

# SAFECOM Governance

## Operating Processes and Procedures

Adopted March 27, 2024

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Intended as supplemental to the *SAFECOM Governance Charter*, this *SAFECOM Governance Operating Processes and Procedures* document provides information about SAFECOM’s goals and objectives, and how SAFECOM conducts administrative tasks, such as election processes and product approval procedures.

### 1. SAFECOM GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

SAFECOM developed the following goals and objectives<sup>1</sup> in support of its mission to improve public safety communications operability, interoperability, and security across all levels of government:

***Goal 1 - Maintain awareness of emerging communications technologies, issues, and needs that affect the public safety community***

**Objective 1.1.** Seek and collect information on emerging technologies, issues, and needs, including those from performance metrics of previously-disseminated guidance

**Objective 1.2.** Determine need for action by supporting forums for discussion, decision making, and recommendation

***Goal 2 - Collaborate across the public safety community to develop consensus-based guidance for emerging communications technologies, issues, and needs***

**Objective 2.1.** Utilize SAFECOM governance structure (i.e., committees, working groups, task forces) to develop work product approval process to develop guidance

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<sup>1</sup> Goals are the outcome intended to be achieved, while objectives are the actions that will help achieve those goals.

**Objective 2.2.** Coordinate with relevant entities in an effort to reduce duplication

**Goal 3 - Disseminate public safety communications guidance to stakeholders**

**Objective 3.1.** Publicize guidance through SAFECOM’s and partner organization’s distribution methods

**Objective 3.2.** Advocate for targeted distribution of guidance through coordination with partner organizations

**2. COMMITTEE STRUCTURE**

Each of SAFECOM’s standing committees has a chair who is assisted by a vice chair. Both the committee chair and vice chair are elected by the committee members. SAFECOM members, including alternates, are expected to participate on one (1) primary committee via teleconference and at in-person meetings throughout the year. While members may participate on more than one committee, travel may only be provided for the committee designated as the primary. A limit or “cap” on the total number of members assigned to any one committee may be instituted, determined by an equal percentage of the entire SAFECOM body at the discretion of the SAFECOM Chair to encourage equitable size and disciplinary composition across the committees. This cap refers only to primary committee designations; members may continue to choose to participate on additional committees, understanding that funding for travel may be limited.

**2.1 Education and Outreach Committee**

The Education and Outreach Committee promotes SAFECOM and its impact on public safety communications nationwide. The Committee leads SAFECOM’s communications efforts with member and non-member organizations to best communicate SAFECOM’s mission, goals, and priorities.

**2.2 Governance Committee**

The Governance Committee concentrates on improving both internal governance structures and processes for SAFECOM as well as external state, local, tribal, and territorial (SLTT) community governance bodies for public safety communications. The Governance Committee oversees management of SAFECOM’s membership and develops programmatic resources, such as SAFECOM’s *Governance Charter*. Additionally, the Governance Committee maintains and administers the Marilyn J. Praisner SAFECOM Leadership Award and oversees the Cybersecurity Working Group.

**2.3 Funding and Sustainment Committee**

The Funding and Sustainment Committee, operated jointly with the National Council of Statewide Interoperability Coordinators (NCSWIC), concentrates on identifying innovative ways to fund and sustain emergency communications systems and activities (i.e., training, personnel, etc.) pertinent to stakeholders at SLTT levels. The Committee also prepares and disseminates information on appropriations and new funding sources available to the public safety community at all levels of government.

**2.4 Technology Policy Committee**

The Technology Policy Committee, operated jointly with NCSWIC, promotes the use of technologies, resources, and processes related to emergency communications and interoperability. The Committee continues to support land mobile radio systems, promote broadband technology and deployment, and work with federal partners to further various technologies within the emergency communications

ecosystem—Identity, Credential, and Access Management, Next Generation 911, alerts and warnings, and cybersecurity.

