

State All Hazards Advisory Committee (SAHAC) Meeting Notes

April 20, 2007

These are unofficial notes from the State All Hazards Advisory Committee (SAHAC) meeting of April 20, 2007, prepared for informational purposes for members of the Colorado State Fire Chiefs' Association.

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 AM. Representing the CSFCA were CSFCA President Doug Forsman, Chief Dan Qualman, and CSFCA Executive Director Paul Cooke (Chief Qualman was called away early in the meeting to respond to an incident in his District).

Discussion Concerning the Organization of Homeland Security Functions in Colorado

Stephanie Villafuerte, Deputy Chief of Staff for Governor Bill Ritter, Jr.; Susan Kirkpatrick, Executive Director, Department of Local Affairs; and Peter Weir, Executive Director, Department of Public Safety were in attendance at the meeting to discuss the organization of homeland security functions in Colorado. Ms. Villafuerte reported that, as a result of past and on-going audits, the Ritter Administration is conducting an assessment of the state's homeland security responsibilities and how they are executed. She advised that there is no preconceived notion of whether a restructuring will be done – and if it is – what it will look like. According to Ms. Villafuerte, they have and will continue to take input from stakeholders and indicated that any major structural change will require legislation, thus it will not occur until next year.

Public Safety Interoperable Communications Grant Program – Mike Borrego, State DTR Project Manager.

Following are the highlights of Mike's presentation on the Public Safety Interoperable Communications Grant Program:

- \$1 billion nationwide dedicated to interoperable communications.
- Guidance and state allocation to be released in July (20% total statewide cash match requirement)
- 36 month performance period
- Statewide plan must be approved by DHS; must demonstrate connectivity to 700 MHz
- In concept, the plan will be a "network of networks" leveraging existing infrastructures and investments
- Division of Information Technologies has adopted the Safecom "Interoperability Continuum" as the governance model with the goal of achieving optimal level on each of the five elements – sought SAHAC adoption of the model, which was deferred until next meeting.

On the issue of rebanding, Mike reported that all contracts have been signed, the schedule will be out in about 2 weeks, and rebanding will begin in about 3-4 weeks.

Attached are a copy of Mike's handout on FAQ's and the Safecom "Interoperability Continuum" Model. For more information, go to:
<http://www.ntia.doc.gov/otiahome/dtv/publicsafety.html>.

Note: Mike is scheduled to make a presentation on this topic at the June 1 General Membership meeting.

Homeland Security Grant Application Update – Randy Kennedy, Homeland Security Grants Manager, Division of Emergency Management.

Following are the highlights of Randy's presentation:

- State application has been submitted to DHS
- Technical assistance for regional applications will begin week of April 23rd. There are changes in the application, including questions that need to be answered by the applicant and will be scored.
- Deadline for regional applications is June 15th
- There will be a DHS grant monitoring visit the week of April 23rd
- There will be a Regional Coordinators Meeting on April 25th

Grant Review Committee Update

Randy Kennedy reported that the Grant Review Committee needs to be appointed and that those agencies and associations that have seats on the committee should get the name of their appointee to him as soon as possible. The tentative date for the Grant Review Committee to meet is July 12th.

CDEM Director Epp reported that while the Governor's office believes the grant oversight process is not adequate and believes changes are necessary, the grant process must move on. Questions were asked about the role of the Grant Advisory Committee with respect to the Senior Advisory Committee (SAC), and whether the SAC has been reconstituted. Director Epp said that the SAC is already constituted by Executive Order (although it has not met in several months) and the Governor's office is currently assessing whether it needs to be reconstituted. According to Director Epp, the role of the Grant Review Committee is to make funding recommendations to the SAC. The SAC, in turn, makes its recommendations to the Governor.

Regional and State Agency Reports

Colorado Emergency Managers Association (CEMA) – CEMA reported that their semi-annual conference was a huge success, with about 350 participants. It was also mentioned that the National Emergency Management Association's survey report is out and Colorado is at the very bottom in terms of funding (see <http://www.nemaweb.org/?1814>).

