County Capabilities Report on Interoperable Communications

County/County- Equivalent Data Collection Form

Return to:

For additional guidance contact:

Capabilities Assessment Questions and Decision Trees

The following section provides a tool for evaluating interoperable communications capabilities for NECP assessment purposes. Lanes of the Interoperability Continuum are shown with statements describing various stages of capabilities development ranging from Early through Advanced. Each lane is accompanied by a decision tree with key questions that differentiate stages of development. The first question is used to distinguish Early and Intermediate stages from Established and Advanced stages of development. Depending on your answer to the first question, you will then answer a subsequent question to either distinguish Early from Intermediate stages or Established from Advanced stages.

When assessing capabilities, please be as truthful as possible. Respondents should not feel pressured to identify an Advanced stage of development for each lane of the Continuum. An honest assessment will ensure that time and resources are appropriately dedicated to the interoperable communications effort.

County / County- Equivalent

County Point of Contact

Name:

Position/Agency:

Phone:

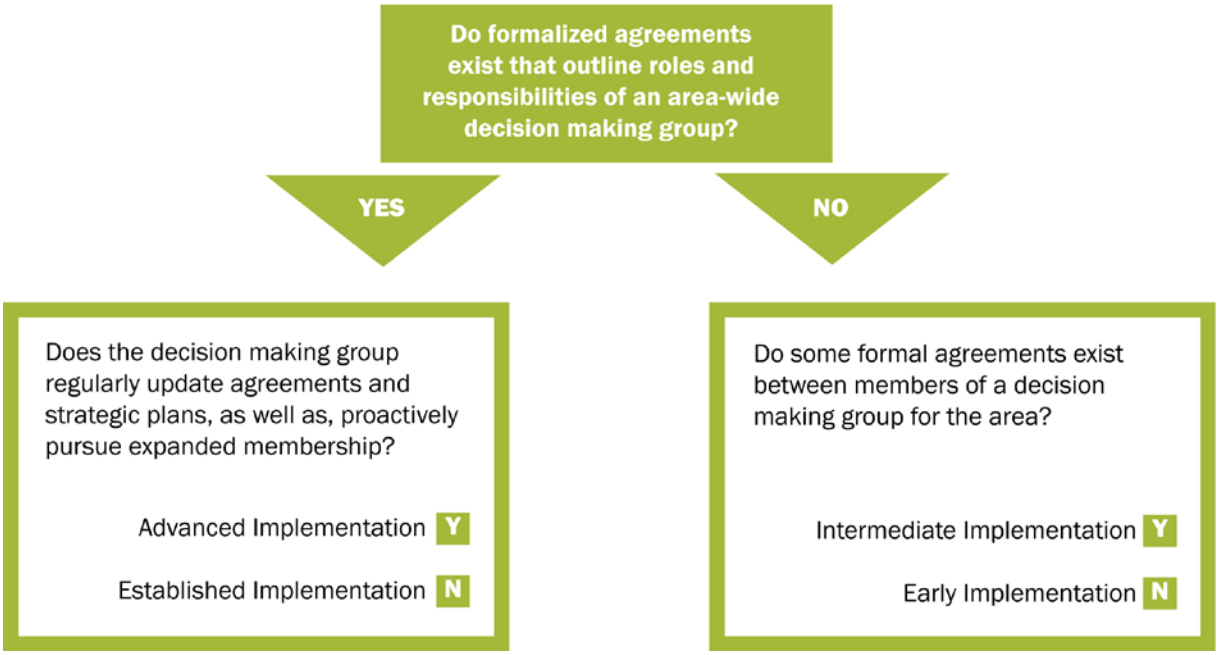
E-Mail:

Governance – The Decision Making Groups

What are we measuring: The formality of and level of participation in interagency partnerships, forums, or governing bodies established to address common interoperability interests in the area.

Capability	Early Implementation	Intermediate Implementation	Established Implementation	Advanced Implementation
Governance	Area decision-making groups are informal and do not yet have a strategic plan to guide collective communications interoperability goals and funding.	Some *formal* agreements exist and *informal* agreements are in practice among members of the decision making group for the area; Strategic and budget planning processes are beginning to be put in place.	Formal agreements outline the roles and responsibilities of an area-wide decision making group, which has an agreed upon strategic plan that addresses sustainable funding for collective, regional interoperable communications needs.	Area-wide decision making bodies proactively look to expand membership to ensure representation from broad public support disciplines and other levels of government, while updating their agreements and strategic plan on a regular basis.

