

# Spring 2024 National Council of Statewide Interoperability Coordinators Bi-Annual Meeting Executive Summary | June 5-6, 2024

The Battle House Renaissance Hotel Mobile | Mobile, Alabama

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## Welcome and Meeting Overview

**Speakers:** Brad Stoddard, *Michigan Statewide Interoperability Coordinator (SWIC), National Council of Statewide Interoperability Coordinators (NCSWIC) Chair*  
 Karla Jurrens, *Texas SWIC, NCSWIC Vice-Chair*  
 Vince DeLaurentis, *Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) Emergency Communications Division (ECD) Deputy Executive Assistant Director*  
 Boyden Rohner, *CISA Integrated Operations Division (IOD), Deputy Assistant Director*

**Session Description:** NCSWIC members were welcomed to Mobile, Alabama, for the June 2024 NCSWIC Bi-Annual Meeting. Members received opening remarks from NCSWIC and CISA ECD Leadership.

### Key Outcomes:

- NCSWIC Leadership discussed how important the relationships are between Statewide Interoperability Coordinators (SWICs) and their peers to help solve challenges in their regions.
- NCSWIC previewed the [SWIC Video Series](#) that will be available to share throughout the emergency communications community.
- CISA Leadership provided an overview of IOD’s structure and capabilities with a special emphasis on CISA regions’ capabilities, including the introduction of the Emergency Communications Coordinators to the CISA Regions.

## Regional Interoperability Council Table Discussions

**Session Description:** SWICs received updates on the Mission Critical Push-to-Talk (MCPTT) broadband talk group naming from the First Responder Network (FirstNet)



Figure 1: View the SWIC Video Series at [youtube.com/@CISAgov/videos](https://youtube.com/@CISAgov/videos)

Authority's Jacque Miller-Waring. SWICs then broke out into regions to discuss issues that were the most pressing within their states, including World Cup emergency communications planning activities.



Figure 2: NCSWIC Members, June 2024

#### Key Outcomes:

- SWICs felt more discussion is needed with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) on the new rules for the 4.9 gigahertz (GHz) frequency band.
- Some regions are using PTT Long Term Evolution (LTE) for personnel in administrative roles to allow for Land Mobile Radio (LMR) devices to be returned to front-line officers. This is also done to eliminate costs from budgets involving LMR radios.
- Some SWICs are becoming more involved in World Cup activities, as some non-host states will be used as base stations for teams outside of their games in the 11 host cities.

**Action Item:** NCSWIC, together with SAFECOM and the FirstNet Authority, is reestablishing the MCPTT Working Group and solicited participation. SWICs interested in participating in the MCPTT Working Group should email [NCSWICGovernance@cisa.dhs.gov](mailto:NCSWICGovernance@cisa.dhs.gov)

## SWATing and Emergency Communications

**Speakers:** Chris Maiers, *Region 7 Emergency Communications Coordinator (ECC)*  
Haley Nichols, *Iowa SWIC*

**Session Description:** Panelists discussed swatting and provided use cases and best practices for how to respond to these incidents.

#### Key Outcomes:

- Ms. Nichols shared a recently developed poster that Iowa plans to share as a resource for Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) to use when responding to swatting incidents. This resource provides state contact information, questions to include in the call-taking process, and best practices for coordinating with law enforcement partners during an incident.
- Panelists shared examples of swatting incidents, including cloning PSAP phone numbers and calling police stations to report fictitious violent crimes. NCSWIC members asked for guidance on how to respond to these incidents. The primary guidance given was for PSAPs to share information with other centers to mitigate swatting attempts.
- Mr. Maiers also shared another real-world example of a hoax call that PSAPs/ECCs have experienced. In this hoax, PSAPs receive a call from what appears to be another PSAP, or two PSAPs are patched together in a group call, which can lead to confusion by the telecommunicators. A request was given for these calls to be shared with NCSWIC members for training purposes.

## Encrypted Storage Location Number Assignment Coordination

**Speakers:** Hermina "Nina" Koshinski, *Pennsylvania State Police, Statewide Radio Network Division*

Scott Wright, *State of Connecticut Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, Connecticut Deputy SWIC*

David Moore, *National Law Enforcement Communications Center (NLECC)*

Michael Baltrosky, *Assistant Chief - Technology Section Chief/CIO at Montgomery County (MD) Fire & Rescue*

Wes Rogers, *CISA*

**Session Description:** Panelists discussed efforts to coordinate assignment of Storage Location Numbers (SLN).

**Key Outcomes:**

- Ms. Koshinski discussed two critical incidents in 2023 in which communications were critical to a successful outcome with federal partners. The 700 Mhz Air-Ground solution designed by Pennsylvania has been adopted in other Northeastern states and can be adopted nationwide.
- The key management facility (KMF) allows for the centralized distribution of key material. Transferring keys between Key Fill Devices can unintentionally introduce errors, which can then be compounded in security risks.
- Training personnel on the use of encryption allows users to be better prepared for issues regarding LMR encryption or know the subject matter expert available to remedy an issue.
- Panelists requested that CISA lead working groups that can collaborate to set standards on best practices to include passwords and field devices.

