of individuals with primary operational leadership responsibility to manage resources and make timely decisions during a multi-agency incident without technical or procedural communications impediments.*

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

Development of the NECP

The NECP was developed in cooperation with a broad set of public and private sector emergency response stakeholders. Federal participants in the NECP development process included DHS component agencies with emergency communications responsibilities, as well as other Federal departments and agencies that serve as members of the Emergency Communications Preparedness Center (ECPC). In addition, to ensure the NECP reflected the needs and requirements of the State and local emergency response community, OEC gathered input from the SAFECOM Executive Committee and Emergency Response Council. Finally, private sector input was obtained through the National Emergency Communications Cross-Sector Working Group under DHS's Critical Infrastructure Partnership Advisory Council structure.

NECP Alignment with Homeland Security Strategies and Authorities

The NECP is the Nation's first strategic plan to improve emergency response communications; it is not a tactical or operational plan. The NECP complements and supports overarching homeland security and emergency communications legislation, strategies, and initiatives. This includes the National Response Framework (NRF) and the National Incident Management System (NIMS), the National Preparedness Guidelines, and Target Capabilities List, which combine to form a unified structure for response and recovery efforts. Taken together, the goals and objectives of the NRF, NECP, and other DHS strategy documents will improve nationwide response efforts, bolster situational awareness, information sharing, and command and control operations.

The NECP will not supplant Statewide Communication Interoperability Plans (SCIP) or Tactical Interoperable Communications Plans. Instead, the SCIPs will be updated to align with the goals of the NECP through grant programs administered by DHS, including the new Interoperable Emergency Communications Grant Program.

NECP Implementation

The successful implementation of the NECP will require a coordinated effort among all levels of government:

- Executive and Legislative Branches—The NECP includes recommended initiatives and national milestones that will inform emergency communications priorities, activities, and resource allocations for consideration and action.
- Federal Agencies—Federal implementation of the NECP will be done collaboratively among the member agencies of the ECPC. It will also occur through the Federal Partnership for Interoperability Communications (FPIC), where Federal response organizations will work with State and local agencies and governments to improve communications and resource sharing.
- State, Local, and Tribal Governments—The NECP provides information for State, local, and tribal agencies and governments on Federal funding available to assist with emergency communications procurement and planning. It also offers a forum for regional planning and participation.
- Private Sector—The NECP identifies ways the private sector can support emergency communications efforts and provides consistent direction for private sector involvement in standards development and advanced communications technologies.

For more information on the NECP and OEC, please contact OEC@hq.dhs.gov or visit <http://www.dhs.gov>; keyword: OEC.

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