Decision Tree

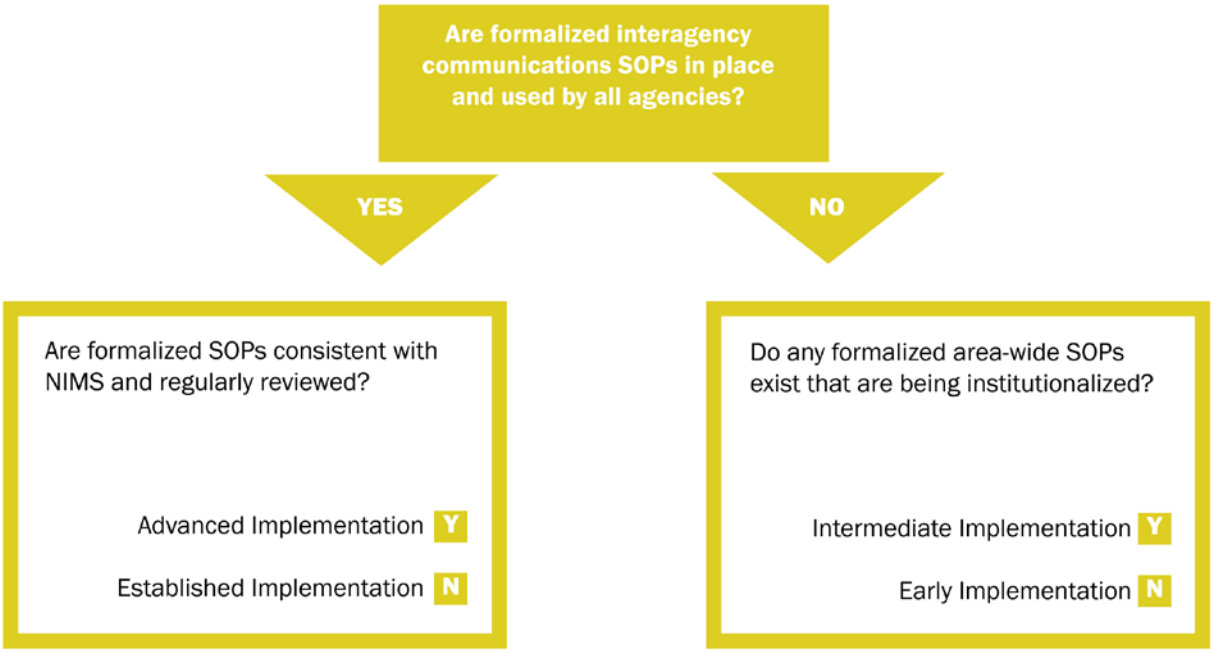


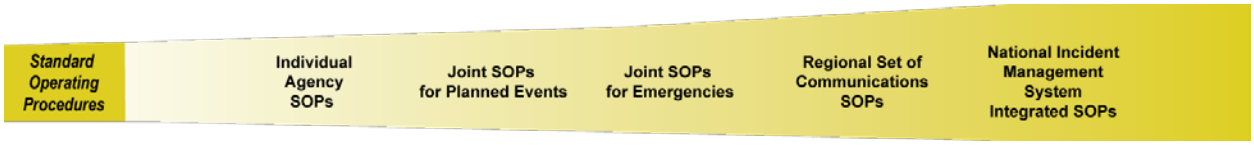
SOPs – Policies, Practices, and Procedures

What are we measuring: The level of adequacy, participation in developing, and consistency of formalized SOPs to address common interoperability interests in the area.

Capability	Early Implementation	Intermediate Implementation	Established Implementation	Advanced Implementation
SOPs	Area-wide interoperable communications SOPs are not developed or have not been formalized and disseminated.	Some interoperable communications SOPs exist within the area and steps have been taken to institute these interoperability procedures among some agencies.	Interoperable communications SOPs are formalized and in use by all agencies within the area. Despite minor issues, SOPs are successfully used during responses and/or exercises.	Interoperable communications SOPs within the area are formalized and regularly reviewed. Additionally, NIMS procedures are well established among all agencies and disciplines. All needed procedures are effectively utilized during responses and/or exercises.

