

cooperation with the Department of National Communications System (as appropriate), shall, in cooperation with State, local, and tribal governments, Federal departments and agencies, emergency response providers, and the private sector, develop not later than 180 days after the completion of the baseline assessment under section 573 of this title, and periodically update, a National Emergency Communications Plan to provide recommendations regarding how the United States should—

(1) support and promote the ability of emergency response providers and relevant government officials to continue to communicate in the event of natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters; and

(2) ensure, accelerate, and attain interoperable emergency communications nationwide.

(b) Coordination

The Emergency Communications Preparedness Center under section 576 of this title shall coordinate the development of the Federal aspects of the National Emergency Communications Plan.

(c) Contents

The National Emergency Communications Plan shall—

(1) include recommendations developed in consultation with the Federal Communications Commission and the National Institute of Standards and Technology for a process for expediting national voluntary consensus standards for emergency communications equipment for the purchase and use by public safety agencies of interoperable emergency communications equipment and technologies;

(2) identify the appropriate capabilities necessary for emergency response providers and relevant government officials to continue to communicate in the event of natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters;

(3) identify the appropriate interoperable emergency communications capabilities necessary for Federal, State, local, and tribal governments in the event of natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters;

(4) recommend both short-term and long-term solutions for ensuring that emergency response providers and relevant government officials can continue to communicate in the event of natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters;

(5) recommend both short-term and long-term solutions for deploying interoperable emergency communications systems for Federal, State, local, and tribal governments throughout the Nation, including through the provision of existing and emerging technologies;

(6) identify how Federal departments and agencies that respond to natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters can work effectively with State, local, and tribal governments, in all States, and with other entities;

(7) identify obstacles to deploying interoperable emergency communications capabilities nationwide and recommend short-term and

long-term measures to overcome those obstacles, including recommendations for multi-jurisdictional coordination among Federal, State, local, and tribal governments;

(8) recommend goals and timeframes for the deployment of emergency, command-level communications systems based on new and existing equipment across the United States and develop a timetable for the deployment of interoperable emergency communications systems nationwide;

(9) recommend appropriate measures that emergency response providers should employ to ensure the continued operation of relevant governmental communications infrastructure in the event of natural disasters, acts of terrorism, or other man-made disasters; and

(10) set a date, including interim benchmarks, as appropriate, by which State, local, and tribal governments, Federal departments and agencies, and emergency response providers expect to achieve a baseline level of national interoperable communications, as that term is defined under section 194(g)(1) of this title.

(Pub. L. 107–296, title XVIII, §1802, as added Pub. L. 109–295, title VI, §671(b), Oct. 4, 2006, 120 Stat. 1435; amended Pub. L. 110–53, title III, §301(d), Aug. 3, 2007, 121 Stat. 300; Pub. L. 115–278, §2(g)(6)(B), Nov. 16, 2018, 132 Stat. 4179.)

Editorial Notes

CODIFICATION

Another section 1802 of Pub. L. 107–296 was renumbered section 1902 and is classified to section 592 of this title.

AMENDMENTS

2018—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 115–278 substituted “Assistant Director for Emergency Communications” for “Director for Emergency Communications” in introductory provisions.

2007—Subsec. (c)(10). Pub. L. 110–53 added par. (10).

Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

CHANGE OF NAME

Reference to the Assistant Director for Emergency Communications deemed to be a reference to the Executive Assistant Director for Emergency Communications, see section 571(g) of this title, enacted Jan. 1, 2021.

§ 573. Assessments and reports

(a) Baseline assessment

Not later than 1 year after October 4, 2006, and not less than every 5 years thereafter, the Secretary, acting through the Assistant Director for Emergency Communications, shall conduct an assessment of Federal, State, local, and tribal governments that—

(1) defines the range of capabilities needed by emergency response providers and relevant government officials to continue to communicate in the event of natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters;

(2) defines the range of interoperable emergency communications capabilities needed for specific events;

(3) assesses the current available capabilities to meet such communications needs;

(4) identifies the gap between such current capabilities and defined requirements; and

(5) includes a national interoperable emergency communications inventory to be completed by the Secretary of Homeland Security, the Secretary of Commerce, and the Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission that—

(A) identifies for each Federal department and agency—

- (i) the channels and frequencies used;
- (ii) the nomenclature used to refer to each channel or frequency used; and
- (iii) the types of communications systems and equipment used; and

(B) identifies the interoperable emergency communications systems in use by public safety agencies in the United States.

