



Governance Case Study: New York City Interagency Communications Committee

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Homeland
Security

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New York City Interagency Communications Committee (ICC)

Background

Over the past decade, the improvement of governance structures has been a priority for multiple State and local agencies in order to strengthen emergency communications nationwide. While optimal interoperability is contingent on an agency's and jurisdiction's needs, the most sophisticated level on the Interoperability Continuum is *Regional Committees Working within a Statewide Communications Interoperability Plan Framework*. The New York City (NYC) area has taken this capability one step further, and can provide a model for how jurisdictions can manage a regional committee within a multi-state framework.

This additional step is a good example of how sophisticated and innovative governance structures can enhance emergency communications efforts and support major initiatives within a region. Not every region will have the same demands and requirements faced by the NYC area. However, as State and local agencies successfully leverage

governance capabilities within their statewide framework, agencies should also consider additional partners beyond State borders, including other States and Urban Areas across the Nation. Efforts to improve governance among Federal, State, local, and tribal agencies must be an ongoing process to ensure continued improvements in interoperable emergency communications. Critical incidents rarely occur neatly within a political boundary; even when incidents are confined to a single jurisdiction, sharing of resources may still be necessary. Therefore, it is important to ensure that these governance structures are in place before incidents occur.

The New York City Urban Area

The NYC urban area is an area at high risk for threats of terrorism and man-made and natural disasters. The Department of Homeland Security has designated this area as one of 10 Tier I Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) regions—or regions with the highest concentration of at-risk infrastructure

Governance

The Interoperability Continuum is designed to assist emergency response agencies and policy makers to plan and implement interoperability solutions for data and voice communications. This tool identifies five critical success elements that must be addressed to achieve a sophisticated interoperability solution. The first critical success element is governance. In order to achieve the most sophisticated level of interoperability in governance, a regional committee working within a statewide communications interoperability plan framework must exist. Multi-disciplinary jurisdictions must work together across a region pursuant to formal written agreements as defined within the larger scope of a state plan.



Interoperability Continuum



and vulnerability. Geographically, the NYC UASI includes the City of New York's five boroughs and extends north into Westchester County, and eastward to include all of Long Island; collectively 1,935 square miles of territory representing a population of nearly 12 million. In the last two decades, the NYC UASI area has sustained numerous disasters requiring multi-jurisdictional response including terrorist attacks, anthrax attacks, several aircraft crashes, a ferry crash, crane collapses, various industrial accidents, the 2003 Blackout, and many storm events.

The New York City Interagency Communications Committee

Established in 2002, the New York City Interagency Communications Committee (ICC), co-chaired by the NYC Office of Emergency Management (OEM), and the NYC Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications (DoITT), was initially formed by representatives of the core city agencies including OEM, DoITT, the New York Police Department (NYPD), the Fire Department of New York (FDNY), and the Department of Corrections. Subsequently, additional partners such as the New York State Counties of Nassau, Suffolk, and Westchester, the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (PANYNJ), the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, and various New York State and Federal government agencies were added to the group. The ICC was established in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks to explore, recommend, test, and implement solutions to enhance region-wide interoperable communications. The group has also worked together to prepare the NYC UASI's Tactical Interoperable Communications Plan (TICP) and have collaborated with Federal

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partners under SAFECOM, RAPIDCOM, ICTAP, and the U.S. Department of Justice High Risk Metropolitan Area Interoperability Project (25 Cities) initiatives.

According to Paul Zito, Public Safety Director of Telecommunications in Connecticut, "The ICC is an example of 'best practices' for getting disparate agencies together to work toward a common goal. Everyone at the table is an equal, with no one agency being more important than another. Through this very collaborative effort, plans have been developed and tested that provide for interoperability across agency and State lines."

The ICC is self-governed and provides status reports to the NYC Urban Area Working Group. The ICC currently incorporates approximately 40 Federal, State, and local entities and associated jurisdictions in New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut spanning some 130 members who meet regularly to evaluate the state of interoperable communications, to develop strategies that exercise and drill communications capabilities, and to ensure that enhancements and improvements are centrally coordinated within the region. The ICC provides technical guidance in the usage and deployment of interoperable communications assets defined within the NYC UASI's TICP.