Public Health – CDPHE reported there is an HHS Grant coordination meeting on May 2nd to review public health agency requirements for next year.

"Operation Mountain Move II", a large scale mass casualty exercise, will be held in Summit County on June 13th. Phase I is an MMRS exercise in Colorado Springs.

Department of Public Safety – Major Jim Wolfenbarger, Director, Office of Preparedness and Security reported that DNC Planning is coming along. They have been meeting with the FBI and Secret Service about information sharing.

Maj. Wolfenbarger also reported that the Rubicon Team has been doing School Vulnerability Assessment Train-the-Trainers.

Department of Agriculture – Kevin Dennison reported that a State Veterinary Reserve Corps has been established. They hope to have 300 people trained for this program in the next couple of years. They have developed a 1 day community animal response training program and a 1 day animal sheltering course.

Division of Emergency Management - CDEM Director Epp reported on recovery efforts from the Holly tornado. He reported that Holly lost 48 homes or 1/3rd of their housing stock; there was 1 life loss and 8 hospitalizations. He reported that recovery efforts are going well. The community created a Tornado Recovery Task Force, and all debris removal has been accomplished by volunteers, at no expense to the State. The Governor declared a disaster and appropriated \$1 million to provide assistance, but the event did not qualify for a Presidential Declaration under Stafford.

Director Epp also reported that GSA donated 50 mobile homes to the state and about half have arrived. The State now owns these mobile homes and will be leasing them to Holly residents based on need. Land is being leased to DEM to site the mobile homes.

Department of Education – Janelle Krueger of CDE reported that HB 1059 concerning School Infrastructure Improvement Grant Program, which will provide for school security improvements is progressing through the legislature.

Next Meeting – June 15, 2007, 09:00 at the State EOC

For more information about the State All Hazards Advisory Committee or to read previous minutes, go to: <http://www.dola.state.co.us/dem/sahac/sahac.htm>

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Public Safety Interoperable Communications Grant Program

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q1. What is the purpose of the Public Safety Interoperable Communications (PSIC) Grant Program?

A1. The PSIC Grant Program will provide funding to States and Territories starting in Fiscal Year 2007 to enable and enhance public safety agencies' interoperable communications capabilities. The PSIC Grant Program is a one-time grant opportunity to enhance interoperable capabilities with respect to voice, data, and/or video and encourage the use of innovative cost- and spectrum-efficient technology solutions.

Q2. What is the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA)?

A2. NTIA, an agency within the Department of Commerce, is responsible for the development of domestic and international telecommunications and information policy for the Executive Branch, for ensuring the efficient and effective use of the federal radio spectrum, and for performing state-of-the-art telecommunications research, engineering, and planning.

Q3. Why is the PSIC Grant Program managed by NTIA?

A3. The Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 (P.L. No. 109-171) established a firm deadline to complete the transition of broadcasters from analog to digital transmissions. This digital television transition returns analog television spectrum, of which 24 megahertz has been reallocated for public safety use. The remaining portion of the returned spectrum will be auctioned for commercial use. With the anticipated auction proceeds, NTIA was given authority to expend \$1 billion in grants to public safety agencies to improve interoperable communications.

Q4. What is the role of Department of Homeland Security?

A4. On February 16, 2007, NTIA and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Office of Grants and Training (G&T) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) through which NTIA will acquire grants-related administrative services and expertise from DHS. NTIA retains the approval authority on the program guidance, all grant awards, and grant applications.

Q5. How do the PSIC grants relate to the forthcoming public safety spectrum in the 700 MHz frequency band?

A5. The PSIC Grant Program will assist public safety agencies in the acquisition of, deployment of, or training for the use of interoperable communications systems that utilize -- or enable interoperability with communications systems that utilize --



reallocated public safety spectrum in the 764-776 MHz and 794-806 MHz bands. The PSIC Grant Program will assist public safety agencies in exploring and encouraging the use of all available technologies to advance overall public safety interoperability, so long as those frequencies will enable first responders to interoperate with the 700 MHz bands in the future.

