

## **Progress in Achieving 9/11 Commission Recommendations: Interoperable Emergency Communications**

Through the Office of Emergency Communications, DHS has helped to improve interoperable emergency communications capabilities and enhance coordination to ensure that responders can continue to communicate during natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other catastrophic events. Additionally, DHS is supporting the Administration's initiatives to deploy a nationwide, interoperable wireless broadband network for public safety.

- Congress established the Office of Emergency Communications (OEC) in response to the communications challenges faced by emergency responders during 9/11 and Hurricane Katrina. OEC work with the public safety community to strengthen emergency communications capabilities through enhanced coordination, planning, training, and technical assistance.
- The National Emergency Communications Plan (NECP) was developed in 2008 with input from more than 150 stakeholders from all levels of government. The NECP serves as the Nation's first strategic plan to improve emergency communications and drive measurable progress.

### Improved Planning and Procedures

- The 9/11 Commission recommended adoption of the Incident Command System (ICS) nationwide to improve multijurisdictional emergency response. Through implementation of the NECP, greater use of standardized plans, protocols, and procedures has strengthened emergency communications.
- In 2010, under NECP Goal 1, the ability of 60 urban areas to achieve response-level communications was assessed, including their ability to implement key ICS provisions for communications. The demonstration of Goal 1 by all Urban Area Security Initiatives (UASI) regions provides evidence of the progress that these urban areas have made in implementing the ICS structure.
- DHS worked with more than 140 jurisdictions to develop Tactical Interoperable Communications Plans (TICPs), which document formalized interoperability governance groups, standardized policies and procedures, and emergency communications equipment inventories. OEC's Technical Assistance program continues to support TICP development in numerous States and regions.
- More than 3,500 responders have been trained to lead communications during multijurisdictional emergencies under ICS through the Communications Unit Leader (COML) training course.

### Enhanced Coordination at All Levels of Government

- OEC coordinates with stakeholders at all levels of government, including through the SAFECOM Program, to ensure national policies reflect the needs of the emergency response community.
- Statewide Coordination and Planning - Every State has an approved Statewide Communication Interoperability Plan (SCIP), a Statewide Interoperability Coordinator (SWIC), and a Statewide Interoperability Governing Body to support strategic planning and decision making.
- Regional Coordination – OEC established its Regional Coordination Program to enhance its interactions with stakeholders at the regional level. There is a Regional Coordinator assigned to each FEMA Region. The Regional Coordinators support the Regional Interoperability Councils, which promote collaboration among SWICs and improve communications across state boundaries. Four of OEC's Regional Coordinators supported the response to Hurricane Irene.
- Federal Coordination – OEC administers the Emergency Communications Preparedness Center to coordinate Federal policy, planning and administration of emergency communications programs for 14 Federal departments and agencies.

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### Nationwide Public Safety Broadband Network

- The President's Wireless Innovation and Infrastructure Initiative includes key elements to support the development and deployment of a nationwide, interoperable wireless broadband network for public safety. The Administration supports legislation that implements these key elements and fulfill the 9/11 Commission's recommendation.
- OEC is supporting these initiatives by helping to set the broad policy framework and incorporating the views and requirements of the public safety community into broadband network planning and implementation efforts.