### 3. MEETING PARTICIPATION GUIDELINES

One member of each association shall attend all SAFECOM meetings. Both primary and alternate members may, but are not required to, attend all meetings; however, the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) will fund the attendance of either the primary or alternate association member and all at-large members at in-person SAFECOM meetings, and, if the member serves on the Executive Board, all Board meetings. Associations may elect to fund the additional attendance of the alternate member at any SAFECOM meeting.

All SAFECOM members’ meeting attendance and participation will be reviewed by the Governance Committee as a basis to keep membership up to date. Attendance audits will be used to track and inform at-risk members on an as-needed basis. Participation in SAFECOM will be re-evaluated if a member has **two** (2) unexplained absences in a row for: in-person or virtual committee meetings in which the committee member is designated as primary; or the bi-annual in-person meetings. In such an event, CISA shall:

1. Inform the Governance Committee and Executive Board of the situation
2. Contact at-risk member directly and inquire as to status of membership
3. If applicable, alert the representative’s association that the designated representative has not attended meetings and provide the association with an opportunity to appoint another representative
4. Evaluate representation based on the association’s response
5. Engage SAFECOM Senior Leadership (i.e., SAFECOM Chair or Vice Chairs) to engage directly with the at-risk member to assess status of participation

#### 3.1 Membership Dormant Status

Associations identified as at-risk, or without active representation, have the option to be listed in a “dormant” status, with their status re-evaluated on a six-month basis. Dormant associations will remain on the SAFECOM website, to show SAFECOM’s intent to be inclusive. Associations may only remain dormant for a maximum of two years before their SAFECOM membership is revoked.

### 4. SAFECOM PRODUCT APPROVAL PROCESS

In 2019, SAFECOM developed an updated product approval process to allow all SAFECOM members, regardless of their primary committee, to review and provide feedback on products prior to final approval by the SAFECOM Executive Board. Development of a product can be initiated in two ways: 1) a product is assigned to a committee by the SAFECOM Executive Board, or 2) a product is initiated in a committee and is approved by the Board, as depicted in *Figure 1*.

After the committee develops and releases the draft product, it is delivered to the full SAFECOM membership for a ten (10) calendar day independent review. SAFECOM membership will either provide comment to approve the product or send the product back to the committee for further development. To ensure products do not linger awaiting full membership approval, silence will be considered consent. Once a SAFECOM product receives Executive Board approval, CISA will review the product prior to publication. Products developed jointly with NCSWIC will also require NCSWIC’s Executive Committee approval prior to submission into CISA review, as depicted in *Figure 2*. The

Executive Board has the authority to override parliamentary processes, and deviate from normal committee approval processes with specific reason, with a super majority approval by Executive Board Members.