**Action Items:**

- Panelists emphasized the importance of using the Advanced Encryption Standard-256 and encouraged members to completely phase out the use of Data Encryption Standard that has not been approved by National Institute of Standards and Technology since 2005 and is highly vulnerable to intrusion.
- Members will continue to develop documents that discuss why encryption is important and who the best contacts are for encryption-related questions through CISA lead working groups.

### Technical Assistance Regional and National Prioritization Process

**Speakers:** Brad Stoddard, *NCSWIC Chair, Michigan SWIC*

Karla Jurens, *NCSWIC Vice-Chair, Texas SWIC*

Mike Rits, *Associate Director, National Interoperability Services (NIS), CISA, ECD*

**Session Description:** Open discussion with ECD on the current and future technical assistance (TA) process. The group participated in brainstorming regional TA priorities and the benefits of working across states to identify TA synergies. The regions ranked the five most popular TAs and engaged in a discussion with NCSWIC leadership about the results.

**Key Outcomes:**

- ECD and NCSWIC leadership discussed the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 TA Prioritization Process and discussed state specific and regional TA priorities.
- ECD leadership reviewed the timeline for the TA Request and Delivery Cycle with SWICs. ECD leadership acknowledged that some TAs would need to be reapplied for that will not meet the new deadline proposed.
- SWICs identified Information Communications Technology (ICT), Interstate Interoperability, Communications Exercises (COMX), and Train-the-Trainer courses as their top TA regional priorities.

**Action Items:**

- ECCs, ECD, and NCSWIC leadership will review the top priorities from the SWICs.
- ECD Leadership plans to finalize the FY 2025 TA Prioritization Process.

### What is Interoperability and How to Explain it to Decision Makers

**Speaker:** Rodney Reed, Harris County, Texas, Fire Marshall's Office

**Session Description:** Members learned about best practices for conveying the importance of interoperability and emergency communications to budget decision-makers.

**Key Outcomes:**

- Interoperability involves more than just funding; it also includes the building of communication frameworks, and the complex technology needs of the agencies. To fully become interoperable, collaboration between all agency levels is important.
- Interoperability is not a technology problem, but a people problem. To overcome issues of personalities, politics, and egos Mr. Reed suggested:
  - Put egos in check and focus on real issues.
  - Responders and system owners together drive change.
  - Breakdown silos and implement interoperability every day.
  - Create an understanding that technology will not solve people problems.
- Mr. Reed redefined interoperability as “a process of building and sustaining trust among stakeholders to effectively implement and maintain processes, technologies, training, and usage for exchanging voice and data as needed.”

## Critical Infrastructure and Emergency Communications

**Speaker:** Mary Anne McKown, CISA Support

**Session Description:** Members learned how ECD is building strategic partnerships with critical infrastructure (CI) sectors as part of the National Emergency Communications Plan (NECP) update.

### Key Outcomes:

- As part of the NECP update, ECD is proactively engaging the 16 CI sectors to ensure that there is an understanding that they are members of the Emergency Communications Ecosystem, and can provide resources and innovative items to help solve interoperability problems.
- ECD is modernizing the NECP to streamline it and write it, and its supplemental resources, in such a way that all members of the Ecosystem understand its applicability to them.
- A draft will likely be disseminated this fall for review.



Figure 3: 16 Critical Infrastructure Sectors

**Action Item:** SWICs were encouraged to foster relationships with CI sectors

## Case Study: Artificial Intelligence’s Benefits to Public Safety

**Speakers:** Amidu Kamara, Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Science and Technology Directorate (S&T)  
James Lake, Charleston County Consolidated Emergency Communications Center

**Session Description:** Mr. Lake described the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology in Charleston County, South Carolina Emergency Communication Centers, using use-case examples and providing statistics. Building on Mr. Lake’s presentation, Mr. Kamara outlined DHS S&T’s work with AI technology in emergency response, presenting the United States Coast Guard (USCG) as a use case, with statics and examples.

### Key Outcomes:

- Using AI for non-emergency calls has streamlined Charleston County’s emergency response, allowing dispatchers to focus on true emergencies, filtering out non-emergency calls and duplicate call responses for the same emergency.
- DHS S&T developed an AI technology called Distress Evaluation: Situational Cueing and Monitoring (DE-SCAM), enabling the USCG to more easily distinguish real emergency calls, filtering out scam calls.
- AI systems can improve the accuracy, efficiency, and cost-effectiveness of public safety responses

## Federal Communications Commission Update

**Speaker:** Roberto Mussenden, FCC

**Session Description:** Members received an update from the FCC, including an update on the 4.9 GHz public safety spectrum.

