



FirstNet and Next Generation 9-1-1

WHAT IS THE FIRST RESPONDER NETWORK AUTHORITY (FIRSTNET)?

FirstNet is an independent authority within the U.S. Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration. FirstNet is governed by a 15-member Board composed of representatives from public safety; local, state and federal government; and the wireless industry.

Signed into law on February 22, 2012, the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act created FirstNet. The law gives FirstNet the duty to ensure the building, deployment and operation of the first high-speed, nationwide wireless broadband network dedicated to public safety entities. FirstNet will ensure the provision of a single interoperable platform for public safety communications.

WHY WAS FIRSTNET CREATED?

The public safety community fought hard to fulfill the 9/11 Commission's recommendation and encouraged Congress to pass legislation establishing a dedicated, reliable network for advanced data communications nationwide. During emergencies, public safety personnel need true priority access and preemption, which are not available on commercial networks.

WHAT WILL BE POSSIBLE WITH THE FIRSTNET NETWORK?

The FirstNet network is intended to improve citizen and responder safety and increase the efficiency and effectiveness of emergency response through cutting edge broadband communications.

Our vision is that public safety personnel using the FirstNet network will be able to share applications, access databases, and provide better informed responses to incidents through integrated communications.

FirstNet's goal is to provide public safety-grade reliability and nationwide coverage so all public safety personnel can count on the network when they are on the job. FirstNet plans to create a nationwide standard of service while affording localized customization and control. When the FirstNet network launches, it will provide mission-critical, high-speed data services to supplement the voice capabilities of today's Land Mobile Radio (LMR) networks. Initially, the FirstNet network will be used for sending data, video, images and text. The FirstNet network will also carry location information and eventually support streaming video. FirstNet plans to offer cellular voice communications such as Voice over Long Term Evolution (VoLTE) or other alternatives.

WHAT IS NEXT GENERATION 9-1-1 (NG9-1-1)?

NG9-1-1 is a nationwide, standards-based, all-IP emergency communications infrastructure enabling voice and multimedia communications between a 9-1-1 caller and a 9-1-1 center. NG9-1-1 is designed as a managed system to provide access to emergency services from all connected communication sources. NG9-1-1 and the FirstNet network represent the two halves of the public safety request for service and the response.

HOW WILL THE FIRSTNET NETWORK INTEGRATE WITH NG9-1-1 NETWORKS?

NG9-1-1 and the FirstNet network are two separate systems, both sharing critical information to first responders. NG9-1-1 and the FirstNet network share common interests such as Cyber Security, Location Accuracy, the Validation and Use of Applications, Identity Management, and Network Coverage. The convergence of the NG9-1-1 networks and the FirstNet network at the PSAP will dramatically enhance public safety communications from the time a call originates on the NG9-1-1 network to the PSAP, through the FirstNet network to the first responders.

HOW WILL THE FIRSTNET NETWORK BENEFIT PUBLIC SAFETY COMMUNICATIONS?

Implementing the vision of FirstNet is intended to provide a mission critical tool for our Nation's PSAPs. The creation of the FirstNet network will help to process, manage, and disseminate the flow of information coming into tomorrow's PSAP. The FirstNet network aims to provide the vital network connectivity between the PSAP and the first responders enabling the real time delivery of videos, photos and other high-speed data. The establishment of uniform non-proprietary standards will become crucial to insuring seamless interoperability.

FirstNet understands that rural coverage is an important part of the development and success of the NPSBN, and is required to meet substantial rural milestones in each phase of the network development.

FirstNet is committed to insuring that the concerns and interests of the public safety communications industry are being considered in the development and operation of the FirstNet network. To achieve this goal FirstNet has been working through the PSAC and with representative national associations. But, just as importantly, FirstNet is reaching out directly to the communications professionals who manage and staff the PSAPs.

WHAT WILL USERS PAY FOR FIRSTNET'S SERVICES?

While final costs have not been set, FirstNet intends to offer services at a compelling and competitive cost to attract millions of public safety users and make FirstNet self-sustaining. The use of FirstNet's services and applications will be voluntary.

HOW CAN MY PSAP AND OTHER PUBLIC SAFETY COMMUNICATIONS AGENCIES PARTICIPATE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE FIRSTNET NETWORK?

The Governor of each state and territory has designated a Single Point of Contact (SPOC) to gather local requirements for the network from each community, tribal region, and public safety entity. Communications personnel can provide input to FirstNet through the SPOC in your state. To identify the SPOC for your state and become involved, go to <http://firstnet.gov/consultation>. Communications personnel may also contact members of the FirstNet Public Safety Advisory Committee (PSAC). More information regarding the PSAC and its membership is available at <http://firstnet.gov/about/public-safety-advisory-committee>. To stay up-to-date on FirstNet activities, communications personnel can track progress at www.firstnet.gov. Look for FirstNet representatives and displays at many 9-1-1 conferences around the nation.

FirstNet Senior 9-1-1 Advisor
Bill Hinkle
202-641-5682
Bill.Hinkle@FirstNet.gov