Dr. Robert W. McCaughern  
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Ottawa, ON  
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September 22, 2006

Subject: SMSE-005-06 — Consultation Paper on Public Safety Radio Interoperability Guidelines, dated 2006-06-03

Dear Dr. McCaughern;

Introduction:

The Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials, Canada, Inc. (APCO Canada) is a voluntary, not-for-profit organization dedicated to the enhancement of public safety communications. It serves the people who supply, install and operate the Emergency Communications Systems used across Canada from coast to coast to coast. Members come from every type of public safety organization in the country, including 9-1-1, police, fire and emergency medical services as well as emergency management, disaster planning and federal search and rescue personnel.

Radio Interoperability Definitions

APCO Canada supports the definition of radio interoperability as proposed in the consultation paper.

APCO Canada also supports the classifications of multi-jurisdictional and multi-disciplinary interoperability as proposed in this section of the consultation paper.
Other Operating Environments:

The examples provided in the Consultation Paper are the primary public safety responders such as the Police, Fire/Rescue and Ambulance services. While APCO Canada’s operational membership has historically been drawn from these disciplines, numerous events in recent years have demonstrated that response to emergencies at the municipal, provincial and federal level requires resources and personnel from a pool that is both deeper and broader than that offered by the traditional services.

Examples of the non-traditional emergency responders would include (and certainly not be limited to) municipal and provincial emergency management programs, search and rescue groups and the Canadian military.

Levels of Radio Interoperability

While APCO Canada supports the five levels of interoperability as proposed, it does not support the concept that these be arranged hierarchically, as the implication is that one must be achieved before moving on to the next.

APCO Canada suggests that the five levels not be represented by a pyramid, or linear model, but simply be referenced as five techniques, perhaps in increasing complexity, refraining from the use of the term “levels”.

Other methods of Radio Interoperability

APCO Canada suggests that this question should be discussed in two parts:

1. Radio Interoperability between First Responders, and
2. Radio Interoperability between a First Responder and a Second or Third Tier Responder

Radio Interoperability Guidelines

APCO Canada agrees that a national entity is required to champion the cause of interoperability and is prepared to play a role in the development of this initiative.

Submitted by:

Glen Miller
Past President
APCO Canada