Q6. *How does the PSIC Grant Program relate to the DHS requirement to submit Statewide Plans?*

A6. DHS has developed a comprehensive statewide planning approach, which each State will be required to implement this year. Statewide Plans will be used as part of the grant application process to ensure that investment justifications and applications are in line with broader, regional interoperability goals. Additionally, disbursement of the State's allocated funding will be contingent upon submission of the Statewide Plan as required by DHS. A qualitative peer evaluation will be used for review of both the Statewide Plans and grant applications to ensure consistency.

Up to five percent of the total available funds will be disbursed at award to grantees in FY 2007 to ensure that Statewide Plans include consideration of PSIC grant requirements.

Q7. *When are the Statewide Plans due to the DHS? Will the States receive help developing the plans?*

A7. SAFECOM released the Statewide Communications Interoperability Plan development guidance for the March 21–23, 2007 symposium in Los Angeles, CA. The criteria set forth will serve as a basis for an eventual peer review process to approve the Statewide Plans. The criteria emphasize a regional approach to interoperability, including but not limited to—

- Governance
- Technology
- Standard Operating Procedures
- Training and Exercises
- Inclusion and coordination of existing plans and strategies (e.g., Tactical Interoperable Communication Plan or TICPs, Statewide Homeland Security Strategies)

DHS will deploy technical assistance to help States draft their Statewide Plans, and preliminary plans will be due to DHS by September 30, 2007. Final plans must be submitted by November 1, 2007 in order to ensure that peer reviews and the release of PSIC grant funding are expedited.



Q8. *How will existing Tactical Interoperable Communication Plans (TICPs) be leveraged within the PSIC Grant Program?*

A8. The PSIC Grant Program builds upon the planning efforts underway across State and local jurisdictions. Urban and metropolitan areas with existing TICPs received recommendations (from the AARs, IPs, and Tactical Interoperable Communications Scorecards) on how to improve regional interoperability. These plans, the recommendations, and the needs identified by the TICP participants should serve as the basis for developing Statewide Plans and investment justifications for PSIC grants.

Q9. *What are the key dates associated with the PSIC Grant Program?*

A9. The dates below represent key milestones associated with the PSIC Grant Program:

- February 16, 2007—Memorandum of Understanding signed between DHS and NTIA.
- March 21–23, 2007—Statewide Planning Workshop held in Los Angeles, CA.
- Mid-July 2007—NTIA and DHS jointly announce funding allocated for awards to States and Territories and release grant application materials.
- September 30, 2007—States and Territories submit preliminary Statewide Plans.
- November 1, 2007—States and Territories submit finalized Statewide Plans.

Q10. *What if I have additional questions?*

A10. For more information on the PSIC Grant Program, please contact the Centralized Scheduling and Information Desk (CSID) at 1-800-368-6498 or askcsid@dhs.gov.

PSIC Grant Program updates will be posted on the NTIA website:
<http://www.ntia.doc.gov/psic>



Interoperability Continuum

A tool for improving emergency response communications and interoperability



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Interoperability Overview

This Interoperability Continuum is designed to help the emergency response community and local, tribal, state, and Federal policy makers address critical elements for success as they plan and implement interoperability solutions. These elements include governance, standard operating procedures, technology, training and exercises, and usage of interoperable communications.

The Interoperability Continuum was developed in accordance with the SAFECOM program's locally driven philosophy and its practical experience in working with local governments across the Nation. SAFECOM is a communications program of the Department of Homeland Security's Office for Interoperability and Compatibility. The Continuum was established to depict the core facets of interoperability according to the stated needs and challenges of the emergency response community and will aid emergency responders and policy makers in their short- and long-term interoperability efforts.

Communications interoperability refers to the ability of emergency response agencies to talk across disciplines and jurisdictions via radio communications systems, exchanging voice and/or data with one another on demand, in real time, when needed, and as authorized.

