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About the Office of Emergency Communications

The ability to communicate is vital when responding to emergencies, especially when responding with multiple agencies. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Office of Emergency Communications (OEC) was created to enhance emergency communications capabilities across all levels of government and public safety agencies by coordinating policies and activities with Federal, Tribal, State, and local stakeholders, as well as the private sector.

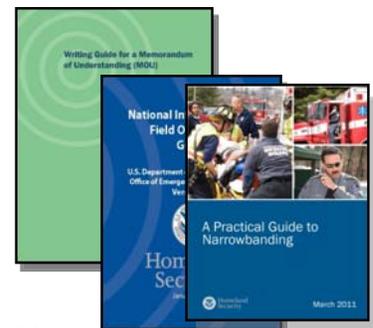
We work with public safety agencies to drive improvements in emergency communications by providing targeted resources to where they are needed the most. Through the SAFECOM program, OEC receives direct input from State, Tribal, and local public safety and government officials on emergency communications policy and best practices to enhance coordination across jurisdictions and disciplines. OEC also works closely with the Statewide Interoperability Coordinators from each of the 56 States and territories, who lead efforts to enhance interoperability statewide.

In response to [Executive Order 13618](#), OEC recently realigned within the Office of Cybersecurity and Communications and its emergency mission was expanded to include the National Communications System (NCS) national security and emergency preparedness (NS/EP) communications responsibilities. The combination of OEC's strong partnerships at the Federal, Tribal, State, and local levels with NCS's technical capabilities enhances OEC's ability to address all emergency communications issues, including advances with public safety broadband.

Resources for Tribal Communities

Guidance Documents

OEC works closely with SAFECOM members and our stakeholders to develop emergency communications guidance documents and publications, such as the [Communications-Specific Tabletop Exercise Methodology](#) and the [Writing Guide for Standard Operating Procedures](#).



OEC also offers operational interoperability guides such as the [National Interoperability Field Operations Guide \(NIFOG\)](#). The NIFOG is a collection of technical reference material for radio technicians who operate or manage radio communication during disaster responses.

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To view these and other guidance documents, please visit www.dhs.gov, keyword 'OEC', or email us at oecl@hq.dhs.gov.

Online Training

OEC provides free online resources and training at www.publicsafetytools.info.

The training, tools, and templates available at this site support stakeholder efforts on planning, governance, and other issues faced by the emergency response community.

For additional information about resources for tribes, please visit www.dhs.gov, keyword 'OEC', or email us at oecl@hq.dhs.gov.

Priority Services Programs

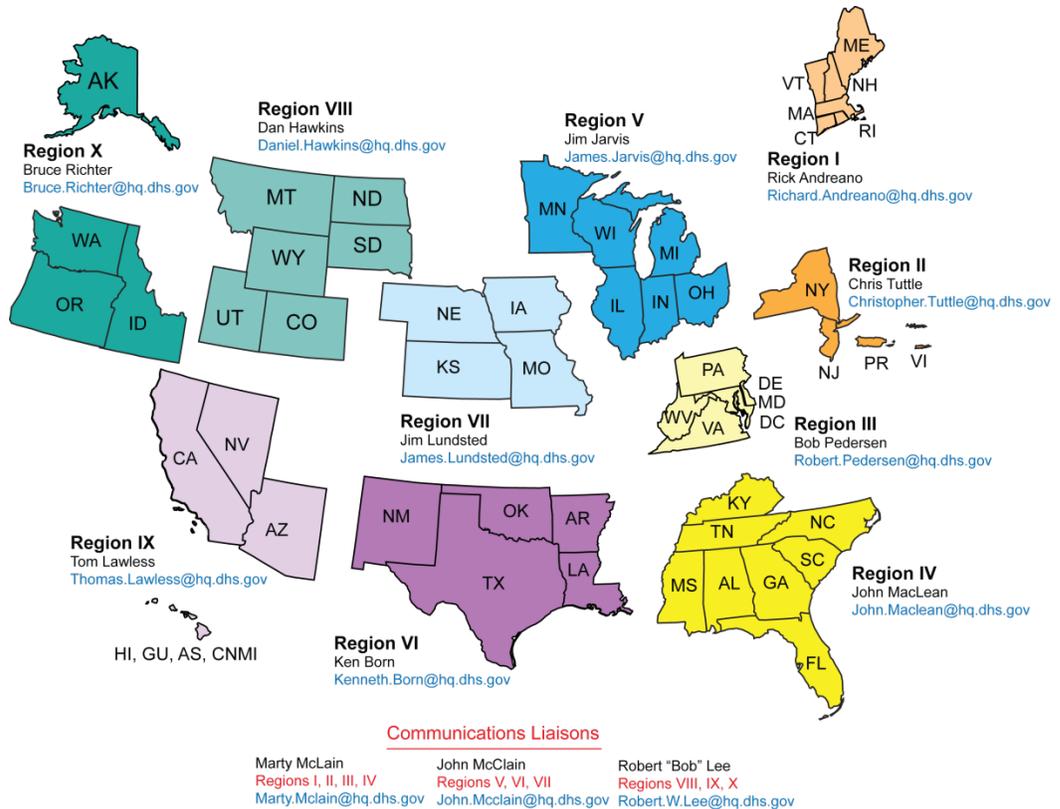
OEC manages DHS' Government Emergency Telecommunications Service (GETS), Wireless Priority Service ([WPS](#)), Telecommunications Service Priority ([TSP](#)), and the Shared Resources ([SHARES](#)) High Frequency (HF) Radio Program Priority Services Programs. GETS and WPS enhance call completion for select Federal, Tribal, State, and private users when abnormal call volume persists on the public switched telephone network. These services provides priority calling, which enable users to bypass disruptions. TSP provides NS/EP organizations with the ability to obtain priority restoration and provisioning of critical data and voice circuits. When normal communications are destroyed or unavailable, SHARES is a messaging system used by NS/EP personnel to transmit emergency messages over existing HF radio resources of Federal, state and industry organizations.

