



The Emergency Management Take

WINTER 2024



FirstNet Authority's Bruce Fitzgerald speaks with Chief Bill Jarvis of the Jackman-Moose River Fire and Rescue Department about rural FirstNet coverage



Determining your agency's operational capabilities

Bruce Fitzgerald, Senior Public Safety Advisor

If a train derails and spills hazardous materials in your community, is your agency prepared with the right communication capabilities to address this large-scale emergency?

As a federal agency serving the public safety community, the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet Authority) works with emergency management to evaluate your communications capabilities. We offer an Operational Capabilities Workshop to help agencies determine what technologies they have and identify any gaps in incident response.

What is an Operational Capabilities Workshop

An Operational Capabilities Workshop enhances public safety's incident response and helps agencies operationalize FirstNet.

During the workshop, a scenario is presented. It may be a train derailment with HAZMAT spillage or a hurricane with flooding. Scenarios are typically generalized but realistic for the community.

The agency evaluates 20 or more capabilities available to assist in responding to the scenario. These capabilities can include everything from air monitoring and gas line maps, to location tracking and equipment dispatch. Participants rank the top five capabilities needed to best manage the scenario and discuss why those five are priorities.

Why request a workshop

Emergency management agencies get multiple benefits from Operational Capabilities Workshops. The workshops help develop preparedness plans that leverage all technology options available to an agency.

FirstNet has a robust ecosystem of solutions designed for public safety response, which are described in the workshop. The conversations generated by the workshop often take a deep dive into specific broadband solutions for response and recovery operations.

For instance, a workshop might address the range of ways to establish or boost coverage using a FirstNet deployable. Different solutions are available depending on whether coverage is needed **indoors**, on **an island**, or for a **crowded event**.

After the workshop, FirstNet Authority staff can follow up with more detailed information. This might mean connecting agencies to FirstNet subject matter experts, providing fact sheets, or setting up meetings about the topic. Every agency has different needs, and these resources can help them identify the right solutions for their specific situation.

Who can participate

Any public safety agency can **request an Operational Capabilities Workshop from the FirstNet Authority** at no cost. The number of participants ranges from a small group of emergency managers to a larger group from multiple agencies. The workshops are tailored to fit the audience.

Emergency management may choose to invite their partner agencies. This can include first responders, like firefighters and law enforcement officers, who join you in the emergency operations center for every incident. This could also include extended primary partners, like transportation and utilities, for a more comprehensive review of response and recovery capabilities.

Other workshops available

In addition to the Operational Capabilities Workshop, the FirstNet Authority also conducts Coverage Workshops. In these engagements, we facilitate a discussion about where coverage is most important for the participating agencies and why they prioritize those areas.

We recently held a Coverage Workshop with a statewide interoperability committee. During our discussion about coverage needs, responses ranged from establishing coverage where none exists in a remote region to addressing a dead spot in a building shadow in an urban area. Ultimately, the group prioritized coverage along the state's northern border with Canada. The area — while sparsely populated — is popular for recreation and important to national security, so reliable communications are essential.

We work with public safety to identify areas that could benefit from broader coverage. The FirstNet Authority takes this information into account, along with other public safety factors and

network considerations, to ensure future coverage enhancements maximize investment dollars and make the biggest impact to public safety operations.

Agencies can [request a Coverage Workshop](#) as a standalone event or in conjunction with an Operational Capabilities Workshop.

More benefits

These workshops build the FirstNet Authority's knowledge of how responders use FirstNet and how we can invest in the network to make it better for public safety.

The FirstNet Authority recently announced a [network investment totaling \\$8 billion over 10 years](#). Thousands of new FirstNet cell sites will be built across the country — including 1,000 new sites within the next two years. Beyond the initial \$6.3 billion investment, the FirstNet Authority anticipates additional investments over the next decade to deliver Band 14 coverage enhancements. These coverage investments will reflect public safety factors and network considerations, all in support of public safety response operations.

What else to know about workshops

Operational Capabilities and Coverage Workshops are conducted by [senior public safety advisors from the FirstNet Authority](#). We either host an in-person event at your agency's headquarters or set up a virtual workshop. On average, each workshop lasts about two hours from start to finish.

Would your emergency management agency benefit from an Operational Capabilities Workshop, a Coverage Workshop, or both? [Email me](#) and we will schedule it.

Don't miss out on our annual gathering:

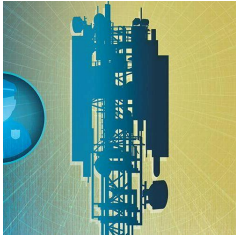
- [5x5: The Public Safety Innovation Summit 2024](#) on June 25-27 in Chicago, Illinois

You can also find me or my colleagues at these events:

- [National Association of County and City Health Officials \(NACCHO\) Preparedness Summit](#) on March 25-28 in Cleveland, Ohio
- [International Wireless Communications Expo \(IWCE\) 2024](#) on March 25-28 in Orlando, Florida
- [National Hurricane Conference 2024](#) on March 25-28 in Orlando, Florida
- [All Hazards Incident Management Teams Association \(AHIMTA\) Annual Conference](#) on March 26-28 in Atlantic City, New Jersey
- [2024 Tribal Assistance Coordination Group Conference](#) on May 6-10 in Phoenix, Arizona
- [Texas A&M University Interop Institute](#) on May 6-10 in College Station, Texas
- [Governor's Hurricane Conference 2024](#) on May 12-17 in West Palm Beach, Florida
- [ESRI Safety and Security Summit and ESRI User Conference](#) on July 13-16 in San Diego, California

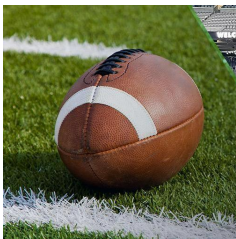
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Inside FirstNet



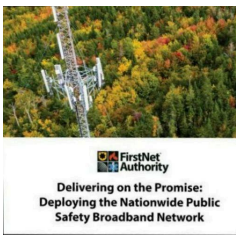
With the **completion of the initial network buildout**, FirstNet Authority is launching the **next phase of FirstNet** through a series of strategic **investments totaling more than \$8 billion over 10 years**. These investments will deliver full 5G capabilities on FirstNet, expanded mission-critical services, and enhanced coverage.

AT&T experienced a network outage on the morning of February 22 that impacted public safety users of FirstNet. FirstNet Authority Executive Director and CEO **Joe Wassel addressed the outage** and outlined actions we are taking.



The Big Game calls for super-sized public safety communications. The FirstNet Authority and AT&T teams confirmed that Allegiant Stadium near Las Vegas had broadband connectivity from top to bottom in preparation for the Big Game.

The **5x5: The Public Safety Innovation Summit** is coming to Chicago on June 25-27. From hands-on tech demos to innovative discussions and networking opportunities, there is something for everyone. **Register now** to join us this summer.



The FirstNet Authority's **Annual Report to Congress** detailed the agency's operations for 2023. Highlights included the achievement of all contract milestones for the initial network deployment, the Federal Communications Commission renewal of the FirstNet Authority's spectrum license, and continued engagement with the public safety community.

Sean McDevitt's passion-driven commitment to

first responders



FirstNet Authority Board Member Sean McDevitt shares his background in telecommunications and personal connection to public safety. Learn more about McDevitt's commitment to giving back to the first responders protecting our communities.

[Watch the video](#)



Our discipline take newsletters come to your inbox with a insider's look at the activities of the First Responder Network Authority.

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