

DRAFT - PROJECT OVERVIEW

Wireless Public SAFETY Interoperable COMMUNICATIONS Program (PROJECT SAFECOM)

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Project SAFECOM Background

For years, the Nation's public safety community has been addressing interoperable communications that would lead to improved response and the saving of lives and property. Recently, new public safety challenges and homeland security objectives have further emphasized this point. The Wireless Public SAFETY Interoperable COMMUNICATIONS Program, known as Project SAFECOM, has been established to address critical public safety wireless communications shortcomings.

Project SAFECOM is 1 of the 24 e-Gov initiatives established by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to improve services, improve operations, and realize savings across the Federal Government. As a part of the government-to-government (G2G) portfolio of initiatives, Project SAFECOM is focused on accelerating the implementation of public safety communications interoperability at all levels of government throughout the Nation. Relative to this focus, "interoperability" is defined as "the immediate mission-critical communications between users of different wireless systems who need to communicate for public safety purposes – be they first response, day-to-day, and task force."

Public Safety Challenges

In recent years, a growing number of acts of domestic terrorism, civil disturbance, and natural disasters have demonstrated the need for local, state, and federal public safety providers to better coordinate their efforts at the scene of an incident. This real-time coordination is most often achieved via radio communications using land mobile radio (LMR) technology. The response to emergency incidents is therefore significantly compounded if, during these events, emergency personnel have limited radio communications.

These radios are often the lifeline for emergency responders and citizens in danger. When a firefighter is trapped in a burning building, a police officer requires backup, or federal agents participate in a drug raid, radio communications ensure that help is immediately available. Despite public safety efforts to mitigate the consequences of these incidents, the risk of losing lives and property has grown as a direct result of the substantial time spent establishing on-scene communications.

Homeland security is also shaping the need for interoperability among varying public safety agencies. The events of September 11, 2001, have served to blur the lines between public safety

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and national security, and have thrust federal entities, such as the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the United States Secret Service (USSS), and the United States Coast Guard (USCG), into broader public safety roles. Many federal public safety entities must now be able to communicate directly with one another and with their state and local counterparts that are also critical frontline defenders in homeland security.

Project SAFECOM is working to resolve these issues with the assistance of Federal, state, and local partners who are actively pursuing solutions to interoperability challenges.

Goals and Objectives

The intent of Project SAFECOM is to accelerate the implementation of interoperable public safety communications at all levels of government throughout the Nation. To that end, the program maintains three principle goals that are in line with the overall e-Government initiative, as well as related initiatives in Homeland Security and Cyber Security:

- Goal 1:** Saving lives through immediate public safety communication and coordination
- Goal 2:** Providing effective public safety and emergency support communications to enable the National Emergency and Incidence Response Plan of the government
- Goal 3:** Realizing cost savings through standardization and information sharing.

These goals will be accomplished across 3 levels of interoperability objectives:

- Objective 1:** Achieve Federal-to-Federal interoperability throughout the Nation
- Objective 2:** Achieve Federal-to-State/local interoperability throughout the Nation
- Objective 3:** Achieve State/local interoperability throughout the Nation.

Value and Impact

The greatest impact of Project SAFECOM will be to the public safety organizations throughout the Nation that will have the wireless communications tools they need to meet homeland security and traditional public safety challenges. Beyond improved mission delivery and productivity enhancement, the lasting impact to these organizations will be in the reduction of lost lives and property. These benefits will be gained in a fiscally responsible way, and in a way that respects the sovereignty of the federal, state, and local systems of governance in place throughout the United States. Benefits also include millions of dollars in potential cost savings, cost avoidance, and cost recovery. Across all levels of Government, Project SAFECOM will deliver results on what matters most – safeguarding the homeland and protecting citizens – while retaining responsible fiscal stewardship as a guidepost.

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Project Scope

Project SAFECOM has two primary components. The first is an aggressive federal effort focused on coordinated implementation of narrowband systems and federal-to-federal interoperability in areas where it is appropriate. The second component targets improvements in State and local interoperability. This component relies heavily on expanding the existing Public Safety Wireless Network Program (PSWN) to provide direct assistance in improving and ensuring wireless interoperability between federal, state, and local agencies.

Project SAFECOM does not represent a single federal network serving federal, state, and local governments. It will not be a controlling entity that dictates or mandates build-out of federal, state, or local networks and hence, will not be a stop to ongoing narrowband efforts. Project SAFECOM will require input and ownership from across all levels of Government. Through this coordination, it will:

- Ensure a right-sized set of shared networks emerges
- Coordinate federal narrowband implementation efforts
- Set the stage for federal interoperability
- Establish interoperability links between federal and state/local networks.

Government Partners

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has assigned the responsibility of serving as managing partner for Project SAFECOM to the Department of the Treasury. The Treasury Wireless Directorate has the responsibility for managing all efforts falling within the scope of the Project SAFECOM initiative. The managing partner and its federal partners are responsible for achieving interoperability where appropriate across public safety entities and for preventing undue duplication and excessive infrastructure build-out among systems.

Project SAFECOM actively seeks the participation of federal partners and state/local representatives to contribute to the accomplishment of the program's goals and objectives. At the federal level, the initiative is guided by a senior-level forum called the Federal Public Safety Wireless Executive Committee (FPSWEC). The committee is comprised of CIO level representatives from Federal departments and agencies with interests in public safety communications. Its purpose is to help ensure priority remains high for the initiative and that departments and agencies are driving towards progress in improving interoperability.

At the State/local level, Project SAFECOM is reaching out to and soliciting involvement from public safety agencies and representatives, primarily through the efforts of the PSWN Program. State/local partners will actively participate in the development of interoperability requirements, architectures and solutions for Federal-to-State/local and State/local interoperability.

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Project SAFECOM welcomes any and all insights and feedback from both federal partners and state/local representatives that have an interest in improving interoperable radio communications that are key to public safety missions.

Contact Information

Questions regarding the Project SAFECOM initiative should be directed to Tom Wiesner (Director, Wireless Programs, Department of the Treasury) at 202-622-1592 or tom.wiesner@do.treas.gov.