Decision Tree

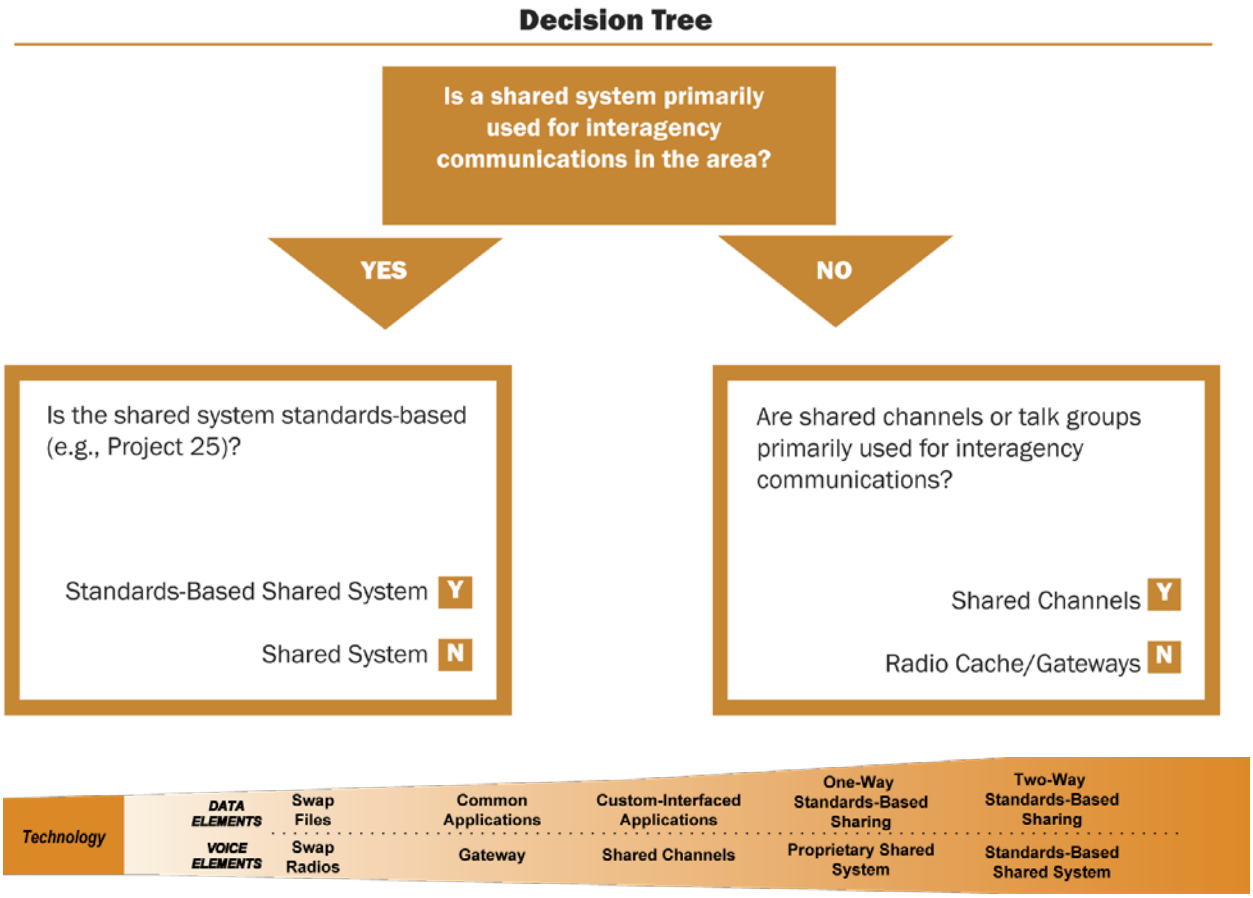




Technology – Standards and Emerging Communications Technologies

What are we measuring: The technology standards and equipment that are being utilized to effectively provide interagency communications in the area.

Capability	Radio Cache/ Gateways	Shared Channels	Shared System	Standards-Based Shared System
Technology	Interoperability within the area is primarily achieved through the use of gateways (mobile/fixed gateway, console patch), shared radios, or use of a radio cache.	Interoperability within the area is primarily achieved through the use of shared channels or talk groups.	Interoperability within the area is primarily achieved through the use of a proprietary shared system.	Interoperability within the area is primarily achieved through the use of standards-based shared system (e.g., Project 25).



