

Summary Overview

- It was the consensus of the Goal 2 Demonstration Working Group that Goal 2 is achievable and we shouldn't make it complicated.
- In many locales in Texas, Goal 2 is, and has been, demonstrated on a regular basis. During wildfire and hurricane responses since 1998, federal, state and local entities have been applying Goal 2 interoperability, including aircraft, over vast geographic areas of the state.
- ***Satisfying Goal 2 simply requires having and using common interoperable channels or talkgroups in the frequency band used day-to-day, and having access to a mobile or fixed gateway which incorporates the interoperable frequencies of the other bands.***

Recommendation Definitions

GATEWAYS

- Fixed gateways (which cover the incident area) or portable/mobile gateways may be needed to fully achieve Goal 2. Feasibly, these should be shared and made available to all public safety entities. Plans, such as RICPs, should include procedures for requesting and implementing gateways.
- ***A gateway should be available, for scene coverage, within one (1) hour of the IC's determination that out-of-band resources will be required on the incident.***
- *(Discussion Comment Only: If common VHF interoperable frequencies were installed in UHF/700/800 MHz trunked sites and UHF/700/800 MHz interoperable frequencies in VHF trunked sites, this could enhance interoperability, not only for Goal 2, but even day-to-day operations.)*

Recommendation 1

from the Goal 2 Demonstration Working Group (G2DWG)

NECP Goal 2—By 2011, 75 percent of non-UASI jurisdictions are able to demonstrate response-level emergency communications within one hour for routine events involving multiple jurisdictions and agencies.

Recommend to consider “event” to also include “incidents” and “exercises.”

Recommendation 2

from the Goal 2 Demonstration Working Group (G2DWG)

- One hour for routine events involving multiple jurisdictions and agencies *The TxRC defines the one hour requirement as one hour after the arrival of two or more first responders at an event and 1) declare the event to require response from multiple jurisdictions /agencies and 2) establish an incident command site.*

G2DWG recommends replacing with the following definition:

- One hour for routine events¹ involving multiple jurisdictions and agencies *The TxRC defines the one hour requirement as one hour after the arrival of two or more first responders (one of whom is the initial Incident Commander) at an incident/event/exercise and the incident commander declares that the incident requires a response from multiple jurisdictions/agencies.*

(¹ICS Defines an “Event” as something planned; An “Incident” is unplanned and is more appropriate for this Goal.)

Recommendation 3

- To accomplish the 14 Elements of the ***National Response-Level Emergency Communication Observational Elements/Criteria*** there will be a need to:
 - Educate
 - Train
 - Evaluate
 - Exercise
- Additional needs:
 - Standard Operating Guides, Regional Interoperability Channel Plans, Pre-planning

Each one of these will be detailed in the following slides.

Recommendation 3, continued

DEMONSTRATING GOAL 2

Educate

- The end-users, dispatchers, elected officials and vendors should be educated on aspects of interoperability and Goal 2. Definitions must be a part of this; include terms such as “narrowband, P-25, interoperability, ICS, NIMS, Goal 2, State and regional communications plans, etc.” Part of the education piece should also be included in the training.

Recommendation 3, continued

DEMONSTRATING GOAL 2

Train

- Classes on radio operation and interoperability will be needed at the local level and on a regular basis. This should be for all end-users and dispatchers.

Recommendation 3, continued

DEMONSTRATING GOAL 2

Evaluate

- All end-users should demonstrate the use of interoperable frequencies and/or talkgroups. Key end-users should demonstrate setting up, integrating and using a gateway device. Evaluations could be associated with routine training, with exercises, or with an actual incident or event. Evaluations should be based on the plans, training, procedures, and equipment on hand that would be used on an initial incident as associated with Goal 2.

Recommendation 3, continued

DEMONSTRATING GOAL 2

Exercise

- Exercises should include a scenario which will involve a unified command, multiple agencies/jurisdictions (including multiple disciplines), and utilize multiple interoperable channels and/or talkgroups.
- As a minimum, establish and designate command, tactical and air-to-ground channels.
- Develop and distribute an ICS 205, conduct a briefing on communications, and simulate a “shift-change” transition.
- All end-users should demonstrate the use of interoperable frequencies.
- Key end-users should demonstrate setting up, integrating and using a gateway device.
- **Other guidelines associated with the *Goal 2 Methodology* are required (discussed later in this conference)**

Recommendation 3, continued

DEMONSTRATING GOAL 2

Exercise, Continued

- Personnel not directly associated with the entity being evaluated should be utilized to evaluate the results of exercises. These personnel shall conduct a fair, impartial and thorough evaluation to ensure the goal is met.
- Exercises should be conducted, at a minimum, every three years.

Recommendation 3, continued

DEMONSTRATING GOAL 2

Previous Incident or Event

- An incident or event which involves the following can be substituted for an exercise:
 - incorporates a unified command, multiple jurisdictions and disciplines, and utilizes multiple interoperable channels and/or talkgroups
 - establishes and designates command, tactical and air-to-ground frequencies
 - an ICS 205 is developed, distributed, briefed and utilized
- Documentation should be maintained to support this. Personnel, not directly associated with the entity being evaluated, should be utilized to validate that the above items were actually done on the incident or event.