OEC offers these programs to over 200,000 users nationwide. For more information on these programs, including your tribe's eligibility, please visit us by clicking [here](#).

OEC's Regional Coordination Program

OEC supports tribal communities through our Regional Coordination Program, which includes Regional Coordinators and Communications Liaisons working in the field. The Regional Coordination Program strengthens emergency communications and NS/EP communications capabilities across Tribal, local, State, and Federal governments at the regional level through trusted relationships, collaboration, and knowledge sharing.

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Stay informed on emergency communications news by subscribing to OEC's *Emergency Communications Forum (ECF)*.

Visit the [OEC webpage](#) to subscribe and learn more about the DHS Office of Emergency Communications.

Regional Coordinators and Liaisons are available to answer questions, support emergency communications initiatives, and serve as liaisons between tribes and other entities in order to achieve advancements in communications.

OEC Regional Coordinators and Communications Liaisons by Region

Region	Regional Coordinator	Communications Liaison
I	Rick Andreano, richard.andreano@hq.dhs.gov	Marty McLain marty.mclain@hq.dhs.gov
II	Chris Tuttle, christopher.tuttle@hq.dhs.gov	
III	Bob Pedersen, robert.pedersen@hq.dhs.gov	
IV	John MacLean, john.maclean@hq.dhs.gov	
V	Jim Jarvis, james.jarvis@hq.dhs.gov	John McClain john.mcclain@hq.dhs.gov
VI	Ken Born, kenneth.born@hq.dhs.gov	
VII	Jim Lundsted, james.lundsted@hq.dhs.gov	
VIII	Dan Hawkins, daniel.hawkins@hq.dhs.gov	Robert "Bob" Lee Robert.w.lee@hq.dhs.gov
IX	Tom Lawless, thomas.lawless@hq.dhs.gov	
X	Bruce Richter, bruce.richter@hq.dhs.gov	

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OEC Continues to Assess Tribal Emergency Communications Capabilities



In early 2012, OEC began collecting data from Federally-recognized Indian tribes and Alaska native communities to better understand tribal emergency communications capabilities. Respecting tribes' status as sovereign nations, OEC is working directly with tribal representatives to collect and analyze data on how tribal emergency responders communicate not only with each other, but also with their neighboring agencies. The survey is part of OEC's effort to evaluate the Nation's progress as a whole in meeting the goals outlined by the National Emergency Communications Plan (NECP) to drive improvements in emergency communications nationwide.

The 11 questions in the survey range from which frequencies and types of radio systems are used within each tribal community, to how often communications training and exercises are held. These questions are identical to those asked by OEC of the more than 3,000 counties during the assessment of NECP Goal 2 in 2011. Once collected, this data will help OEC better target resources, training, and technical assistance to improve emergency communications capabilities in Indian Country.

As tribes complete the survey, OEC will evaluate the responses and offer technical assistance to those tribes presenting the greatest need. OEC will also provide tribes with guidance documents and other resources for emergency response professionals. In addition, OEC is engaging tribal representatives through its Regional Coordination Program, and participation in tribal events such as the National Congress of American Indians Annual Convention, the United South and Eastern Tribes Annual Meeting, and the Northwest Tribal Public Health and Emergency Preparedness Conference.

Your participation is both valuable and important! Has your tribe completed the survey? For more information or to participate, contact the NECP Goals team at NECPGoals@hq.oec.dhs.

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National Congress of American Indians Joins SAFECOM



SAFECOM is an emergency communications program of the Department of Homeland Security's Office of Emergency Communications (OEC) that

provides input on the challenges, needs, and best practices involving emergency communications to Tribal, local, State, and Federal emergency response agencies. Through collaboration with emergency responders and policymakers across all levels of government, SAFECOM works to improve multi-jurisdictional and intergovernmental communications interoperability. SAFECOM recently welcomed two new members to its Executive Committee representing the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI): Fuzzy Fletcher and John Taylor.

