Texas Interoperable Communications Coalition (TxICC)

Charter

Adopted 8/5/22

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Section 1: Introduction

The Texas Interoperable Communications Coalition (TxICC) is committed to cooperatively addressing the challenge of communications interoperability among emergency responders across the State. This document describes the purpose, authority, outcomes, scope, operating principles, membership, and management by which the TxICC will achieve success.

"For any area or region to improve communications interoperability, collaboration and participation of pertinent public safety stakeholders in a governing body is essential. A formal governance structure provides a unified front across multiple jurisdictions and disciplines within a particular political constituency, which can aid the funding, effectiveness, and overall support for communications interoperability." Source: DHS, SAFECOM.

Section 2: Purpose

The primary purpose of the TxICC is to oversee public safety communications interoperability in Texas and the preliminary development, ongoing review, and implementation of the Texas Statewide Communications Interoperability Plan (SCIP).

The TxICC, previously known as the Texas Radio Coalition, is a voluntary association of Federal, State, local, Tribal, and non-profit entities including government, first responders, emergency management, critical infrastructure security, public utility, and transportation agencies. Representatives from these agencies have come together in a cooperative effort to plan, develop, and secure funding for a statewide wireless interoperable public safety communications system, comprising existing and future local and regional wireless communications systems that remains under local control.

To achieve this goal, the TxICC partners with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to align with SAFECOM guidelines and recommendations.

The TxICC establishes a partnership among its member agencies to enhance both voice and data emergency and interoperable communications capabilities statewide. The TxICC provides a vendor neutral forum to discuss any public safety communication initiative that may impact the agencies represented by the coalition and to help ensure that local and regional projects have an opportunity to align with the State plan. The TxICC is a voluntary committee and not subject to the Open Meetings Act of Texas Government Code 551.

Long term, the coalition will oversee expansion, interconnectivity, shared use, and interoperability user training of land mobile radio systems, and public safety broadband applications.

Section 3: Authority

A. The TxICC is recognized as the governance body for the Texas SCIP. Responsibility will include, but not be limited to, making official recommendations to the Governor of Texas and the Director, Texas Department of Public Safety concerning public safety communications interoperability, technology, training, exercises, standard operating procedures, implementation, and funding.

The Texas Interoperable Communications Coalition is a member of the Governor's First Responder Advisory Council represented by the SWIC and Deputy SWIC and thus designated to advise the Governor's Office on relevant communications interoperability issues. TxICC has the authority to:

1. Evaluate the state of current and emerging communications interoperability capabilities across the State of Texas.
2. Create and update a plan for statewide emergency and interoperable public safety communications.
3. Make recommendations to Executive Leadership regarding implementation of the plan.
4. Make recommendations to Executive Leadership as to appropriate policies, procedures, and guidelines related to public safety emergency and interoperable communications.

B. As directed, the TxICC or its designated representative(s) will review emergency and interoperable communications policies and plans and advise Executive Leadership as to their viability and compliance with the SCIP.

C. TxICC will make recommendations to help direct the use of funds allocated for capital improvements and operational upgrades to improve statewide public safety emergency and interoperable communications.

D. TxICC will work to identify and leverage sources of funding allotted through cross-discipline and cross-jurisdictional coordination.

Section 4: Objectives

The TxICC through the SWIC Office oversees the following tasks:
A. Conduct annual Regional Focus Group Sessions to better understand the current state of emergency and interoperable communications in the State of Texas.
B. Assign advisory groups to identify and recommend current and future technologies that will enhance emergency and interoperable communications capabilities in the State of Texas.
C. Create and update priorities for the Texas Statewide Communications Interoperability Plan (SCIP).
D. Assist and advise Executive Leadership regarding management and implementation of the SCIP.
E. Assist and advise Executive Leadership with the creation of statewide best practices, policies, and procedures for emergency and interoperable communications to be incorporated into existing regional Councils of Governments (COG) interoperability plans.
F. Assist and advise Executive Leadership to ensure that training programs on emergency and interoperable communications are created and made available to all authorized public safety practitioners.

