

First Responder Resource Group: An Emergency Response and Preparedness Think Tank



Homeland
Security

Science and Technology

FIRST RESPONDERS ARE AT THE CORE OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

The Department of Homeland Security Science and Technology Directorate (S&T) relies on experienced emergency response and preparedness professionals to guide its research and development efforts. The First Responder Resource Group (FRRG) fills that role.

Composed of 140 first responders, the FRRG is an all-volunteer working group that helps S&T maintain focus on the top-priority needs of responders in the field. Members represent a broad range of disciplines (law enforcement, fire service, emergency medical service, emergency management, and more), sectors (local, state, tribal, and federal government), as well as first responder professional associations and geographic regions.

IDENTIFYING CAPABILITY GAPS AND FIELD REQUIREMENTS

The FRRG's primary role is two-fold: (1) identify high-priority capability gaps in the first responder community that S&T development efforts might be able to fill; and (2) define operational requirements that technologies and knowledge products must meet in order to effectively fill those gaps. FRRG members also often help validate and evaluate solutions during development.

Some of the S&T projects and technologies for which the FRRG has provided expert guidance are:

- 3D Location for First Responders
- EDGE Virtual Training
- Radio Internet-Protocol Communications Module
- Electronic Recovery and Access to Data
- Multi-Threat Base Ensemble
- Public Alerts and Warnings using Social Media

THE FRRG PROCESS

The FRRG's starting point is the most recent report issued by Project Responder, a multi-year effort by S&T and local, state, tribal, and federal response agencies to identify and prioritize

gaps between current first responder capabilities and those required for effective response to catastrophic incidents.

At the annual FRRG meeting, the membership reviews and identifies capability gaps within domains of Project Responder and prioritizes those gaps. Statements of Objectives are then developed with a focus on end user needs and the concept of operations. Subsequently, the group has participated throughout the development cycle of S&T-funded projects related to those capability gaps, to ensure that the resulting technologies meet end user needs.

KEY PART OF THE SOLUTION DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The FRRG is part of S&T's solution development process, which subjects all projects to rigorous and transparent validation to ensure not only that the projects meet legitimate first responder needs but also that their deliverables are highly likely to be transitioned into use.

AN INVALUABLE ASSET

Since its establishment in 2011, the FRRG has proven to be an invaluable asset to S&T, yet its real value is in the service it provides to first responders nationwide by providing them with enhanced capabilities and safety. Through their voluntary contributions to homeland security, the men and women of the FRRG ensure that the efforts undertaken by DHS S&T, and other R&D efforts, are maximized to provide the greatest value and return on investment to protect our citizens and the responders themselves.

