Homeland Security

Office of Emergency Communications

National Emergency Communications Plan Goal 1

The National Emergency Communications Plan (NECP) creates a vision for emergency communications in the United States. To move the Nation toward this vision, the Goals of the NECP establish target levels of interoperable emergency communications for Federal, State, regional, local, and tribal jurisdictions.

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

Goal 1 of the NECP addresses the 60 high-risk urban areas designated by the Fiscal Year 2008 UASI Program.[1] To implement and measure Goal 1, the Office of Emergency Communications (OEC) is assessing UASI regions' abilities to demonstrate response-level emergency communications during planned events.[2] In the Fiscal Year 2010 Statewide Communication Interoperability Plan Implementation Reports will report on UASI regions' current capabilities for interoperable emergency communications, as appropriate.[3] This capability data will assist OEC in its analysis of Goal 1 performance and help identify national trends in urban area emergency communications.

Demonstration Guidelines

NECP Goal 1 demonstrations are being conducted between January and October 31, 2010. OEC is assessing communications at large-scale, planned events identified by the UASI for observation. Consistent with the NECP and in accordance with Department of Homeland Security grant requirements, the selected events must be managed using the National Incident Management System. The events must also involve participants from multiple jurisdictions and disciplines. UASIs are being observed against specific criteria related to common policies and procedures, responder roles and responsibilities, and communications quality and continuity.

The Goal observations are conducted by OEC teams consisting of Federal staff, peers, and support personnel. The peer observers are matched from comparably-sized UASI regions to ensure familiarity with the size of operations. Peer observers receive special training to in preparation for Goal 1 observations. Trained Communications Unit Leaders are used as observers where possible.

After Action Reports

Following the observation of the planned events, OEC will develop reports for UASI and State officials that identify strengths and weaknesses and present improvement plans. OEC will conclude the NECP Goal 1 measurement process by analyzing the results of all 60 reports, identifying nationwide trends, and preparing an aggregate report of nationwide results.

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[1] For information on the FY 2008 UASI Program, visit http://www.fema.gov/pdf/government/grant/uasi/fy08_uasi_guidance.pdf.

[2] Planned events are events for which the date and time are known and multiple responding agencies are involved.

[3] Emergency communications capabilities are addressed in Exhibit 4 on page 8 of the NECP.

Homeland Security

Office of Emergency Communications

National Emergency Communications Plan Goal 2

The National Emergency Communications Plan (NECP) creates a vision for emergency communications in the United States. To move the Nation toward this vision, the Goals of the NECP establish target levels of interoperable emergency communications for Federal, State, regional, local, and tribal jurisdictions.

By 2011, 75 percent of non-Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) jurisdictions are able to demonstrate response-level emergency communications within one hour for routine events involving multiple jurisdictions and agencies.

Goal 2 focuses on the demonstration of response-level emergency communications within one hour[1] for *routine* events in non-UASI jurisdictions.[2] The Office of Emergency Communications (OEC) is working with States[3] to develop a methodology for collecting data at the county, tribal, or county-equivalent level. To provide for the greatest degree of flexibility in collecting Goal 2 data, each State will determine its own implementation methodology to collect Goal 2 capability and performance data. The methodology chosen by the States will be reported to OEC in the Fiscal Year 2010 Statewide Communication Interoperability Plan (SCIP) Implementation Report.

Goal 2 Demonstration Guidelines

Goal 2 demonstration requires States to report on emergency communications data collected at the county and tribal levels. As a part of this process, States will assess every county's ability to demonstrate response-level emergency communications using a Web-based Incident Evaluation Tool. Counties may select an exercise, planned event, or incident for Goal 2 as long as it involves multiple jurisdictions and responder disciplines and is managed under a National Incident Management System-compliant Incident Command System. Examples of potential Goal 2 demonstrations include vehicle collisions, non-catastrophic natural disasters, and large public gatherings. The incident must have occurred after July 2008. Counties that are part of a designated UASI may submit their Goal 1 demonstration results as part of the Goal 2 data collection. States will also be asked to report on their counties' communications capabilities along the SAFECOM Interoperability Continuum. OEC encourages States to leverage existing governance structures and reporting methodologies when assessing and collecting Goal 2 performance and capability data.