Section 5: Scope

A. The TxICC in coordination with the SWIC Office may:

1. Ensure that local and Regional Interoperable Communications Plans (RICP) align with the SCIP
2. Work with Federal, State, and local agencies to avoid duplication of effort, including coordination of procurement decisions.
3. Coordinate with various regional and multi-regional organizations including tribal councils, COG's, and FCC-designated regional planning and review committees and keep these organizations updated on the TxICC's activities.
4. Address tribal councils and regional non-governmental organizations, that are not directly funded by DHS grants, and identify ways to coordinate activities through sharing of resources or technologies.

5. Educate public officials to increase awareness and ensure success of emergency and interoperable communications initiatives.

B. Inclusion: This effort will include all public and not-for-profit emergency response and first responder organizations in the State of Texas.

C. Level: This effort will address all levels of communication as defined in National Incident Management System (NIMS) guidelines.

D. Function: This effort will address technological and operational components of emergency and interoperable communications. "Technological" means systems design, equipment procurement, and maintenance of both voice and data systems. "Operational" means authorization, SOP's, incident command, and training.

E. Communication Type: The TxICC will provide guidance to all public safety and critical infrastructure responders at all levels of government regarding effective and efficient use of public safety emergency communications systems.

F. Usage: This effort will address the following levels of interoperability, emergency, and mutual aid communications:
    1. Day-to-day: Routine within a jurisdiction (inter-disciplinary).
    2. Day-to-day: Routine inter-jurisdictional (mutual aid).
    3. Planned major event: Inter-disciplinary, inter-jurisdictional.
    4. Unplanned critical incident: Inter-disciplinary, inter-jurisdictional.

Section 6: Guiding Principles

The TxICC will:
A. Recognize and respect each region's unique needs and attempt to address them if they negatively affect statewide communication interoperability capabilities.
B. Use a phased approach and not attempt to solve all problems at once.
C. Identify matters within the TxICC's control and apply resources toward those matters rather than areas that are not within the TxICC's control.
D. Work to coordinate regional and local strategies with the statewide strategy.
E. Work to identify and maintain a balance between infrastructure and subscriber unit needs.
F. Ensure the State takes a collaborative approach toward improving public safety emergency and interoperable communications.
G. Speak with one voice when reporting externally.
H. Maintain the sense of urgency that 9/11 brought to this issue.
I. Work with Executive Leadership to keep the issue of communications interoperability in front of politicians as they are elected and administrations change.
J. Work toward achieving and sustaining voice and data emergency communications and interoperability solutions across Texas

Section 7: Membership and Governance

A. Membership

Membership in the TxICC is open to all Federal, State, local, tribal, and non-profit entities including government, first responders, emergency management, critical infrastructure security, public utility, and transportation agencies. Government and not-for-profit wireless communication system owners/operators, as well as all agencies that rely on public safety-allocated radio frequencies for

primary emergency communication, are encouraged to join the TxICC. For a current membership list, please contact the Statewide Interoperability Coordinator's (SWIC) office at TXSWIC@dps.texas.gov.
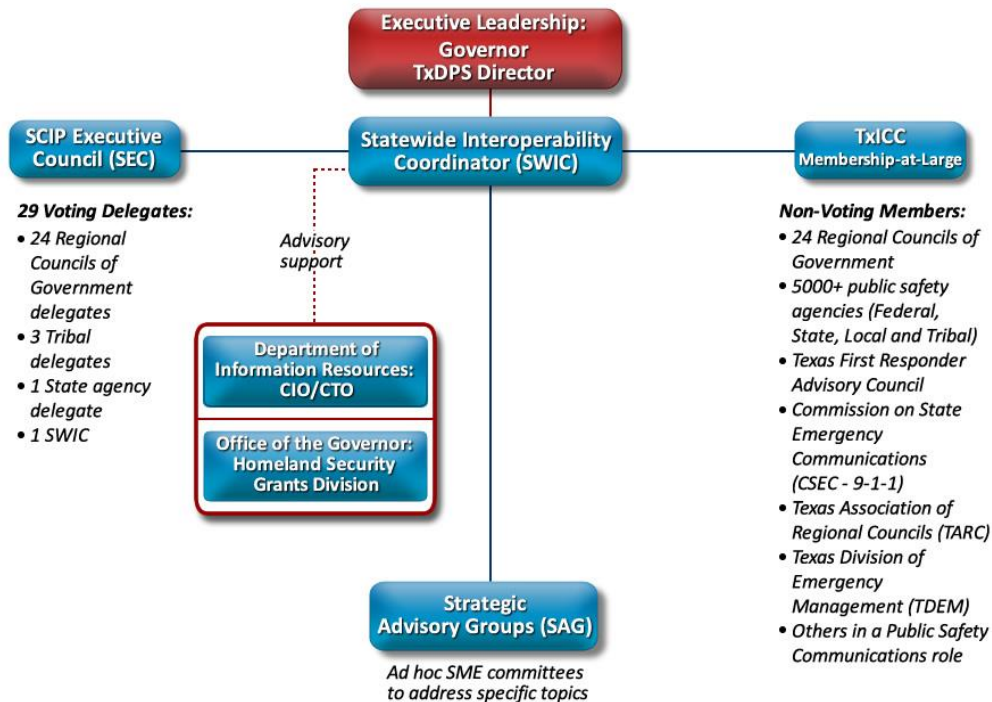
B. Governance

