



CRITERIA FOR STATEWIDE INTEROPERABILITY STRATEGIC PLANS

Purpose of Criteria

According to Section I.C.5 of the 2006 Homeland Security Grant Program, all states are required by December 2007 to develop and adopt statewide communications interoperability plans. As defined in the Homeland Security Act of 2002, the term “state” means, “any State of the United States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and any possession of the United States.” To assist this process and to ensure all states include the essential components of a statewide plan, the criteria of what must be included in the communications interoperability plan have been developed. The criteria were formulated with input from local and state practitioners. The sections below outline the criteria.

All-Inclusive Approach

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) requires that all grant recipients submit by the end of 2007 a statewide communications interoperability plan. The SAFECOM program within the DHS Science and Technology Directorate recommends that states, through their governors, other state and local policy makers, and local emergency responders, use a statewide strategic planning process that gathers the perspectives of all emergency responders. By using a practitioner-driven approach that involves local, tribal, state, and Federal stakeholders, a strategic plan will be developed to meet the needs of end users. They are therefore more likely to adopt such a plan.

The criteria for the statewide plan provide an opportunity for partnership among local, tribal, state and Federal entities. Each has a critical role to play in the development of a strong statewide, locally driven interoperability plan that has the best chance of success for improving interoperability. The governor’s office, or its designee, should act as an umbrella organization that plays a vital role in leadership, coordination, management, and support for the statewide planning process. Local jurisdictions play an equally important, but different, role in further developing the interoperability within their region, identifying ways to build out their current systems to become interoperable with the neighboring jurisdictions, and providing significant input into the development of the statewide plan that builds on efforts already underway.

Ideally, each state will have an interdisciplinary policy committee, comprised of representatives from the governor’s office and key state and local agencies. If a state has already established an interdisciplinary, inter-jurisdictional communications interoperability committee with significant local representation, it is encouraged to use this existing governance structure. If not, it is encouraged to develop one. This is the committee that would be responsible for developing and putting into practice the statewide plan.

The communications interoperability committee would likely include representatives from:

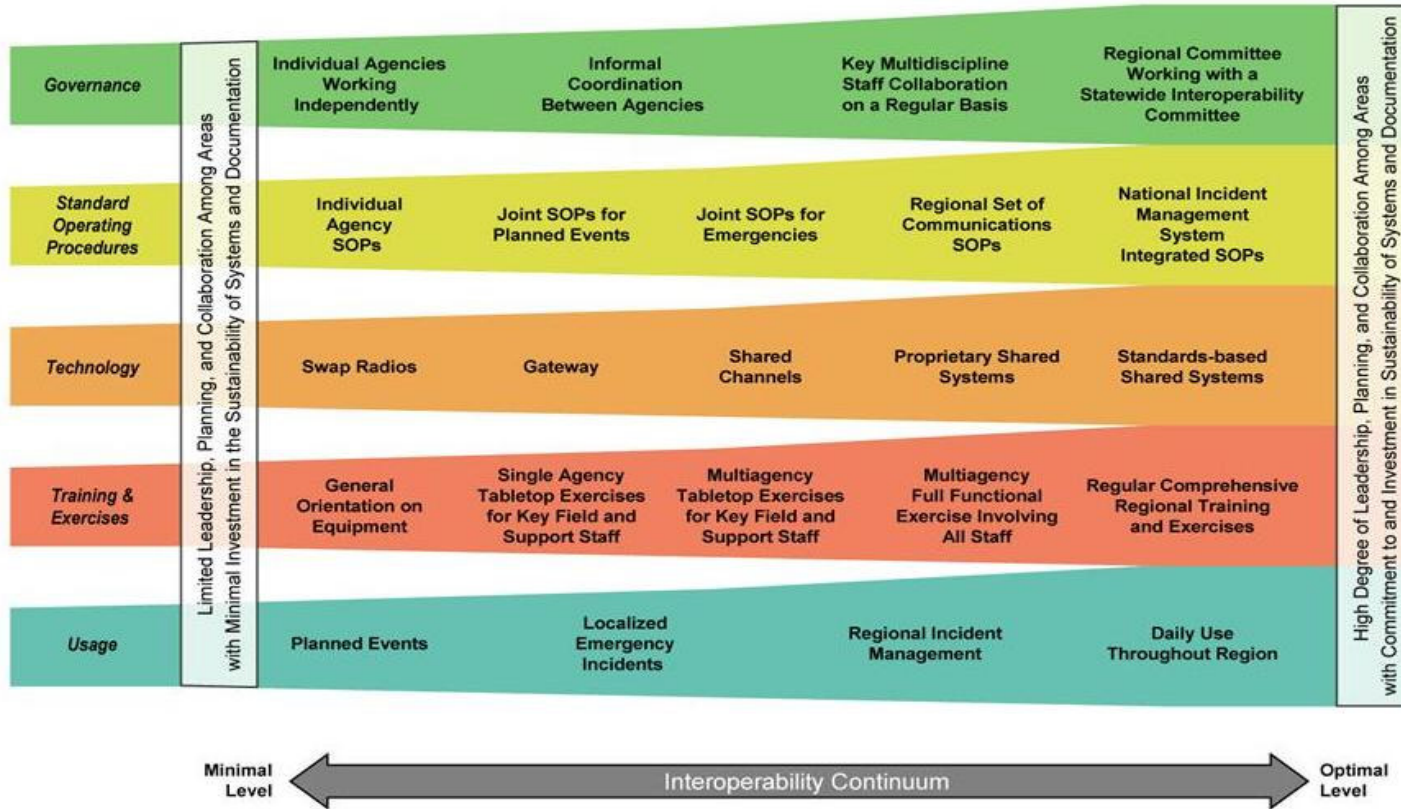


- Governor's office
- State and local elected officials
- State and local emergency medical services
- State and local health officials
- State and local fire response services
- State and local law enforcement
- State and local emergency management
- State and local homeland security offices
- State and local transportation agencies
- Tribal governments
- Military organizations operating in the state (DoD, National Guard, etc.)
- Federal agencies that need to be interoperable with state and local emergency responders
- Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI)
- Critical infrastructure
- Other non-government organizations, such as the Red Cross and utility companies
- Other organizations with abilities and resources for prevention of or response and recovery from crises or disasters
- Regional planning committee chairpersons for 700 and 800 MHz

In keeping with the relevant state and local laws and regulations, some representatives may need to serve in an *ex officio* role.

Interoperability Continuum Framework

SAFECOM recommends applying its Interoperability Continuum, shown below, as a comprehensive framework to address critical elements for planning and implementing statewide interoperability solutions. These elements include governance, standard operating procedures, technology, training and exercises, and usage of interoperable communications.





Criteria Checklist

A detailed criteria checklist is provided in the table below.

1. Background and Preliminary Steps	
<input type="checkbox"/>	1.1. Provide an overview and background information on the state and its regions. Include geographic and demographic information.
<input type="checkbox"/>	1.2. List all agencies and organizations that participated in developing the plan. (List them according to the categories recommended for a communications interoperability committee in the All-Inclusive Approach section above.)
<input type="checkbox"/>	1.3. Identify the point of contact. DHS expects that each state will have a full time interoperability coordinator. The coordinator should not represent or be affiliated with any one particular agency and should not have to balance the coordinator duties with other responsibilities.
<input type="checkbox"/>	1.4. Describe the communications and interoperability environment of the current emergency response effort.
<input type="checkbox"/>	1.5. Include a problem definition and possible solutions that addresses the challenges identified in achieving interoperability within the SAFECOM Interoperability Continuum.
<input type="checkbox"/>	1.6. Identify any Tactical Interoperability Communications Plans in the state.
<input type="checkbox"/>	1.7. Set the scope and timeframe of the plan.
2. Strategy	
<input type="checkbox"/>	2.1. Describe the strategic vision, goals, and objectives for improving emergency response interagency wireless communications statewide, including how they connect with existing plans within the state.
<input type="checkbox"/>	2.2. Provide a strategic plan for coordination with neighboring states. If applicable, include a plan for coordination with neighboring countries.
<input type="checkbox"/>	2.3. Provide a strategic plan for addressing data interoperability in addition to voice interoperability.
<input type="checkbox"/>	2.4. Describe a strategy for addressing catastrophic loss of communication assets by developing redundancies in the communications interoperability plan.
<input type="checkbox"/>	2.5. Describe how the plan is, or will become, compliant with the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and the National Response Plan.