To drive progress along the five elements of the Continuum and improve interoperability, emergency responders should observe the following principles:

- Gain leadership commitment from all disciplines [Emergency Medical Services (EMS), Fire, Law Enforcement].
- Foster collaboration across disciplines (EMS, Fire, Law Enforcement) through leadership support.
- Interface with policy makers to gain leadership commitment and resource support.
- Use interoperability solutions on a regular basis.
- Plan and budget for ongoing updates to systems, procedures, and documentation.
- Ensure collaboration and coordination across all elements [Governance, Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), Technology, Training and Exercises, Usage].

Making progress in all aspects of interoperability is essential, since the elements are interdependent. Therefore, to gain a true picture of a region's interoperability, progress along all five elements of the Continuum must be considered together. For example, when a region procures new equipment, that region should plan training and conduct exercises to make the best use of that equipment.

Leadership, Planning, and Collaboration

In addition to progression along the five elements of the Continuum, regions should focus on planning, education and outreach, and maintain an awareness of the specific issues and barriers that affect a particular area's movement towards increased interoperability. For example, many regions face difficulties related to political issues and the relationships within and across jurisdictions and disciplines (e.g., EMS, Fire, Law Enforcement). Leadership can help to work through these challenging internal and jurisdictional conflicts as well as set the stage for a region's commitment to the interoperability effort. Additionally, leaders must be willing to commit the time and resources necessary to ensure the success of any interoperability effort. For example, ongoing maintenance and support of the system must be planned for and incorporated into the budget.

Sustainability

Communications interoperability is an ongoing process, not a one-time investment. Once a governing body is set up, it must be prepared to meet on a regular basis, drawing on operational and technical expertise to plan and budget for continual updates to systems, procedures, and training and exercise programs. If regions expect emergency responders to use interoperable equipment on a daily basis, supporting documentation and the installed technology must be well-maintained with a long-term commitment to upgrades and eventual replacement of equipment.

Lastly, an interoperability program should include both short- and long-term solutions. Early successes can help motivate regions to tackle more time-consuming and difficult challenges. It is critical, however, that short-term solutions not inappropriately drive the planning process, but function in support of longer-term improvements.

Interoperability Continuum Elements

Governance

A common governing structure for solving interoperability issues will improve the policies, processes, and procedures of any major project by enhancing communication, coordination, and cooperation, establishing guidelines and principles, and reducing any internal jurisdictional conflicts. This group should consist of local, tribal, state, and Federal entities as well as representatives from all pertinent emergency response disciplines within the identified region. A formal governance structure is critical to the success of interoperability planning.

Individual Agencies Working Independently—A lack of coordination among responding organizations.