Training and Exercise – Emergency Responder Skills and Capabilities

What are we measuring: The availability and regularity of training and exercise programs for communications interoperability.

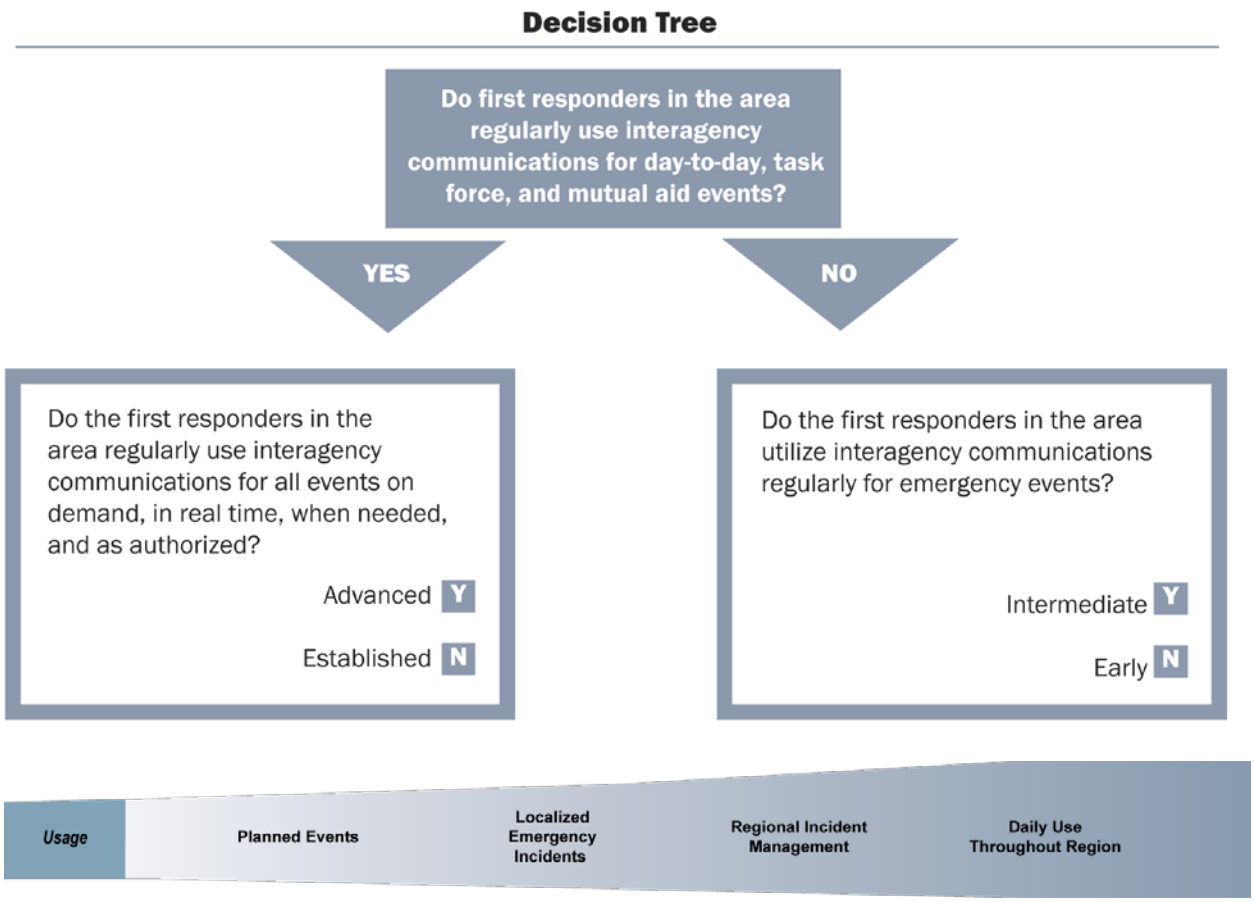
Capability	Early Implementation	Intermediate Implementation	Established Implementation	Advanced Implementation
Training & Exercises	Area-wide public safety agencies participate in communications interoperability workshops, but no formal training or exercises are focused on emergency communications.	Some public safety agencies within the area hold communications interoperability training on equipment and conduct exercises, although not on a regular cycle.	Public safety agencies within the area participate in equipment and SOP training for communications interoperability and hold exercises on a regular schedule.	Area public safety agencies regularly conduct training and exercises with communications interoperability curriculum addressing equipment and SOPs that is modified as needed to address the changing operational environment.