**Key Outcomes:**

- The Commission shared its newest capability: performing wireless cellular network assessments by collecting, analyzing, and providing reports on spectrum usage for both notice and non-notice events.
- The Commission is planning to finalize an agreement under the new General Coordination Agreement (GCA) for FirstNet’s operations along the Canadian border, add air-ground provisions to agreements for 700 megahertz (MHz) and 800 MHz, and look for opportunities to expand the availability of very high frequency (VHF) interoperability channels along the border.
- Members were informed about how to avoid public safety licensing issues by providing an agency or title email instead of a personal email. For assistance, Mr. Mussenden shared licensees, Mr. Mussenden shared licensees can contact the FCC ULS support staff but may also contact an FCC public safety coordinator that will be able to update administrative information or renew a license for a fee.
- Members were informed about the latest updates for 4.9 GHz band rulemaking with the goal of maximizing the potential of the spectrum. These updates include establishing a nationwide band manager, a proposal to collect more specific data on public safety deployments in the band, and technical changes to Part 90 rules to allow licensees to deploy the latest commercially available technology, including 5G, in the band.
- SWICs discussed the impacts of constant and unspecific outage notifications on their PSAPs.

**Action Items:**

- SWICs were requested to remind public safety licensee stakeholders to avoid public safety licensing issues by providing an agency or title email instead of a personal email.
- The [4.9 GHz Ninth Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking](#) seeks comments on specific criteria for protecting public safety licensees operating in the band from harmful interference.
- SWICs were requested to submit a formal report on the negative impact of alert fatigue.

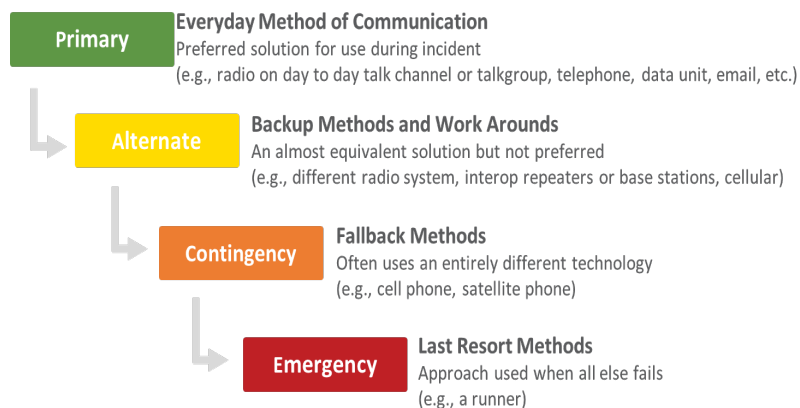
**PACE Planning, Briefing, and Group Discussion**

**Speakers:** Charlie Guddemi, *District of Columbia Statewide Interoperability Coordinator (SWIC)*  
Brandon Smith, *CISA Emergency Communications Coordinators Western Sector Coordinator*  
Greg Hauser, *North Carolina SWIC*

**Session Description:** Panelists discussed the ways in which Primary, Alternate, Contingency, Emergency (PACE) planning can reduce and diversify risk. Members participated in a group discussion about PACE planning.

**Key Outcomes:**

- Speakers emphasized the importance of having a diverse PACE Plan, and to not use “all-in-one” solutions which are really anti-PACE and can fail during a response to a man-made or naturally caused emergency. Agencies should practice their PACE plan often and agency personnel should be well familiarized with it.
- Panelists highlighted the difference between tools and solutions; for example, utilizing LTE and LMR are tools for



**Figure 4:** PACE: Primary, Alternate, Contingency, Emergency Planning

communication, but not a solution or plan for communication.

- Mr. Smith discussed the response needed for a presidential inauguration to show the value in evaluating both physical and cyber vulnerabilities as both can have detrimental effects; an event can have a strong physical security presence and still be taken down by a cyberattack.
- While technology and new products are emerging at a rapid rate, Mr. Guddemi emphasized the value of including, and providing training for, past technologies and protocols (e.g., runners as communicators) as part of the “Emergency” aspect of the PACE plan because it would mean that the Primary, Alternate, and Contingency plans have already failed.

## Closing Remarks

**Speakers:** Brad Stoddard, *Michigan SWIC, NCSWIC Chair*  
Karla Jurrens, *Texas SWIC, NCSWIC Vice-Chair*  
Greg Hauser, *North Carolina SWIC, Incoming Vice-Chair*  
Vince DeLaurentis, *CISA, ECD, Deputy Executive Assistant Director*

**Session Description:** ECD and NCSWIC leadership discussed future opportunities for collaboration, successful meeting topics, and continued relationship building.

## Key Outcomes:

- ECD, NCSWIC, and fellow SWICs wished outgoing Vice-Chair, Karla Jurrens a well-deserved retirement and presented her with a Certificate of Appreciation signed by NCSWIC Chair Brad Stoddard and ECD Executive Assistant Director Billy Bob Brown, Jr.
- ECD, NCSWIC, and fellow SWICs welcomed the incoming Vice-Chair, Greg Hauser, into the position as Ms. Jurrens’ successor.
- The fall NCSWIC Meeting is currently planned for December 9-13, 2024; Location and additional logistics information forthcoming.

**Action Item:** NCSWIC members were encouraged to participate in the [Meeting Feedback Survey](#) as their input in the survey kicks off development for the next bi-annual meeting



**Figure 5:** NCSWIC Chair Brad Stoddard, Outgoing NCSWIC Vice-Chair Karla Jurrens, D/EAD Vince DeLaurentis, and Incoming NCSWIC Vice-Chair Greg Hauser