



FirstNet and the Fire Service

WHAT IS FIRSTNET?

FirstNet will be the first high-speed wireless broadband network dedicated to public safety. FirstNet will be a single, nationwide network that makes it easier for public safety users to communicate during emergencies and on the job every day. Think of FirstNet as a bigger, more reliable, secure and resilient wireless data network. This new network will provide faster access to information and wireless coverage where firefighters need it most.

WHAT WILL BE POSSIBLE WITH FIRSTNET?

FirstNet will enable faster, better coordinated response to natural and manmade disasters. Just as smartphones have changed personal lives, FirstNet devices and applications will ultimately change the way career firefighters and volunteers operate. Imagine a day when one interoperable communications network can be used to dispatch an extrication team, a medical helicopter, police and EMS from different jurisdictions all at the same time. Firefighters using FirstNet will be able to share images, applications, and access to databases to have a common operating picture as incidents unfold.

FirstNet's goal is to provide public safety-grade reliability and extensive coverage so you can count on the network when you are on the job. FirstNet is also aiming to provide coverage solutions that let firefighters "take the network along" to their destination in certain geographies. Incident commanders and local officials will have local control over the network so, for example, they can assign users and talk groups and determine who can access applications.

When FirstNet launches, it will provide mission-critical, high-speed data services to supplement the voice capabilities of today's LMR networks. Initially FirstNet will be used for sending data, video, images and text. FirstNet will also carry location information and eventually support streaming video. In time, FirstNet plans to offer voice over LTE.

WHY WAS FIRSTNET CREATED?

After 9/11, the public safety community fought hard to fulfill the 9/11 Commission's last standing recommendation and lobbied Congress to pass legislation establishing a dedicated, reliable network for advanced data communications nationwide. During emergencies, fire personnel need priority access and preemption, which are not available on commercial networks.

HOW WILL FIRSTNET BENEFIT THE FIRE SERVICE?

Using FirstNet will greatly improve situational awareness and keep firefighters safer. It will make it possible to gain quick access to new tools and applications that provide location data and other vital information for firefighting. FirstNet will enable the exchange of real-time data and audio/video feeds on the fireground to assist incident commanders with operational decision-making and maximize search and rescue and suppression effectiveness.

WHAT WILL USERS PAY FOR FIRSTNET SERVICES?

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 services and applications will be voluntary. The costs for FirstNet services and devices have not yet been set.

HOW CAN MY LOCAL AGENCY PARTICIPATE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF FIRSTNET?

FirstNet is responsible for working through the designated state single points of contact (SPOC) to consult with states, local communities, tribal governments, and first responders to gather requirements for developing its network deployment plans. Fire personnel can provide input to FirstNet via the outreach efforts being coordinated by the SPOC in each state. To identify the SPOC for a state and let them know you are interested, go to <http://www.ntia.doc.gov/other-publication/2013/firstnet-stateterritory-single-points-contact>. Fire personnel may also want to contact members of the FirstNet Public Safety Advisory Committee (PSAC) and participate in outreach discussions at professional association meetings and conferences. To stay up to date on FirstNet activities, fire personnel can track progress at www.firstnet.gov.