Decision Tree

Usage – Frequency of Use and Familiarity

What are we measuring: Ease and regularity of using interagency communications technologies and procedures within the area and across all types of events, including day-to-day, task force, and mutual aid operations.

Capability	Early	Intermediate	Established	Advanced
Usage	First responders across the area seldom use solutions unless advanced planning is possible (e.g., special events).	First responders across the area use interoperability solutions regularly for emergency events, and in limited fashion for day-to-day communications.	First responders across the area use interoperability solutions regularly and easily for all day-to-day, task force, and mutual aid events.	Regular use of solutions for all day-to-day and out-of-the-ordinary events across the area on demand, in real time, when needed, as authorized.



1. Governance *(Select option that best describes your county)*

- ○ County decision-making groups are informal and do not yet have a strategic plan to guide collective communications interoperability goals and funding.
- ○ Some *formal* agreements exist and *informal* agreements are in practice among members of the decision making group for the area; Strategic and budget planning processes are beginning to be put in place.
- ○ Formal agreements outline the roles and responsibilities of an area-wide decision making group, which has an agreed upon strategic plan that addresses sustainable funding for collective, regional interoperable communications needs.
- ○ County-wide decision making bodies proactively look to expand membership to ensure representation from broad public support disciplines and other levels of government, while updating their agreements and strategic plan on a regular basis.

2. Standard Operating Procedures *(Select option that best describes your county)*

- ○ County-wide interoperable communications SOPs are not developed or have not been formalized and disseminated.
- ○ Some interoperable communications SOPs exist within the area and steps have been taken to institute these interoperability procedures among some agencies.
- ○ Interoperable communications SOPs are formalized and in use by all agencies within the area. Despite minor issues, SOPs are successfully used during responses and/or exercises.
- ○ Interoperable communications SOPs within the area are formalized and regularly reviewed. Additionally, NIMS procedures are well established among all agencies and disciplines. All needed procedures are effectively utilized during responses and/or exercises

3. Technology ***(Select option that best describes your county)***

- ○ Interoperability within the area is primarily achieved through the use of gateways (mobile/fixed gateway, console patch), shared radios, or use of a radio cache
- ○ Interoperability within the area is primarily achieved through the use of shared channels or talk groups.
- ○ Interoperability within the area is primarily achieved through the use of a proprietary shared system.
- ○ Interoperability within the area is primarily achieved through the use of standards-based shared system (e.g., Project 25).

4. Frequency Band(s) ***What frequency band(s) do public safety agencies within the county currently utilize? (Check all that apply)***

- ☐ VHF-Low Band
- ☐ VHF-High Band
- ☐ UHF 450-470
- ☐ UHF "T Band" 470-512
- ☐ UHF 800 MHz
- ☐ UHF 700/800 MHz

5. Training & Exercises *(Select option that best describes your county)*

- ○ County-wide public safety agencies participate in communications interoperability workshops, but no formal training or exercises are focused on emergency communications.
- ○ Some public safety agencies within the area hold communications interoperability training on equipment and conduct exercises, although not on a regular cycle.
- ○ Public safety agencies within the area participate in equipment and SOP training for communications interoperability and hold exercises on a regular schedule.
- ○ Area public safety agencies regularly conduct training and exercises with communications interoperability curriculum addressing equipment and SOPs that is modified as needed to address the changing operational environment.

6. Role of Interoperability *(Select option that best describes your county)*

- ○ First responders across the area seldom use solutions unless advanced planning is possible (e.g., special events).
- ○ First responders across the area use interoperability solutions regularly for emergency events, and in limited fashion for day-to-day communications.
- ○ First responders across the area use interoperability solutions regularly and easily for all day-to-day, task force, and mutual aid events.
- ○ Regular use of solutions for all day-to-day and out-of-the-ordinary events across the area on demand, in real time, when needed, as authorized.

7. Communications Equipment Use *(Select the estimated percentage of public safety responses that utilize the following technologies in your county)*

a. Cell phones/Direct Connect Frequency: Select

b. Satellite Phones Frequency: Select

c. Mobile Data

Commercial Networks[1] Frequency: Select

Private Networks Frequency: Select

[1] Commercial Networks that operate at or above 128K; also includes use of broadband devices such as smart phones, mobile e-mail devices, or wireless air cards.