Reporting

After the capability and performance data has been collected, each State will report their counties' data to OEC through the FY 2011 SCIP Implementation Report. OEC will conclude the NECP Goal 2 demonstration process by analyzing the data collected, identifying nationwide trends, and preparing an aggregate report of nationwide results. This data will help OEC better align its programs and resources to improving emergency communications.

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[1] OEC defines the one-hour requirement as one hour after the arrival of two or more emergency responders at an exercise, event, or incident requiring response from multiple jurisdictions and agencies; this timeframe must also encompass the time to establish an incident command site.

[2] OEC defines non-UASI jurisdictions as counties and county-equivalents.

[3] States refers to States and territories.

Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Office of Emergency Communications (OEC)
National Emergency Communications Plan (NECP) Goal 2
Frequently Asked Questions

Background

What is National Emergency Communications Plan Goal 2 measurement?

- Goal 2 of the NECP states: "By 2011, 75 percent of all non-Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) jurisdictions are able to demonstrate response-level emergency communications within one hour for routine events involving multiple jurisdictions and agencies."
    - OEC defines "non-UASI jurisdictions" as all the Nation's counties, county-equivalents (e.g., a parish), and tribal nations.

What is meant by Goal 2's one hour requirement?

- OEC defines the one hour requirement as one hour after the arrival of two or more emergency responders at an exercise, event, or incident requiring response from multiple jurisdictions and agencies, after the establishment of an incident command site.

How will data for Goal 2 measurement be collected?

- Goal 2 measurement requires every county[1] to conduct a two part self-assessment.
    - A self-assessment of a routine incident, planned event, or exercise utilizing an online Response-Level Emergency Communications Evaluation Form, which will generate a scored after-action report (AAR). This will generate performance data.
    - A self-assessment of communications capabilities. This will generate capability data.

Do UASI counties involved in Goal 1 demonstration need to report data for Goal 2?

- Yes. For Goal 2, all counties, including UASI counties, must submit their individual performance and capability data. Counties that participated in a Goal 1 demonstration may use the observed event to address the Goal 2 performance data questions.

Determining Your Goal 2 Methodology

How do States[2] report Goal 2 methodology and data to OEC?

- States, via the SWIC, will submit their proposed approach for Goal 2 measurement as a part of the 2010 Statewide Communication Interoperability Plan (SCIP) Implementation Report.
- Then counties will assess a routine incident, planned event, or exercise, and report the data to the SWIC. The States will compile the results into their 2011 SCIP Implementation Report.

What are the recommendations for developing a Goal 2 methodology?

- Since Goal 2 data must be collected statewide, the SWIC will coordinate the measurement effort.
- The Goal 2 methodology will identify proper evaluators for collecting Goal 2 data at the county level.
- Outside of leveraging the SWIC and identifying proper evaluators, each State/territory is free to develop a unique approach for Goal 2 measurement. Some options include:
    - A Statewide Approach in which the SWIC leverages the Statewide Interoperability Governing Body to complete their counties' capabilities questionnaire.

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[1] "County" refers to counties, county-equivalents, and tribal nations.
[2] "State" refers to States and territories.

Distribution for SWIC Meeting Only

- A Regional Approach in which the SWIC leverages the State's regional governance groups to complete their counties' capabilities questionnaire as well as their counties' response-level emergency communications AAR using an incident, planned event, or exercise.
- A County Approach in which the SWIC directly contacts county officials to complete their county-wide capabilities questionnaire as well as their response-level emergency communications AAR using an incident, planned event, or exercise.
- A Unique Approach in which any combination of the approaches listed above (or something entirely unique to the State's needs) is used.

Selection of an Incident, Planned Event, or Exercise for Assessment

What are the guidelines for selecting a routine incident, planned event, or exercise?

- The selected incident, planned event, or exercise should involve multiple jurisdictions (Federal, State, local, and/or tribal) and multiple disciplines (fire, emergency medical services, and/or law enforcement) and be managed under a National Incident Management System-compliant Incident Command System.
- Examples of potential routine incidents, planned events, or exercises include vehicle collisions, drowning victim responses, a non-catastrophic natural disaster, sporting events, parades, and marathons.
- For additional assistance, OEC will provide, as part of the online Evaluation Form, an incident selection checklist to help individuals select an appropriate incident, planned event, or exercise.