The ICC's responsibilities include:

- Maintaining the TICP
- Establishing and managing interoperable communications working groups
- Recommending final technology solutions and directing the implementation of these solutions
- Establishing training requirements in support of the TICP
- Creating chains of command for interoperable

The New York Interagency Communications Committee (ICC) includes:

- NYC Office of Emergency Management (OEM)
- NYC Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications (DoITT)
- New York Police Department (NYPD)
- Fire Department of New York (FDNY)
- New York State Department of Corrections
- Nassau County
- Suffolk County
- Westchester County
- Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (PANYNJ)
- Metropolitan Transportation Authority

communications including Communications Unit Leaders

- Executing Memoranda of Understanding and Sharing Agreements for interoperable communications resources

Urban Area Tactical Communications

The NYC area's TICP, developed in 2005 from a UASI grant program and shaped by the ICC, reflects a Citywide Incident Management System—or CIMS—based approach to tactical communications. CIMS is NYC's approach to implementing the National Incident Management System, which manages incidents and addresses the city's specific incident management requirements. CIMS establishes agency roles and responsibilities and designates authority for city agencies performing and supporting emergency responses. CIMS also is designed to be scalable and facilitate integration of additional organizations including Federal and State agencies, and private sector and non-profit partners.

Major Committee Activities

- In July 2010, many ICC member agencies were instrumental in the planning and execution of coordinated emergency communications for the Macy's 4th of July Fireworks Spectacular along the Hudson River. In partnership with the New Jersey UASI area, the NYC UASI demonstrated response-level emergency communications within one hour for multijurisdictional planned events. More than 5,000 emergency response and other personnel supported the event along the Hudson River; over one million spectators viewed the fireworks from nearby riverfront venues, which spanned two miles in length. Additional operational command posts were located adjacent to the river along 12th Avenue and across the river in New Jersey, and the interagency talk path included multiple agencies, disciplines, and non-governmental organizations.
- The ICC oversees the TICP update project that conforms to the DHS Office of Emergency Communications' template for UASI territories—

an Interoperable Emergency Communications Grant Program grant initiative. The ICC formed a working group of core stakeholder member agencies to document regionally shared systems and shared channels. These capabilities are provided by NYPD; NYC OEM; PANYNJ; New York State Police; New York Department of Health; New York State Emergency Management Office; the counties of Nassau, Suffolk, and Westchester; New Jersey State Police; Essex County, NJ; Connecticut State Police; the U.S. Department of Justice; and the U.S. Coast Guard. Subsequent to the completion of the TICP update, the Committee oversaw the development of a regional field operations guide.

- In an effort to bridge the gap in regional public safety communications, the ICC is managing the region's Public Safety Interoperable Communications grant program award. The ICC specifically will focus on the procurement and deployment of a regional Internet Protocol gateway to integrate legacy systems of varying operating frequencies, and also the deployment of a regional radio cache to ICC core stakeholders. The investment was extended to the Port Authority Trans-Hudson ("PATH") railroad system, bringing reliable public safety interoperable communications capabilities underground and in tunnels between New York City and New Jersey.

ICC Moving Forward

The ICC will continue its mission to coordinate with its cross-jurisdictional and multidisciplinary membership to ensure it is one of the most highly functioning and successful working groups in the NYC area. The ICC will leverage the National Emergency Communications Plan and New York SCIP Plan proactively to address the challenges of emergency communications in the NYC area and provide guidance to the NYC UASI Working Group. As new and complicated communications issues arise, the ICC will continue to make emergency communications and interoperability a priority in the NYC area.

This case study is a part of a series developed by the Office of Emergency Communications (OEC) to highlight advancements made by stakeholders in strengthening emergency communications capabilities. The case studies align to the Interoperability Continuum and detail milestones in the areas of governance, standard operating procedures, technology, training and exercises, and usage. Each study represents a unique solution from a State, region, city, or town across the Nation.