Texas interoperable communications plans, and governance are developed and maintained by TxICC stakeholders representing public safety agencies and non-governmental emergency response entities. The SWIC provides oversight and leadership to the TxICC. Final authorization of SCIP planning, policies, and funding distribution is confirmed by the TxICC Executive Leadership (TxDPS Director and the Texas Governor's Office). The organizational chart on the left illustrates support from the Governor's Office down to the local level through participation in the TxICC.

The TxICC provides guidance for land mobile radio, public safety broadband applications, and monitors Alerts and Warnings, and Next Generation 9-1-1 activities as they relate to public safety communications.

The TxICC governance structure consists of:
- The Texas SWIC
- The TxICC SCIP Executive Council (SEC)
- The TxICC Membership-at-Large
- The TxICC Strategic Advisory Groups (SAGs)

The following graphic illustrates the dynamics and relationship of each TxICC group.

TxICC Governance Groups, Roles and Responsibilities:

1. The SWIC
   - The SWIC is appointed by the Director, Texas Department of Public Safety
   - The SWIC passes recommendations on interoperable communications to the State Executive Leadership.
   - The SWIC chairs the TxICC and the SEC.
   - The SWIC is given the authority by the State and TxICC to convene Strategic Advisory Groups on matters of interoperability as needed.
   - The SWIC is responsible for the publication or reporting of TxICC documents
   - The Deputy SWIC will serve as the alternate for the SWIC

2. The TxICC Membership-at-Large
   Membership-at-Large includes personnel from the following:
   - 24 Regional Councils of Government
   - 5000+ public safety agencies (Federal, State, Local and Tribal)
   - Texas First Responder Advisory Council
   - Commission on State Emergency Communications (CSEC – 9-1-1)
   - Texas Association of Regional Councils (TARC)
   - Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM)
   - Others in a public safety communications role

   Membership-at-Large participates in the following activities:
   - Build collaborative relationships at the Federal, State, and local levels.
   - Leverage resources where appropriate.
   - Participates in COG Focus Group meetings, and selection of SEC Delegates
   - Review and recommend goals and objectives to the SEC.
   - Review and recommend short- and long-range plans to the SEC.
   - Recommend adoption and modification of operating policies and procedures to the SEC.
   - Communicate with communities to build support for statewide communications emergency response and interoperability efforts.

3. The SCIP Executive Council (SEC)
   - Consists of 29 voting delegates (one per COG, one per Tribal Nation, one for the combined State Agencies and the SWIC).
   - SCIP Executive Council Eligibility Requirements
   - Active participation in the TxICC.
   - Appropriate knowledge of communications equipment, systems, and procedures.
   - Provide guidance on emerging technologies and the integration into public safety
   - Appropriate knowledge of public safety broadband applications
   - Provide appropriate alternate if unable to participate in an event.
   - The SEC delegates will be appointed for two-year terms by the applicable COG, State Agencies or Tribal organizations during annual Focus Group Sessions. [Recommendation: elect one primary delegate and a minimum of two alternates to ensure the entity is represented for all voting occurrences.]
   - The SEC will meet annually at the SCIP Conference and additionally as needed via in-person or virtual meetings.
   - The SEC by vote, confirms, approves, and/or modifies decisions (e.g., prioritized gaps) and reports developed by the TxICC, for example the SCIP, TSICP and TxICC Charter

