



Advancing Communications Interoperability for Canadian Responders

Public Security Technical Program



Background

Historically, public safety agencies have depended upon their own standalone radio communication systems. Unfortunately, those systems are rarely compatible with one another. Not only are there different systems for different agencies within one community, different jurisdictions maintain their own systems too. There are approximately one hundred thousand public safety first responders in Canada. They work for 1800 provincial and municipal law enforcement agencies, 2600 fire departments, and more than 600 rescue departments. At times, they must also interact with Federal law enforcement, and other agencies, such as provincial/territorial and federal emergency management, transportation and the public utilities who all need to talk to one another during critical incidents.



Canadian Interoperability Technology Interest Group: A Partnership that Works

The Canadian Interoperability Technology Interest Group (CITIG) was created in 2007 to improve Canadian public safety communications interoperability. It is a responder-driven, federally-funded activity, led by the Canadian Police Research Centre, that brings together responders, academia, industry and government stakeholders who share a common interest in enhancing Canada's communications interoperability and are dedicated to improving the safety and security of first responders, and the people and critical infrastructure of Canada. CITIG was formalized when the Canadian Police Research Centre (CPRC) and the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police (CACP) joined forces with the Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs (CAFC) and Emergency Medical Services Chiefs of Canada (EMSCC) to work together to improve public safety interoperability in Canada.

Today, CITIG is made up of more than 450 volunteer members from the responder community, all orders of government, non-governmental organizations, associations, academia and industry.

The CITIG provides:

- a pro-active mechanism for exchanging unbiased information and knowledge amongst stakeholders across all levels of government on public safety communications interoperability (i.e., the five aspects — governance, standard operating procedures, technology, training & exercise and usage — as per SAFECOM model, a key framework for enhancing communications interoperability widely adopted in Canada);

A Partnership Led by Defence R&D Canada – Centre for Security Science



Agriculture and Agri-Foods Canada • Atomic Energy of Canada Limited • Canada Border Security Agency • Canadian Food Inspection Agency • Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission • Canadian Security Intelligence Service • Communications Security Establishment • Defence Research and Development Canada • Environment Canada • Fisheries and Oceans Canada • Health Canada • Industry Canada • National Research Council • Natural Resources Canada • Privy Council Office • Public Health Agency of Canada • Public Safety Canada • Public Works and Government Services Canada • Royal Canadian Mounted Police • Transport Canada • Treasury Board Secretariat





- a mechanism for facilitating the development and implementation of communications interoperability best practices (i.e., Canadian Communications Interoperability Plan led by Public Safety Canada, SAFECOM, national and regional workshops, etc.);
- a means to improve responder capabilities in emergency management, in day-to-day operations and to tackle crime; and
- a way to interface with industry/academia/allied partners (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, U.K. National Police Improvement Agency, etc.) with public safety communications interoperability stakeholders and federal and provincial funding programs in order to address communication interoperability gaps.

- directly facilitated (i.e., raised awareness about funding opportunities, helped identify interoperability gaps, helped public safety agencies to identify potential opportunities and partners, etc.) over \$500,000 in CPRC funding for communications interoperability projects;
- responsible for facilitating hundreds of thousands of dollars in in-kind contributions by the CPRC and its partners; and
- initiated solid ties with international collaborators such as the US Department of Homeland Security, the National Public Safety Telecommunications Council and UK Home Office, to name a few.

CITIG Accomplishments

CITIG has been very successful since its inception about two years ago — achievement, good will and momentum are at an all-time high. In short, CITIG has:

- significantly increased awareness about interoperability challenges and helped provide useful tools for practitioners and policy-makers to overcome those challenges;
- promoted the effective use of resources, particularly through the sharing of best practices and by adapting international work to Canadian needs; and
- enhanced communications within and cooperation among responder agencies and between many levels of government, both in Canada and internationally.

Specific achievements include:

- helped conceive, encouraged and supported the Canadian Communications Interoperability Plan (CCIP), led by Public Safety Canada, which defines a national vision to improve daily communication interoperability between emergency responders;
- initiated a series of national voice interoperability workshops, a cross-border interoperability workshop, a vendor outreach forum and a successful program of regional forums designed to raise awareness amongst, and prompt action by, communications interoperability stakeholders;

About the CPRC

The Canadian Police Research Centre (CPRC) harnesses science and technology knowledge to strengthen police, fire and emergency medical services across Canada through research, development of standards, product evaluation and technology transfer. CPRC is a strategic investor that:

- provides leadership, expertise and services to the responder tri-services across Canada;
- invests with public safety partners;
- participates in project planning and provides support; and
- monitors progress of projects and quality of deliverables.

CPRC is managed by the Defence Research and Development Canada (DRDC) – Centre for Security Science (CSS), a joint endeavour between DRDC and Public Safety Canada to provide science and technology solutions to strengthen Canada’s ability to prepare for, prevent, respond to, and recover from high-consequence public safety and security events.

**For more information,
please visit :
www.css.drdc-rddc.gc.ca**