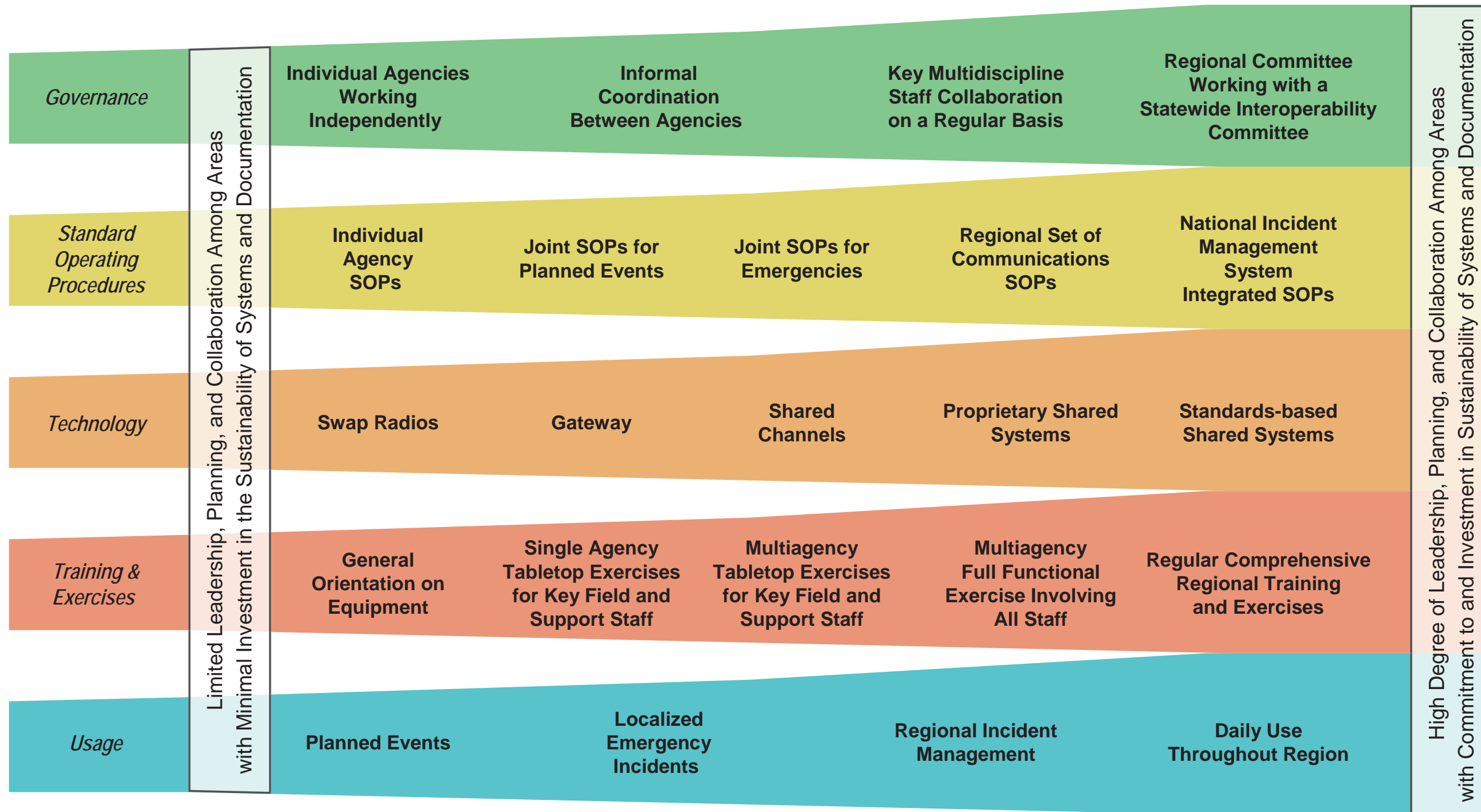
Informal Coordination Between Agencies—Loose line level or agency agreements that provide minimal incident interoperability.

Key Multidiscipline Staff Collaboration on a Regular Basis—A number of agencies and disciplines working together in a local area to promote interoperability.

Regional Committee Working with a Statewide Interoperability Committee—Multidisciplinary agencies working together across a region pursuant to formal written agreements as defined within the larger scope of a state plan. Such an arrangement promotes optimal interoperability.



Interoperability Continuum



Standard Operating Procedures

Standard operating procedures (SOPs) are formal written guidelines or instructions for incident response. SOPs typically have both operational and technical components.

Individual Agency SOPs—Uncoordinated procedures across agencies that can hinder effective multidiscipline/multiagency response.

Joint SOPs for Planned Events—The development of SOPs for planned events. This typically represents the first phase as agencies begin to work together to develop interoperability.

Joint SOPs for Emergencies—SOPs for emergency level response that are developed as agencies continue to promote interoperability.

Regional Set of Communications SOPs—Region-wide communications SOPs for multiagency/multidiscipline/multi-hazard responses; an integral step towards optimal interoperability.

National Incident Management System Integrated SOPs—Regional SOPs molded to conform to the elements of the National Incident Management System.

Technology

Although technology is a critical tool for improving interoperability, it is not the sole driver of an optimal solution. Success in each of the other elements is essential to its proper use and implementation, and should drive technology procurement.