<input type="checkbox"/>	2.6. Describe a strategy for addressing communications interoperability with the safety and security elements of the major transit systems, intercity bus service providers, ports, and passenger rail operations within the state.
<input type="checkbox"/>	2.7. Describe the process for periodic review and revision of the state plan.
3. Methodology	
<input type="checkbox"/>	3.1. Describe the method by which multi-jurisdictional, multi-disciplinary input was provided from all regions of the state. For an example of a methodology that ensures input from all regions, see the Statewide Communication Interoperability Plan, or SCIP, methodology developed by SAFECOM.
<input type="checkbox"/>	3.2. Define the process for continuing to have local input and for building local support of the plan.
<input type="checkbox"/>	3.3. Define how the TICPs were incorporated into the statewide plan.
<input type="checkbox"/>	3.4. Describe the strategy for implementing all components of the statewide plan.
4. Governance	
<input type="checkbox"/>	4.1. Identify the executive or legislative authority for the governing body of the interoperability effort.
<input type="checkbox"/>	4.2. Provide an overview of the governance structure that will oversee development and implementation of the plan. Illustrate how it is representative of all of the relevant emergency response disciplines and regions in the state.
<input type="checkbox"/>	4.3. Provide the charter for the governing body, and use the charter to state the principles, roles, responsibilities, and processes.
<input type="checkbox"/>	4.4. Identify the members of the governing body and any of its committees. (List them according to the categories recommended for a communications interoperability committee in the All-Inclusive Approach section above.)
<input type="checkbox"/>	4.5. Provide a meeting schedule for the governing body.
<input type="checkbox"/>	4.6. Describe multi-jurisdictional, multi-disciplinary agreements needed for decision-making and for sharing resources.
5. Technology	
<input type="checkbox"/>	5.1. Include a statewide capabilities assessment (or a plan for one) which includes, critical communications equipment and related interoperability issues. At a minimum this should include types of radio systems, data and incident management systems, the manufacturer, and frequency assignments for each major emergency responder organization within the state. Ultimately more detailed information will be required to complete the



	documentation of a migration strategy. States may use the Communications Asset Survey and Mapping (CASM) tool to conduct this assessment.
<input type="checkbox"/>	5.2. Describe plans for continuing support of legacy systems, and developing interfaces among disparate systems, while migrating to newer technologies.
<input type="checkbox"/>	5.2.1. Describe the migration plan for moving from existing technologies to newly procured technologies.
<input type="checkbox"/>	5.2.2. Describe the process that will be used to ensure that new purchases comply with the statewide plan, while generally allowing existing equipment to serve out its useful life.
6. Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	6.1. Include an assessment of current local, regional, and state operating procedures which support interoperability.
<input type="checkbox"/>	6.2. Define the process by which the state, regions, and localities will develop, manage, maintain, upgrade, and communicate standard operating procedures (SOPs), as appropriate.
<input type="checkbox"/>	6.3. Identify the agencies included in the development of the SOPs, and the agencies expected to comply with the SOPs.
<input type="checkbox"/>	6.4. Demonstrate how the SOPs are NIMS-compliant in terms of the Incident Command System (ICS) and preparedness.
7. Training and Exercises	
<input type="checkbox"/>	7.1. Define the process by which the state will develop, manage, maintain and upgrade, or coordinate as appropriate, a statewide training and exercises program.
<input type="checkbox"/>	7.2. Describe the process for offering and requiring training and exercises, as well as any certification that will be needed.
<input type="checkbox"/>	7.3. Explain how the process ensures that training is cross-disciplinary.
8. Usage	
<input type="checkbox"/>	8.1. Describe the plan for ensuring regular usage of the relevant equipment and the SOPs needed to improve interoperability.
9. Funding	
<input type="checkbox"/>	9.1. Identify committed sources of funding, or the process for identifying and securing short- and long-term funding.



<input type="checkbox"/>	9.2. Include a plan for the development of a comprehensive funding strategy. The plan should include a process for identifying ongoing funding sources, anticipated costs, and resources needed for project management and leveraging active projects.
10. Implementation	
<input type="checkbox"/>	10.1. Describe the prioritized action plan with short- and long-term goals for achieving the objectives.
<input type="checkbox"/>	10.2. Describe the performance measures that will allow policy makers to track the progress and success of initiatives.
<input type="checkbox"/>	10.3. Describe the plan for educating policy makers and practitioners on interoperability goals and initiatives.
<input type="checkbox"/>	10.4. Describe the roles and opportunities for involvement of all agencies in the implementation of the statewide plan.
<input type="checkbox"/>	10.5. Establish a plan for identifying, developing, and overseeing operational requirements, SOPs, training, technical solutions, and short- and long-term funding sources.
<input type="checkbox"/>	10.6. Identify a POC responsible for implementing the plan.
<input type="checkbox"/>	10.7. Describe critical success factors for implementation of the plan.

The criteria for the statewide plan provide an opportunity for partnership regarding improved interoperability among local, tribal, state and Federal entities. Each has a critical role to play in the development of a strong statewide, locally driven interoperability plan that has the best chance of success for improving interoperability. By using a practitioner-driven approach that involves all of these stakeholders, a strategic plan can be developed to meet the needs of end users, who will therefore also be more likely to adopt the plan.