



## SOUTHWEST BORDER COMMUNICATIONS WORKING GROUP

In 2008, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Office of Emergency Communications (OEC) created the Southwest Border Communications Working Group (SWBCWG). The SWBCWG supports federal, state, local, and tribal (F/S/L/T) agency efforts in the Southwest Border Region—the States of Arizona, California, New Mexico, and Texas—to maintain operable and interoperable public safety communications. This includes support of FirstNet and the envisioned National Public Safety Broadband Network (NPSBN). The SWBCWG aims to enhance the quality of public safety communications operability and interoperability while effectively and collaboratively identifying, documenting, and facilitating the sharing of scarce regional infrastructure resources, capabilities, and services. The SWBCWG's efforts help to ensure success in meeting end users' communications needs while improving coordination between U.S. departments and agencies at all levels of government, as well as cross-border Mexican governmental departments and agencies.

### WORKING GROUP PARTICIPANTS

SWBCWG participants include representatives from F/S/L/T agencies that rely on communications to support critical public safety and border security missions. Participants include stakeholders from various disciplines, including system managers, communications engineers and technicians, spectrum managers, emergency managers and planners, F/S/L/T law enforcement, and fire/Emergency Medical Services officials and practitioners.

### BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATION

The working group provides a forum for, and benefits from, the collective expertise and perspectives of all participants when addressing and discussing public safety communications operability and interoperability issues and engaging solution development. Participants meet in-person multiple times per year on a rotating location basis to share information on current activities and issues within the region. SWBCWG meetings include reports, guidance documents, presentations, and activities generated by the focus/specific issue groups and discussion topics identified by participants.

The SWBCWG also hosts a series of webinars that enable sharing and discussion of technical information, issues, best practices, and lessons learned.

***The vision of the SWBCWG is to improve and support real-time operable and interoperable public safety communications throughout the Southwest Border Region.***

### ADDRESSING UNIQUE SOUTHWEST BORDER COMMUNICATIONS CHALLENGES

The U.S.-Mexico international border region poses unique communications challenges to the public safety community. These challenges include, but are not limited to:

- Effectively utilizing the Cross Border Security Communications Network (CBSCN), a dedicated internet protocol microwave-based system connecting 10 pairs of U.S. and Mexican government communications centers;
- Maintaining up-to-date understanding of regulatory and international treaty issues

and agreements that impact public safety communications, including 800 megahertz (MHz) re-banding, 700 MHz narrowbanding, and broadband developments;

- Recognition of cross border communications interference and resolution mechanisms;
- Establishment of best practices and lessons learned for communications infrastructure and spectrum sharing/partnerships;
- Delineating operational communications challenges, including secure communications in a multi-jurisdictional response environment; and
- Articulating challenges along the Southwest Border related to the development and deployment of the NPSBN.

- Hosting a series of webinars and in-person meetings which focus on participant-identified topics, including those focused on technical, operational, or governance issues;
- Providing guidance on methods to resolve harmful radio interference and delivering information on the Bilateral Interference Resolution Process conducted jointly with Mexico;
- Providing regular updates and information to F/S/L/T agencies on the CBSCN to support the application/use processes;
- Identifying and documenting additional opportunities to utilize the CBSCN for cross border communications; and
- Providing best practices and lessons learned on infrastructure-sharing partnerships among F/S/L/T agencies in relation to the NPSBN planning and development.

## PARTICIPANT STATISTICS

The SWBCWG is a cross cutting, multidisciplinary public safety communications-oriented assemblage of participants that include the following\*:

Federal Departments and Agencies	243 participants from 18 federal agencies
State and Local Agencies	228 participants from 37 state and 78 local agencies
Tribal Nations and Organizations:	18 participants from six Tribal Nations and two organizations

\*Statistics current as of February 2016.

## KEY ACTIVITIES AND INITIATIVES

While SWBCWG participants continue to address gaps in operability and interoperability, much progress is being made in how U.S. agencies and entities communicate along and across the Southwest Border Region. SWBCWG activities in this area include:

- Facilitating relationships among F/S/L/T agencies to better support the personal safety of border public safety personnel through the use of cross-border interoperable communications with Mexico;

## RESOURCES

Several technical and informational resources have been made available on the Web Portal to support SWBCWG participant collaboration. These resources are periodically reviewed and updated to reflect changes in the working group or regional environment. Participants can access these resources on the secure SWBCWG Web Portal hosted on the Homeland Security Information Network (HSIN) at: <https://hsin.dhs.gov/ci/cs/swbcwg/Pages/default.aspx>.

To request access to the HSIN SWBCWG Web Portal, please email [SWBCWG@hq.dhs.gov](mailto:SWBCWG@hq.dhs.gov).



## SWBCWG Web Portal

### FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Please contact [SWBCWG@hq.dhs.gov](mailto:SWBCWG@hq.dhs.gov) or visit [www.dhs.gov](http://www.dhs.gov) (keyword OEC).