4. Strategic Advisory Groups (SAGs)
- Consist of an undetermined number of subject matter experts (SME) assembled to research and provide advice to the TxICC on a communications issue:
  - SAG appointments are temporary.
  - SMEs must have expert knowledge in specified communications technology, funding, project management, policies, and procedures, and/or field administration.
  - SAG membership will be dependent upon the expertise required to solve a problem and/or address the assignment.
  - SAG SMEs may differ in number and talent depending upon the assignment.
  - If the TxICC membership-at-large does not have the talent needed for the assignment, the SWIC may identify a specialist to work with the SAG.
  - SAGs develop final work products or reports as needed to present to the SEC.

Section 8: Decision Making

Officers and Agents:
- The officers of the TxICC are the SWIC, as chairman, and the Deputy SWIC, as vice-chairman.
- The SWIC is the chief executive officer of the TxICC and shall have general charge and supervision of the affairs of the TxICC. The chairman shall preside at all meetings of the TxICC.
- The Deputy SWIC will temporarily assume the duties of the chairman if for any reason the chairman is absent from, or otherwise unable to serve at any TxICC meeting.
- The DPS Executive Leadership provides final authorization of SWIC and TxICC activities.

A. TxICC Decision Making Process — Governance Voting Structure

Action by Vote: Each voting delegate shall have one vote.
Voting: Total = 29 votes
1. Voting members will consist of:
   a) 28 SEC votes [one for each COG delegate (24), one vote for each tribal nation (3), one vote for the combined State agencies (1)]
   b) 1 SWIC vote
2. SEC members present in-person or virtually at any TxICC meeting represent a quorum.
3. SEC members may appoint a proxy to vote on their behalf by email to the Texas SWIC prior to any meeting.
4. Consensus: As an advisory body to the TxICC Executive Leadership, the TxICC SEC will strive for consensus on all decisions and recommendations. When consensus is not possible, recommendations will be based on approval by a simple majority of those present at any TxICC-SEC meeting. As much as possible, the consensus opinion will be reflected.
5. TxICC members are free to express to the TxICC SEC how they stand on any matter.

B. TxICC SEC members will be held accountable through their authorizing body or office. The authorizing body or office has the final decision on all matters related to committee participation.

C. Decisions and recommendations of the TxICC SEC will be reported to the DPS Executive Leadership through the SWIC.

D. The TxICC Membership-at-Large will report status, actions, and recommendations through the annual Focus Group Survey, routinely scheduled electronic meetings, and during the annual SCIP Conference.

Section 9: Logistics

A. Conference/Annual Meetings. The TxICC will host a SCIP Strategic Planning Conference each year either in-person or virtually. Unless otherwise advised, this conference will take place in Austin, Texas at a schedule determined by the SWIC.
B. The TxICC SEC will meet in-person or virtually not less than once each year on a date to be determined.
C. Special Meetings. Special meetings of the complete TxICC membership or any subset groups may be held at any time and at any place within the State in-person or virtually. Special meetings of the members may be called by the SWIC, Deputy SWIC, or Executive Leadership.
D. Call and Notice.
    • Meetings may be in-person, virtual, or a combination.
    • To maintain vendor neutrality, meetings are open only to the TxICC Membership-at-Large. Vendors, contractors, and consultants may be invited to present on certain topics but may not attend the meeting as a whole.
    • Except as otherwise expressly provided, it shall be reasonable and sufficient to notify members by email at least ten (10) business days before any meeting, addressed to each member at his or her usual or last known email address, or, to give notice to a member in person or by telephone at least ten (10) business days before the meeting. Such notice must specify the purposes of the meeting.
    • TxICC meetings are open to all Federal, State, local, tribal, and non-profit entities including government, first responders, emergency management, critical infrastructure security, public utility, and transportation agencies. Government and not-for-profit wireless communication system owners/operators, as well as all agencies that rely on public safety-allocated radio frequencies for primary emergency communication.
    • An open forum environment is provided for anyone to express a viewpoint or to have input into the TxICC governance process.