Recommendation 4

PROGRAMMING and COMMON TEMPLATES

- **It's essential that all public safety users have programmed in their radios all Texas Statewide Interoperability Channel Plan (TSICP) interoperable frequencies in the frequency band used for day-to-day communications and/or interoperable talkgroups of their day-to-day system. This should be demonstrated in the evaluations and in the incident / event / exercise and should be documented.**
- *Some COG regions are paying for the programming of radios whether or not they were purchased with Homeland Security funding. Some COG regions are purchasing all the public safety radios in their region. Some COGs are working with the end-users and vendors to create common templates for every radio. All of these things combined help ensure interoperability and that the requirements of Goal 2 are met.*

Recommendations 5 and 6

CACHES

- Caches of radios for use in interoperable situations should be programmed with interoperable frequencies and talkgroups and, if applicable, updated with common names.

USAGE of INTEROPERABLE CHANNELS on INCIDENTS / EVENTS

- Documenting the use of interoperable channels or talkgroups on incidents and events should be done to reflect compliance. ICS 205s and IAPs are among examples of documentation.
- The use of the interoperable frequencies or talkgroups is only an item of Goal 2, but it must be considered that these frequencies or talkgroups will be assigned as tactical, air-to-ground, and command channels on an incident. This presents an opportunity to pre-designate some of these frequencies or talkgroups ahead of an incident.

Challenges

- NIMS requires all agencies to use common terminology and plain text on incidents/events involving multiple jurisdictions or agencies.
- NIMS recommends a specific “calling format.” (i.e. Called ID, then Your ID);
- Prioritization of communications resources; Which incident is more important? Pre-planning? Standard Operating Guides (SOGs)?
- Establishing pre-planned channels or talkgroups for things such as “Calling,” “Command,” “Air-to-Ground,” “Staging,” etc.
- Establishing clear unit identification procedures to help avoid duplicate ID numbers on an incident;
- Ensuring that all radios are programmed with identical interoperable channel names;

Challenges

- Some federal agencies use encrypted transmissions and may not want outside agencies talking to them on their radios. To reach Goal 2, radios with interoperable frequencies and/or talkgroups might have to be issued to these agencies.
- At least some interoperable training must be on the radio equipment that the individual will be using on a regular basis. Interoperable training received at academies, external courses, etc, may not be on equipment that the end-user will be using on a day-to-day basis.
- Agencies could be from local, state and federal levels and from across the nation.

Challenges

- Determining who has the “lead” for the incident and who should be in a unified command; Agreeing to an Operations Section Chief (Deputy OSCs could be utilized to gain acceptance);
- Establishing a communications plan when most “routine” incidents won’t require a written ICS 205;
- To comply with the requirement of not having to repeat more than 1 in 10 transmissions, supervisors may require two or more radios, and/or an on-scene assistant;
- Providing a backup system to the primary communications;

Proposed Motion for Vote

- 1. In the Goal 2 requirement, consider the word “Event” to also include “Incident” or “Exercise” as long as the criteria is met for that of an “Exercise” (as defined in this proposal).**
- 2. Modify the TxRC’s definition of the one-hour requirement to read:**
“TxRC defines the one hour requirement as one hour after the arrival of two or more first responders (one of whom shall be the Incident Commander) at an incident and the incident commander declares that the incident requires a response from multiple jurisdictions/agencies.”

Proposed Motion for Vote

- 3. To accomplish the 14 Elements of the National Response-Level Emergency Communications Observational Elements/Criteria, there will be a need to Educate, Train, Evaluate and Exercise. This will be administered at the Regional-level but much of this must be implemented at the County-level. Exercises will be conducted at least every three years.**
- 3a. Previous incidents or events, which accomplish at a minimum, the requirements for an exercise, can be used in lieu of an exercise. Documentation shall be done to reflect compliance. Personnel, not directly associated with the entity being evaluated, should be utilized to validate that the above items were actually done on the incident or event.**

Proposed Motion for Vote

- 4. All public safety users must have programmed in their radios all Texas Statewide Interoperability Channel Plan (TSICP) interoperable frequencies in the frequency band used for day-to-day communications and/or interoperable talkgroups of their day-to-day system. The naming format needs to match that of the (TSICP). This should be demonstrated in the evaluations and in the incident / event / exercise.**
- 5. Caches of radios for use in interoperable situations, including incidents/event/exercises, should be programmed with interoperable frequencies and talkgroups and, if applicable, updated with common names matching those of the TSICP.**

Proposed Motion for Vote

6. Documenting the use of interoperable channels or talkgroups on incidents and events should be done to reflect compliance. ICS 205s and IAPs are among examples of documentation.
- 6a. Pre-designate some of the interoperable frequencies or talkgroups ahead of an incident/event/exercise.

Examples:

VFIRE26 will be the primary VHF Air-to-Ground channel when communicating with state/federal aircraft.

UTAC43D will be the primary UHF travel channel while responding to an incident/event.