Technology is highly dependent upon existing infrastructure within a region. Multiple technology solutions may be required to support large events.

Swap Radios—Swapping radios, or maintaining a cache of stand-by radios, is an age-old solution that is time-consuming, management-intensive, and may only provide limited results due to channel availability.

Gateway—Gateways retransmit across multiple frequency bands providing an interim interoperability solution as agencies move toward shared systems. However, gateways are inefficient in that they require twice as much spectrum because each participating agency must use at least one channel in each band per common talk path, and because they are tailored for communications within the geographic coverage area common to all participating systems.

Shared Channels—Interoperability is promoted when agencies share a common frequency band, air interface (analog or digital), and are able to agree on common channels. However, the general frequency congestion that exists across the United States can place severe restrictions on the number of independent interoperability talk paths available in some bands.

Proprietary Shared Systems and Standards-based Shared Systems—Regional shared systems are the optimal solution to interoperability. While proprietary systems limit the user's choice of product with regard to manufacturer and competitive procurement, standards-based shared systems promote competitive procurement and a wide selection of products to meet specific user needs. With proper planning of the talk group architecture, interoperability is provided as a byproduct of system design, creating an optimal technology solution.

Training & Exercises

Proper training and regular exercises are critical to the implementation and maintenance of a successful interoperability solution.

General Orientation on Equipment—Agencies provide initial orientation to their users with regard to their particular equipment. Multijurisdiction/multiagency operations are often an afterthought to this training, if provided at all.

Single Agency Tabletop for Key Field and Support Staff—Structured tabletop exercises promote planning and identify response gaps. However, single agency activities do not promote interoperability across disciplines and jurisdictions. Additionally, management and supervisory training is critical to promoting routine use of interoperability mechanisms.

Multiagency Tabletop for Key Field and Support Staff—As agencies and disciplines begin working together to develop exercises and provide field training, workable interoperability solutions emerge.

Multiagency Full Functional Exercises Involving All Staff—Once multiagency/multidiscipline plans are developed and practiced at the management and supervisory level, it is then critical that all staff who would eventually be involved in actual implementation receive training and participate in exercises.

Regular Comprehensive Regional Training and Exercises—Optimal interoperability involves equipment familiarization and an introduction to regional/state interoperability at time of hire (or in an academy setting). Success will be assured by regular, comprehensive, and realistic exercises that address potential problems in the region and involve the participation of all personnel.

Despite the best planning and technology preparations, there is always the risk of the unexpected—those critical and unprecedented incidents that require an expert at the helm who can immediately adapt to the situation. Within the Incident Command System (ICS), these specialists are called Communications Unit Leaders. The role of the Communications Unit Leader is a critical function that requires adequate training and cannot be delegated to an individual simply because that person "knows about radios." Rather, the proper training of these individuals is of significant importance to a region's ability to respond to unexpected events, and it should prepare them to manage the communications component of larger interoperability incidents, applying the available technical solutions to the specific operational environment of the event.

Usage

Usage refers to how often interoperable communications technologies are used. Success in this element is contingent upon progress and interplay among the other four elements on the Interoperability Continuum.

Planned Events—Events for which the date and time are known. Examples include athletic events and large conferences/conventions that involve multiple responding agencies.

Localized Emergency Incidents—Emergency events that involve multiple intra-jurisdictional responding agencies. A vehicle collision on an interstate highway is an example of this type of incident.

Regional Incident Management—Routine coordination of responses across a region that include automatic aid fire response as well as response to natural and man-made disasters.

Daily Use Throughout Region—Interoperability systems that are used every day for managing routine as well as emergency incidents. In this optimal solution, users are familiar with the operation of the system and routinely work in concert with one another.

The Department of Homeland Security established the Office for Interoperability and Compatibility (OIC) in 2004 to strengthen and integrate interoperability and compatibility efforts in order to improve local, tribal, state, and Federal emergency response and preparedness. OIC programs and initiatives address critical interoperability and compatibility issues. Priority areas include communications, equipment, training, and other areas as identified.



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