What is the appropriate timeframe associated with an evaluated incident, planned event, or exercise?

- Counties may choose a routine incident, planned event, or exercise that has occurred since July 2008.

Can counties "team up" to utilize one incident, planned event, or exercise for measurement?

- Yes, for example, if a regional communications exercise is planned within the State, each county within the region may choose to partner with one another for the purposes of Goal 2 demonstration.
- If a larger county manages an incident, planned event, or exercise which includes a sparsely populated rural county, then the rural county may use these same results for their Goal 2 demonstration.
    - In these instances it is required that each county must have at least one agency present and all counties must agree to receive the same score for their Goal 2 demonstration.

What if a rural county relies on surrounding counties for emergency response support?

- If a rural county relies on surrounding counties for public safety resources, such as a dispatch center, they are permitted to use the same Goal 2 demonstration.

Assessment of a Routine Incident, Planned Event, or Exercise

Who should evaluate the routine incident, planned event, or exercise?

- The selected evaluator must have the capacity to obtain AARs and agency incident reports as well as the ability to interview primary operational leadership.
- Consider the selected event's Operations Section Chief, COML, or TICP point of contact.

What criteria does the online Response-Level Emergency Communications Evaluation Form use to assess Goal 2 demonstration?

- The online Form features 14 evaluation criteria that fall into three categories: (1) Common Policies and Procedures, (2) Responder Roles and Responsibilities, and (3) Quality and Continuity of Communications.

Will the online Evaluation Form only be available for Goal 2 measurement?

- No. The purpose of the Form is to provide stakeholders with a means to independently, regularly, and consistently assess response-level emergency communications capabilities and performance.

Assessment of Communications Capabilities

How do I evaluate communications capabilities for my jurisdiction?

- Counties and county-equivalents will receive a decision tree, which covers all five lanes of the SAFECOM Interoperability Continuum, whereby they can evaluate the degree to which their communications capabilities have been implemented within their jurisdictions.

Who should evaluate communications capabilities for my jurisdiction?

- Consider selection of the SWIC, regional governance group chair, county representative on the regional governance group, county commissioner, county Public Safety Access Point manager, or county emergency manager.

Can counties use each others' results?

- It is not recommended that counties use other counties' results for the capabilities assessment. All counties have their own set of capabilities, however limited or sophisticated, that should be documented.

What if a county's capabilities are minimal (i.e., fall leftward on the Interoperability Continuum) but are adequate for their emergency response requirements?

- OEC understands that every county has its own unique requirements. These requirements and needs—based on factors such as population density, geographical landscape, and location relative to bordering areas—determine the appropriate level of capability for an area.
- When conducting their capabilities assessments, States and counties are encouraged to be as honest as possible as this will ensure that future time and resources are appropriately dedicated to the interoperable communications effort.
    - States and counties who wish to explain why their current capabilities are appropriate for their emergency communications needs are also encouraged to provide a narrative summary in their 2011 SCIP Implementation Report.

Goal 2 Process and Timeline

What support is OEC providing to States/territories for Goal 2 demonstration?

- OEC will provide guidance documents and technical assistance support to SWICs and public safety agencies to support Goal 2 demonstration efforts.

Can a State/territory use grant funds for costs associated with Goal 2 demonstration?

- States and territories who have received funds from the Interoperable Emergency Communications Grant Program may use these funds to support any costs directly related to Goal 2 demonstration efforts provided these funds are programmed within the grant budget.

How will Goal 2 results affect future Federal emergency communications grant programs?

- OEC does not expect this process to have direct implications on grant funding levels. Instead, NECP Goal 2 validation is intended to help States and their counties identify gaps and develop future investments. It will also assist DHS in better aligning and targeting its programs and resources to assist States and their counties with improving emergency communications.

What if a county is unable to demonstrate Goal 2?

- OEC will work with the SWIC on developing improvement plans for these counties.

What if a county decides to not participate in Goal 2 demonstration?

- OEC will document all counties which choose not to participate in the final report to Congress.

Is every county required to report for Goal 2?

- Yes. If a State anticipates that some counties will not report, this should be documented in the State's Goal 2 methodology statement as part of the 2010 SCIP Implementation Report.

Who can I contact for additional information?

- For additional information, please contact OEC at necpgoals@hq.dhs.gov.