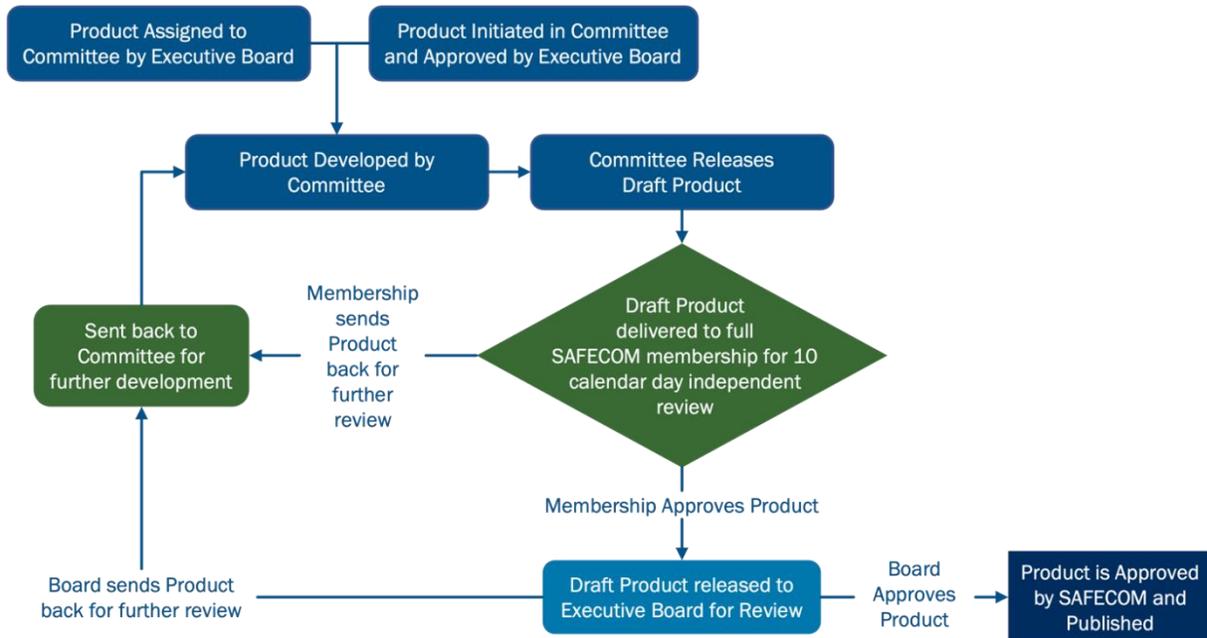


Figure 1: SAFECOM Work Product Approval Process

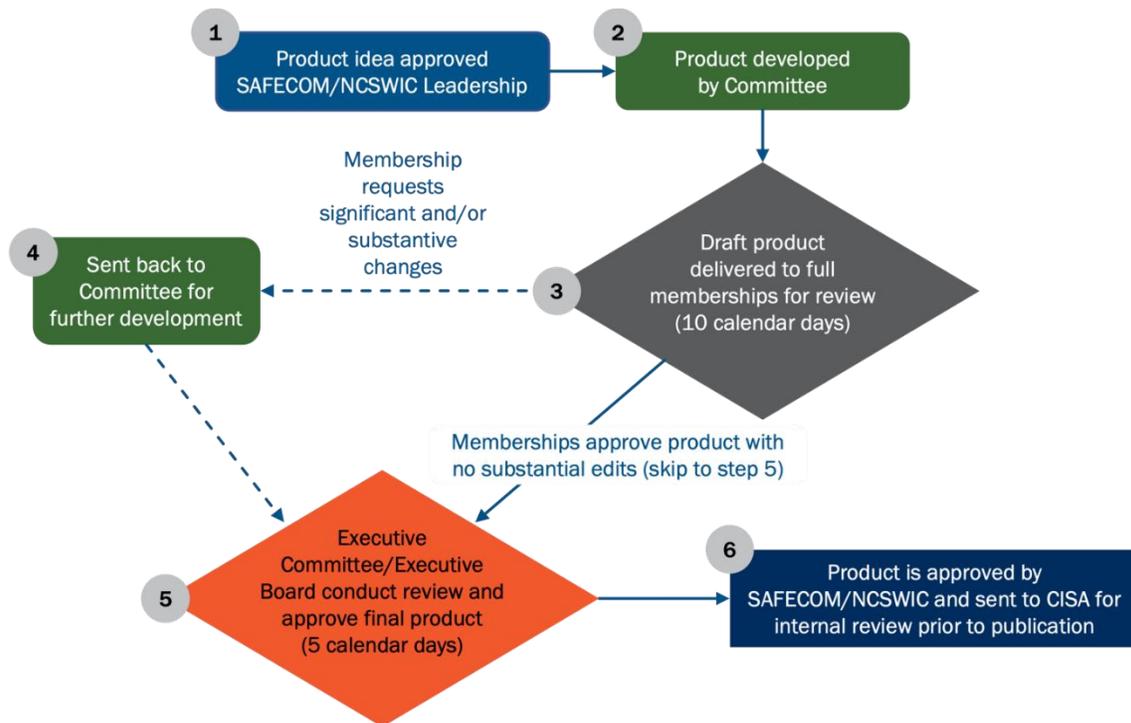


Figure 2: Joint SAFECOM-NCSWIC Work Product Approval Process

## 5. VOTING PROCEDURES

A quorum of fifty percent plus one member of the voting-eligible associations, NCSWIC representatives, and at-large members must be present for purposes of conducting business. Upon establishing the meeting quorum, the SAFECOM Chair will state the number of votes needed to carry a motion. Each association, NCSWIC representative,<sup>2</sup> and at-large member will have one formal vote. An association or NCSWIC's alternate representative can contribute if the primary is not in attendance; however, an alternate may vote only in the absence of the primary association or NCSWIC's representative.

Members may abstain from voting on any issue after they inform the SAFECOM Chair of the reason. Members may also give another member permission to serve as a proxy on any vote. In the event of a tie vote, the SAFECOM Chair will flip a coin to determine the final result of the vote.

## 6. ELECTION PROCEDURES

The following section outlines the procedures to elect the SAFECOM Executive Board, including the SAFECOM Chair and Vice Chair(s), committee chairs and vice chairs, and Board Members, as well as succession planning.

### 6.1 Election of SAFECOM Chair and Vice Chair(s)

The SAFECOM Chair and Vice Chair(s) are elected from the full SAFECOM membership by a vote of the entire SAFECOM membership. Members of NCSWIC are not eligible to hold these positions. SAFECOM members are required to attend at least two bi-annual meetings to be eligible for leadership positions. Members of SAFECOM will vote to elect the Chair and Vice Chairs by secret ballot, in accordance with the voting procedures outlined in Section 5. The elections occur on a staggered, two-year term cycle during the fall/winter in-person SAFECOM meeting to provide overlap and continuity (i.e., on even years the Chair and the Second Vice Chair are elected and on odd years the First Vice Chair is elected).<sup>3</sup>

