



September 2016

2017 NATIONWIDE COMMUNICATIONS BASELINE ASSESSMENT (NCBA) FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the Nationwide Communications Baseline Assessment?

The NCBA is a survey being conducted by the Office of Emergency Communications (OEC) to assess the Nation's ability to communicate during a response to natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters. The purpose of this assessment is to improve understanding of emergency response providers' capabilities in use and needed to establish operable, interoperable, and continuity of communications across all levels of government. Congress directs OEC to conduct this assessment of federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial governments no less than every five years, in accordance with the Homeland Security Act of 2002, as amended (6 U.S.C. § 573(a)).

Why should I participate in the NCBA?

Information gathered will assist officials at all levels of government in making informed decisions about interoperable emergency communications, establishing priorities, and allocating resources more effectively. These findings may influence appropriations for grant funding, programs, and service offerings, as well as drive OEC programs and services to advance emergency communications capabilities nationwide.

How is the NCBA being developed?

The NCBA is being developed in coordination with federal, state, and local public safety stakeholders, including representatives from State Homeland Security and Emergency Services, SAFECOM, and the National Council of Statewide Interoperability Coordinators. OEC is collaborating with these partners to establish a comprehensive structure for assessing capabilities and gaps, as well as designing a survey to be deployed nationwide.

How does the NCBA relate to past assessments?

The 2017 NCBA expands the scope of past assessments that focused primarily on land mobile radio operations and traditional emergency responders. The 2017 assessment encompasses the evolving emergency communications ecosystem and whole community concept as described in the 2014 National Emergency Communications Plan. To accomplish this, OEC and its partners built on the SAFECOM Interoperability Continuum's critical success elements (Governance, Standards Operating Procedures, Training & Exercises, Technology, and Usage) expanding them to include all personnel related to emergency communications and advanced technologies and security considerations. Information on past OEC assessments can be found at <http://www.dhs.gov/oec>.

When will the NCBA survey be available?

OEC plans to administer the NCBA survey for a thirty day period beginning in March 2017.

When will the NCBA survey results be available?

Following survey administration and data analysis, OEC will develop and submit the NCBA findings report to Congress by early 2018. The report will be posted, once approved, to the OEC website at <http://www.dhs.gov/oec>.

Who will receive the NCBA survey?

The NCBA survey will be sent to emergency communications stakeholders at all levels of government in a wide range of positions, including federal agency staff, governors, executive state-level officials, local officials, policy makers, and emergency responders (law enforcement, fire, and emergency medical services). Agencies within these sample groups will receive an invitation to complete the survey by email and direct mail, where appropriate. OEC will provide respondents an opportunity to complete the survey online or on paper.

Am I required to participate in the NCBA survey?

No, emergency communications stakeholders are not required to participate. However, OEC encourages all stakeholders to voluntarily participate in the NCBA survey as the findings will inform Congress on the current state of emergency communications capabilities and gaps. As a result, these findings may influence appropriations for grant funding, programs, and service offerings across all levels of government. In addition, the NCBA survey findings will establish a baseline or benchmark to measure progress for future initiatives. Therefore, it is critical that this baseline is an accurate accounting of emergency communications capabilities and gaps, in order to identify necessary improvements nationwide.

May I forward the NCBA survey to a colleague who might be interested in participating?

Yes, participants are encouraged to forward the NCBA survey to relevant emergency communications stakeholders within the target population. Additional instructions will be included in the survey.

Is my response and participation anonymous?

No, OEC will internally track responses and participation. However, OEC will not collect any personally identifiable information.

How long will it take to complete the NCBA survey?

It will take participants approximately 30 minutes to complete the survey. Additional details and instructions will be included in the survey.

Does the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) clearance process apply to the NCBA survey?

Yes. PRA clearance is the term used for the process of obtaining approval from The White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for federally sponsored data collections. OEC is developing the NCBA survey in accordance with all PRA requirements.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Please contact OECNECP@hq.dhs.gov or visit www.dhs.gov/oec.