Fuzzy Fletcher

Mr. Fletcher has worked in emergency management and homeland security for 12 years, supporting Indian Country and rural America. He currently serves as the Director of Public Safety for the Snoqualmie Indian Tribe. Throughout his career, Mr. Fletcher has been active in public safety communications for fire, police, and emergency services in tribal and rural jurisdictions, and as an amateur radio technician. He has written numerous emergency management plans and procedures for all types of facilities, such as medical clinics. Mr. Fletcher is excited to serve on the Executive Committee as NCAI's primary representative.

John Taylor

Mr. Taylor serves as the Emergency Manager, Public Health, and Safety Officer for the Squaxin Island Tribe. Retired from the U.S. Army after 21 years, Mr. Taylor has worked in emergency services since 1977. In his current position, the tribal government has implemented an emergency management system recognized by the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) for its ability to prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies and disasters.

Mr. Taylor is the Treasurer on the Executive Board for the Tribal Emergency Management Association (iTEMA), and a member of the International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM); Washington State Emergency Management Association; Board of Certified Safety Professionals; and the National Safety Council. He holds numerous professional certifications and is certified to teach the National Incident Management System (NIMS) Incident Command System (ICS) course. Mr. Taylor looks forward to serving as NCAI's alternate representative on the SAFECOM Executive Committee.

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Establishing the Nationwide Public Safety Broadband Network

On February 22, 2012, President Obama signed into law the *Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012*, which authorizes the establishment of the Nationwide Public Safety Broadband Network. The network will provide a secure, reliable, and dedicated interoperable network for emergency responders to communicate during an emergency. Securing this authorization and funding was the first step in accomplishing one of the last outstanding recommendations of the 9/11 Commission: the creation of a nationwide interoperable communications network.

FirstNet: Overseeing Deployment of the Network

A key provision of the law creates the First Responders Network Authority (FirstNet), an independent authority within the Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA). FirstNet is responsible for deploying the Nationwide Network. This responsibility includes, at a minimum, ensuring nationwide standards for use and access to the network; and issuing open, transparent, and competitive requests for proposals (RFPs) to build, operate, and maintain the network. It is also responsible for leveraging economically desirable, existing commercial wireless infrastructure to speed deployment of the network; and overseeing contracts with non-federal entities to build, operate, and maintain the network.

FirstNet is run by a [15-member Board of Directors](#), with the Secretary of Homeland Security, the US Attorney General, and the Director of the Office of Management and Budget serving as permanent Federal representatives. On August 20, 2012, Acting US Commerce Secretary Rebecca Blank announced the 12 remaining members of the Board, representing the interests of State, Tribal, and local stakeholders. This diverse group brings together expertise in the fields of public safety, technology, network operations, and finance.

On September 25, 2012, the FirstNet Board held its first meeting, where it adopted bylaws and made initial organizational decisions. At this inaugural meeting, the Board adopted a resolution to leverage SAFECOM membership in standing up its Public Safety Advisory Committee. Through its representation on the Public Safety Advisory Committee and SAFECOM, the National Congress of American Indians will provide vital tribal input in the design and implementation of the network.

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OEC's Role in Deploying the Nationwide Public Safety Broadband Network

Since being established by Congress, a key component of OEC's efforts has been, and will continue to be, engagement and collaboration with public safety and government at the Federal, Tribal, State, and local levels. This mission is the reason OEC was chosen to lead DHS's efforts in supporting the development and deployment of the Nationwide Network in collaboration with stakeholders at all levels of government. OEC will continue this work through the support of DHS Secretary Napolitano (pictured) on the FirstNet Board, and through our outreach and engagement with public safety and government at the Federal, Tribal, State, and local levels, to ensure that your input is heard. As this new network is developed and deployed, this engagement will be more important than ever.



At the Federal level, OEC is working with the Departments of Commerce and Justice to ensure the Nationwide Network meets the needs of users in the public safety community, and that State, Tribal, and local public safety and government officials have a voice in the development and deployment of the network. OEC continues to engage our Federal partners on the network's implementation through our work on the Emergency Communications Preparedness Center (ECPC) and the OneDHS Emergency Communications Committee, which is managed by OEC.

For more information on broadband and the Nationwide Network, and to stay up to date on recent developments, visit OEC's Public Safety Broadband page at www.dhs.gov/publicsafetybroadband.

OEC Staff Members Attend Tribal Events

In our continuing efforts to support tribal stakeholder engagement and collaboration, members of the OEC Team have participated in the following events:

Northwest Tribal Emergency Management
Council

[Tribal Public Health Emergency Preparedness
Conference](#)

August 14-15, 2012
Shelton, WA



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United South and Eastern Tribes
[USET Annual Meeting and EXPO](#)
October 9-12, 2012
Uncasville, CT



National Congress of American Indians
[NCAI Annual Convention and Marketplace](#)
October 22-26, 2012
Sacramento, CA



National
Congress of
American
Indians

TribalNet
[13th Annual Technology Conference for the
Native American Industry](#)
November 5-8, 2012
San Diego, CA



Interested in having the OEC Team participate in your upcoming event? Contact us at oecc@dhs.gov.
