



FirstNet®

FirstNet and Emergency Medical Services

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 consisting of the Attorney General of the United States, the Secretary of Homeland Security, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, and 12 members appointed by the Secretary of Commerce. The FirstNet Board is composed of representatives from public safety; local, state and federal government; and the wireless industry.

Federal legislation creating FirstNet was signed into law in February, 2012. FirstNet has been obligated by Congress to take all actions necessary to ensure the building, deployment and operation of the nationwide public safety broadband network. FirstNet will provide a single, broadband, interoperable platform for public safety mobile communications.

WHAT WILL BE POSSIBLE WITH THE FIRSTNET NETWORK?

FirstNet will enable emergency medical services personnel to exchange key diagnostic information with doctors and provide treatment to patients like never before. Imagine a day when one interoperable communications network will provide high speed data, including video, text, graphics and eventually voice, to connect all of the participants in an EMS encounter. FirstNet will provide the broadband connectivity between EMS and hospitals to support advanced diagnostics and treatment in the field, with solid physician oversight and advice. In addition, access to many useful databases and applications will be supported.

FirstNet's goal is to provide public safety-grade reliability and sufficient coverage so EMS personnel can count on the network when they are on the job. EMS chiefs and local officials will have local control over the network so they can assign users and talk groups and determine who can access applications.

When the FirstNet network launches, it will provide mission-critical, high-speed mobile data services to supplement the voice capabilities of today's traditional public safety 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 support streaming video. As the 4G LTE standard used by the FirstNet network matures, voice communication will also be part of the FirstNet offering.

WHY WAS FIRSTNET CREATED?

The 9/11 Commission recommended that a nationwide, dedicated, reliable network for public safety communication be created. The public safety community lobbied Congress to pass legislation to provide for this advanced data communications network. Some EMS services already make use of broadband data connectivity provided by commercial cellular providers. But, during emergencies, EMS personnel need priority access and preemption that are not available on existing commercial networks.

HOW WILL THE FIRSTNET NETWORK BENEFIT EMS?

Using the FirstNet network will improve situational awareness and decision-making by bringing broadband, high speed data connectivity to the ambulance and the patient in the field. The FirstNet network will make it possible to use new diagnostic tools, such as ultrasound and CT in the ambulance, to enhance decision making and treatment capability. The broadband connectivity provided by FirstNet will bring the “hospital to the ambulance” like never before possible. This kind of connection, while units are on the scene and during transport, will improve all levels of pre-hospital care.

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 LOCAL HOSPITAL AND EMS AGENCY PARTICIPATE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE FIRSTNET NETWORK?

The Governor of each State has designated a Single Point of Contact (SPOC) to gather local requirements for the network from each community, tribal region, and public safety entity. EMS 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>. EMS 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, EMS personnel can track progress at www.firstnet.gov. Look for FirstNet representatives and displays at many EMS conferences around the nation.

FirstNet Senior EMS Advisor
Brent A. Williams
202-794-4372
Brent.Williams@FirstNet.gov

FirstNet Board member, representing EMS interests
Kevin McGinnis
Kevin.McGinnis@FirstNet.gov