



Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The seeds of interoperability were sown in the fertile vision of Illinois officials more than 40 years ago when the nation's first statewide emergency radio network was founded in the Prairie State. Known as the Illinois State Police Emergency Radio Network, or ISPERN, the system has provided interagency communications capabilities to municipal, county, state, and federal law enforcement agencies since 1965.

Today, Illinois' public safety agencies are served by multiple interoperability systems which provide effective, efficient data and voice communications platforms among service-aligned agencies as well as in cross-disciplinary applications. The rollout of Illinois' STARCOM 21 (State Radio Communications for the 21st Century) radio platform continues to raise the state of interoperability in Illinois to an unprecedented level. This state-of-the-art 700/800 megahertz (MHz) radio platform is bringing interoperability into the mainstream of police, fire, and emergency medical response agencies throughout Illinois.

Today's omnipresent threat of a major terrorist attack dictates a high-level of planning and interagency cooperation to ensure Illinois' response preparedness. As the nation's fifth most populous state, Illinois' wealth of critical infrastructures could serve as a magnet for zealots who, in the name of their distorted religious or political ideologies, could seize the opportunity to strike in any area of the target-rich state with violence and mayhem. The original SCIP made possible a statewide comprehensive Tactical Interoperable Communications Plan (TICP) which ensures first responders have the knowledge, technology, and usage skills they need to react quickly and effectively to any incident or event.

The foresight of Illinois' officials more than four decades ago set the standards for the state's national role as a leader in the field of interoperable communications . . . a role which Illinois refuses to cede today. With its rich tradition of success, coupled with today's climate of opportunity and technological growth, the following Statewide Communications Interoperability Plan details Illinois' commitment to its role as "A State of Interoperability."