CISA will solicit nominations for the SAFECOM Chair and Vice Chair positions from the entire SAFECOM membership. Nominees for Chair and Vice Chair positions may be self-nominated or nominated by another SAFECOM member. Nominations are submitted by the interested party along with a brief biography and statement of interest in the Chair and/or Vice Chair position. There is no limit to the number of terms that the Chair or Vice Chair may serve.

### 6.2 Election of Committee Chairs and Vice Chairs

SAFECOM committee chairs and vice chairs are elected by the members of that committee for two-year terms on a rotational basis by electronic submission prior to the fall/winter meeting.

- Members of the Education and Outreach Committee and the Funding and Sustainment Committee will elect chairs and vice chairs on odd-numbered years
- Members of the Governance Committee and Technology Policy Committee will elect chairs and vice chairs on even-numbered years

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<sup>2</sup> The NCSWIC primary and alternate serve as representatives of NCSWIC and hold one vote; the two SWIC At-Large positions each hold their own vote, for a total of three SWIC votes on matters pertaining to SAFECOM elections and committee/working group/task force business.

<sup>3</sup> If the member resigns from the First Vice Chair role, the "Second" will assume the title of "First" Vice Chair, and a second Vice Chair will be elected by SAFECOM membership. In the event that both Vice Chairs resign at the same time, SAFECOM membership will vote for the "First" and "Second" Vice Chair positions.

Nominees may be self-nominated or nominated by members of that committee. Nominees may provide the committee with a brief biography and statement of interest in the chair or vice chair positions. SAFECOM members are required to attend at least two bi-annual meetings to be eligible for leadership positions. There are no limits to the number of consecutive terms committee chairs and vice chairs may hold.

### **6.3 Election of Board Members on the SAFECOM Executive Board**

In addition to the SAFECOM Chair, Vice Chairs, and four committee chairs, four additional members will be elected to the Executive Board by a vote of the entire SAFECOM membership by electronic submission prior to the fall/winter meeting. Nominees may be self-nominated or nominated by other SAFECOM members. Members of NCSWIC are not eligible to hold these positions.

