

## *Homeland Security Update...*



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### **DHS Issues Interoperability Requirements for First Responders**

During emergencies, first responders need to be able to communicate with one another reliably. Unfortunately, differences in technology and communication systems sometimes prevent this – causing confusion and costing time as public safety personnel work to save lives.

On April 26, 2004, the Department of Homeland Security's Science and Technology Directorate released the first document providing base level interoperability requirements for public safety communications systems. This "Statement of Requirements" marks the first time that public safety agencies have received a document outlining interoperability communications requirements.

The Committee commends the work of Homeland Security Department and the S&T Directorate in establishing these important interoperability benchmarks for our nation's first responders. As we saw on 9/11, it is essential that our public safety personnel on the front lines – our policemen, firemen, and emergency medical workers – be able to communicate with one another during emergencies. By providing requirements for how technology should function in the field, DHS and the S&T Directorate are further enabling first responders to save lives and protect themselves during a terrorist attack.

This effort by the Department complements our Committee's overall effort to establish preparedness guidelines for first responders. H.R. 3266, The Faster and Smarter Funding for First Responders Act, directs the Secretary of Homeland Security to define clear terrorism preparedness goals for our states and localities. Like interoperability requirements, those essential capabilities will help state and local governments train and equip their first responders to better prevent, prepare for, and respond to a terrorist attack.

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