(b) Classified annex

The baseline assessment under this section may include a classified annex including information provided under subsection (a)(5)(A).

(c) Savings clause

In conducting the baseline assessment under this section, the Secretary may incorporate findings from assessments conducted before, or ongoing on, October 4, 2006.

(d) Progress reports

Not later than one year after October 4, 2006, and biennially thereafter, the Secretary, acting through the Assistant Director for Emergency Communications, shall submit to Congress a report on the progress of the Department in achieving the goals of, and carrying out its responsibilities under, this subchapter, including—

(1) a description of the findings of the most recent baseline assessment conducted under subsection (a);

(2) a determination of the degree to which interoperable emergency communications capabilities have been attained to date and the gaps that remain for interoperability to be achieved;

(3) an evaluation of the ability to continue to communicate and to provide and maintain interoperable emergency communications by emergency managers, emergency response providers, and relevant government officials in the event of—

(A) natural disasters, acts of terrorism, or other man-made disasters, including Incidents of National Significance declared by the Secretary under the National Response Plan; and

(B) a catastrophic loss of local and regional communications services;

(4) a list of best practices relating to the ability to continue to communicate and to provide and maintain interoperable emergency communications in the event of natural disasters, acts of terrorism, or other man-made disasters; and

(A)¹ an evaluation of the feasibility and desirability of the Department developing, on its own or in conjunction with the De-

partment of Defense, a mobile communications capability, modeled on the Army Signal Corps, that could be deployed to support emergency communications at the site of natural disasters, acts of terrorism, or other man-made disasters.

(Pub. L. 107-296, title XVIII, § 1803, as added Pub. L. 109-295, title VI, § 671(b), Oct. 4, 2006, 120 Stat. 1437; amended Pub. L. 115-278, § 2(g)(6)(B), Nov. 16, 2018, 132 Stat. 4179.)

Editorial Notes

CODIFICATION

Another section 1803 of Pub. L. 107-296 was renumbered section 1903 and is classified to section 593 of this title.

AMENDMENTS

2018—Subsecs. (a), (d). Pub. L. 115-278 substituted “Assistant Director for Emergency Communications” for “Director for Emergency Communications” in introductory provisions.

Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

CHANGE OF NAME

Reference to the Assistant Director for Emergency Communications deemed to be a reference to the Executive Assistant Director for Emergency Communications, see section 571(g) of this title, enacted Jan. 1, 2021.

§ 574. Coordination of Department emergency communications grant programs

(a) Coordination of grants and standards programs

The Secretary, acting through the Assistant Director for Emergency Communications, shall ensure that grant guidelines for the use of homeland security assistance administered by the Department relating to interoperable emergency communications are coordinated and consistent with the goals and recommendations in the National Emergency Communications Plan under section 572 of this title.

(b) Denial of eligibility for grants

(1) In general

The Secretary, acting through the Assistant Secretary for Grants and Planning, and in consultation with the Assistant Director for Emergency Communications, may prohibit any State, local, or tribal government from using homeland security assistance administered by the Department to achieve, maintain, or enhance emergency communications capabilities, if—

(A) such government has not complied with the requirement to submit a Statewide Interoperable Communications Plan as required by section 194(f) of this title;

(B) such government has proposed to upgrade or purchase new equipment or systems that do not meet or exceed any applicable national voluntary consensus standards and has not provided a reasonable explanation of why such equipment or systems will serve the needs of the applicant better than equipment or systems that meet or exceed such standards; and

¹ So in original. Probably should be “(5)”.