

# Press Release

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## **NATIONAL BASELINE SURVEY FINDINGS SHOW SIGNIFICANT LEVELS OF INTEROPERABILITY ACROSS THE NATION**

WASHINGTON— The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) today announced the results of a nationwide survey of first responders and law enforcement that assesses progress in achieving interoperable communications. The national interoperability baseline survey was issued to 22,400 randomly selected law enforcement, fire response, and emergency medical services (EMS) agencies, and confirms that roughly two-thirds of emergency response agencies across the nation use interoperable communications at varying degrees.

“The survey reinforces the fact that interoperability is achievable,” said Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff. “That technology works today and is available. The willingness of emergency response leaders and local officials to make this issue their priority is what will continue to drive progress on one of 9/11’s most important lessons.”

Survey findings indicate that agencies tend to be more developed in technology than they are in culturally related areas like standard operating procedures and exercises. It showed that cross-discipline and cross-jurisdiction interoperability at local levels tends to be more advanced than it is between state and local agencies. In addition, law enforcement, fire response and EMS agencies reported similar levels of development in most areas of interoperability.

The national interoperability baseline survey is the first interoperability assessment that uses a comprehensive definition for interoperability. It was designed in partnership with the emergency response community and assessed stages of development in five areas, governance, standard operating procedures, technology, training and exercises, and usage.

The survey had a statistically valid response rate of 30 percent, with 6,816 agencies responding. Participation in the survey was evenly split between law enforcement and fire response and EMS.

Additional baseline survey findings are available on the SAFECOM Web site at [www.safecomprogram.gov](http://www.safecomprogram.gov).

Since 9/11, DHS has provided more than \$2.1 billion to state and local governments for interoperable communications. Through its SAFECOM program, DHS provides research, development, testing and evaluation, guidance, tools, and templates on communications-related issues that improve emergency response through more effective and efficient interoperable wireless communications.

SAFECOM has already achieved interoperable communications at the command level, within one hour of a major event, in the 10 highest threat urban areas, as part of its *RapidCom 1* initiative. It has published a step-by-step planning guide for developing a locally-driven statewide strategic plan for interoperable communications, and facilitated regional communications interoperability pilots that assist local officials in the implementation of their statewide plans.

*For more information about the SAFECOM program, visit [www.safecomprogram.gov](http://www.safecomprogram.gov) or call 1-866-969-SAFE.*

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