Board Members serve two-year terms. Elections occur on a staggered, two-year term cycle to provide overlap and continuity (i.e., on even years, two members are elected, and on odd years, the other two members are elected). SAFECOM members are required to attend at least two bi-annual meetings to be eligible for leadership positions. There are no term limits for this position.

### **6.4 Leadership Succession Planning**

In the event a member in a leadership position must step down, the following may occur:

1. *Special Election.* If the general election (held during the fall/winter in-person SAFECOM meeting) is more than 90 days away from the date the seat was vacated, a special election may be held to elect a succeeding chair/vice chair/Board Member.
2. *Acting Responsibilities.* If the general election is less than 90 days away from the date the seat was vacated, the First Vice Chair (in the case of the SAFECOM Chair) or the committee vice chair (in the case of a committee chair) will assume responsibility for the roles of the chair.

### **6.5 SAFECOM Election Implementation Timeline**

The Governance Committee will develop an appropriate timeline based on election needs for the particular year and submit the timeline for Executive Board approval. Generally, elections for leadership will commence in August/September and conclude with the fall/winter in-person SAFECOM meeting. SAFECOM is notified of vacant positions and winners are announced via electronic notification.

## **7. SAFECOM MEMBERSHIP SELECTION PROCESS**

### **7.1 Membership Selection Steps**

SAFECOM, through the Governance Committee, utilizes the following process to select new association and at-large membership on an annual basis:

1. Governance Committee re-examines SAFECOM composition to identify membership gaps<sup>4</sup>
2. Governance Committee solicits new membership based on gap(s) via written notification to full SAFECOM membership requesting applications and through a marketing campaign
3. Candidates submit appropriate [membership application](#)<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Membership gaps further defined in *Section 7.3: SAFECOM Compositional Attributes*.

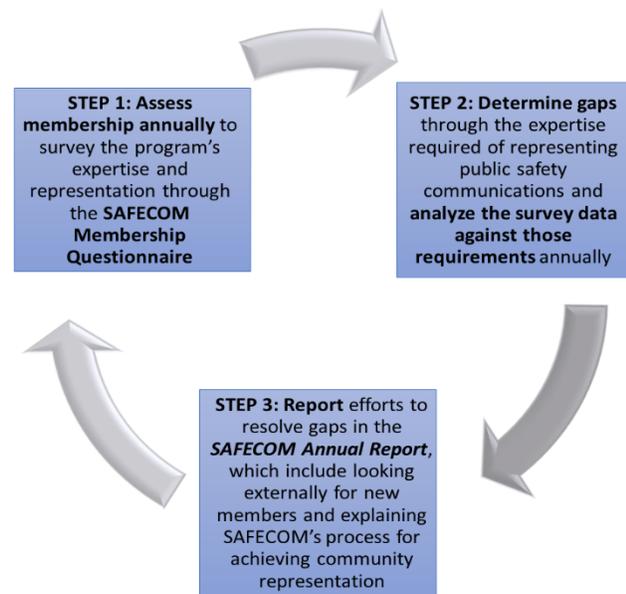
<sup>5</sup> SAFECOM Membership Applications (association and at-large) are available year-round and can be found on the SAFECOM website at <https://www.dhs.gov/safecom/membership>. The Membership Working Group will, on an annual or as needed basis, review the submitted applications and vet applicants through an interview process.

4. Governance Committee adjudicates applications based on membership criteria and current gaps in membership demographics
5. Governance Committee submits recommended candidates to the SAFECOM Executive Board for consideration and approval
6. Upon approval by the Executive Board, Governance Committee delivers “Letter of Membership Offer” to candidates
7. Upon candidate membership acceptance, Governance Committee delivers SAFECOM Welcome Package to new member
8. Applicants who are not selected for SAFECOM membership will receive an electronic “Notice of Response” following the vetting and selection process

## 7.2 Process for Determining SAFECOM Composition Gaps

SAFECOM, through the Governance Committee, utilizes the following process (See *Figure 3*) to identify membership gaps in SAFECOM’s composition on an annual basis:

1. Update SAFECOM membership roster and categorize represented composition and functions (i.e., current state)
2. Perform assessment of individuals/organizations to determine emergency communications community composition and functions (i.e., desired state)
3. Compare assessment results to SAFECOM membership
4. Determine gaps in composition and functions
5. Solicit targeted membership, as need is determined
6. Convey results in a publicly available, standard reporting mechanism, such as the *SAFECOM Annual Report*, at the end of each calendar year



**Figure 3: SAFECOM process for identifying and filling membership gaps and reporting these efforts**

## 7.3 SAFECOM Compositional Attributes

Attributes considered when identifying gaps in membership composition include, but are not limited to:

- Disciplinary specialty representation relevant to the public safety communications community
  - Traditional emergency responder disciplines (e.g., law enforcement, fire and rescue, emergency medical services, emergency communications centers/public safety answering points, emergency management)
  - Other entities that share information during incident response (e.g., medical facilities, utilities, nongovernmental organizations)
- Extent of public safety experience (i.e., years of experience)
- Level of expertise (i.e., manager versus front-line)
- Official designee of a public safety association
- Employed (including volunteer status) or designated by SLTT or regional government

- Serve on a statewide and/or regional interoperability governing body
- Geographic location, to ensure diversity among membership

**7.4 Applicant Vetting**

Following completion of candidate interviews, the Governance Committee will vet the candidates against the membership criteria and identified gaps in membership. Members will coordinate with CISA to identify the quantity of new members that can be added without limiting ongoing efforts and support of current membership. The selected group of applicants will be recommended to the SAFECOM Executive Board for consideration and approval.

**7.5 Letter of Membership Offer/Notice of Response**

Upon approval by the SAFECOM Executive Board, the Governance Committee will deliver an electronic “Letter of Membership Offer” to candidates.

Associations have 45 days from receipt of the SAFECOM membership invitation to electronically accept, and 90 days from receipt of the SAFECOM membership invitation to assign a primary representative and alternate representative (as desired) to serve on SAFECOM by completing the “SAFECOM Association Representative Change Notification Form.” If a representative is not assigned by written notification to CISA within 90 days, CISA and SAFECOM will re-evaluate the membership offer.

At-large members have 30 days from receipt of the SAFECOM membership invitation to electronically accept.

Applicants who are not selected for SAFECOM membership will receive an electronic “Notice of Response” following the vetting and selection process.

**8. PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION**

The Department of Homeland Security’s CISA administers the SAFECOM Program. CISA’s roles and responsibilities include:

- Host regular meetings to solicit the input of SAFECOM’s governance groups in accordance with the mission guided and stakeholder supported philosophy
- Ensure deliverables are of high quality and address SAFECOM’s goals by incorporating stakeholder input and review throughout the deliverable process
- Implement practices to ensure meaningful engagement of the public safety community and keep governance groups aware of SAFECOM issues and activities
- Monitor membership and adjust based on participation rates, discipline diversity, and geographic diversity and ensure the group is constituted in accordance with governmental regulations and practices
- Work with the SAFECOM Chair to develop meeting schedules and agendas
- Help establish working groups, as appropriate
- Assist SAFECOM members in preparing materials, presentations, issue summaries, etc. for SAFECOM-sponsored events
- Design and support meetings, serve as facilitators and consensus builders when appropriate
- Facilitate communications between SAFECOM and the SAFECOM Executive Board members, as appropriate
- Coordinate programs within CISA and with other federal agencies, as appropriate, regarding public safety communications and communications interoperability

## 9. COSTS

CISA will fund the support and travel of SLTT stakeholders and association representatives subject to the availability of funding. Costs of participating in SAFECOM for federal members will be borne by each member. CISA will make every effort possible to minimize travel and related expenses.

## 10. ADDITIONAL POLICIES

This *SAFECOM Governance Operating Processes and Procedures* document is subject to review by CISA and the SAFECOM Executive Board on an as needed basis.