

A Resolution to Address Problems with Public Safety Emergency Communications

*Offered by:
International Association of Fire Chiefs*

Whereas, emergency responders depend on effective and reliable communications to ensure a safe and effective response to both routine calls and catastrophic emergencies; and

Whereas, recent large-scale disasters, including hurricane Katrina, the 9/11 terrorist attacks and the Oklahoma City Bombing have all highlighted the catastrophic results of inadequate emergency communications; and

Whereas, too many emergency response departments currently lack the communications equipment necessary to achieve basic communications operability; and

Whereas, large-scale responses involving multiple agencies and multiple jurisdictions have revealed significant interoperability communications problems; and

Whereas, increased demands upon currently available public safety spectrum caused the Congress to dedicate an additional 24 MHz of spectrum in the 700 MHz band to public safety to be made available in February 2009, and;

Whereas, the fire service and public safety personnel would benefit from access to available advanced communications services and increased public safety and emergency response needs require access by public safety to broadband technologies, and;

Whereas, the broadband communications needs of public safety have become more clear and compelling in recent years, and it is in the public interest to provide public safety access to sufficient spectrum to foster the development of a next generation nationwide public safety network;

Therefore Be It Resolved, that the Congressional Fire Services Institute call on policy makers at the federal, state, and local level, public safety organizations, and private companies to undertake a comprehensive solution to address the problem of public safety communications; and be it further

Resolved, that a priority be established to achieve basic communications operability within every fire department in America; and be it further

Resolved, that adequate spectrum be made available to achieve inter-agency and inter-jurisdictional interoperability; and be it further

Resolved, that nationwide interoperability protocols be established by the federal government and adopted by state and local governments; and be it finally

Resolved, that a nationwide public safety broadband network be established, operating on a common spectrum range, implemented in combination with next generation equipment, associated training and close coordination, to provide state and local public safety agencies with a valuable tool to enhance public safety communications.