



FirstNet[®]



Connecting the frontlines during COVID-19 response

How FirstNet supports public safety during emergencies

FirstNet: America's Public Safety Network

The Department of Commerce's **First Responder Network Authority** (FirstNet Authority) has delivered a nationwide broadband network to America's first responders, helping them communicate, save lives and protect our communities. The network provides first responders with their own always-on, 24/7, 365 "fast lane" for voice and data communications.

SUPPORTING PUBLIC SAFETY RESPONSE TO COVID-19

FirstNet is helping communities respond to COVID-19 by supporting public safety communications across the country. Healthcare workers and first responders are using the FirstNet network to communicate and coordinate operations at COVID-19 testing centers, field hospitals, and incident command posts. The network allows them to maintain reliable communications when and where they need it most – even during surge situations where commercial networks can become congested – and interoperate with other first responders across federal, state, and local agencies. The network's fleet of dedicated deployable assets – more than 70 portable cell sites available 24/7 at no additional charge – has also been called upon to help public safety agencies.

- ✓ More than **50 FirstNet mobile cell sites** have been deployed for COVID-19 related emergencies.
- ✓ There are **more than 13,000 agencies** using more than **1.5 million connections** on FirstNet (as of April 2020).
- ✓ The response to COVID-19 led to increased network use. First responders **consumed more than 2 times as much data** as **AT&T commercial customers** from January to May 2020. This underscores the need and importance of having a network specifically built for public safety's demanding and lifesaving mission.

EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTERS AND HEALTHCARE SITES

- FirstNet is working closely with federal, state, local and tribal emergency operations centers (EOCs) to make sure the network addresses first responders' communication needs during COVID-19 response. **FirstNet is working with EOCs in every state and has deployed mobile cell site assets in states including Georgia, California, New York, and Connecticut.**
- FirstNet portable cell sites and other devices have been deployed at testing facilities to ensure reliable communications for when crowds arrive for testing. The nation's first **COVID-19 Dedicated Care Center in Boston** needed reliable communications fast to care for an influx of patients. Thousands of FirstNet Ready™ devices – including smartphones, MiFis and more – were delivered to help first responders test and treat patients.
- FirstNet provided connections for public safety and healthcare workers inside the **US Naval Ship Comfort** in New York harbor by providing kits to install FirstNet service on the ship, and a FirstNet cell tower on wheels was used to bolster emergency communications for workers at the **US Naval Ship Mercy** in Los Angeles.

CONNECTING RURAL AND TRIBAL LOCATIONS

- To prepare for and meet the demand of caring for COVID-19 patients in rural California, FirstNet supported emergency communications in **Tulare County**, where a remote, makeshift hospital was set up at the Porterville Developmental Center. There, a portable FirstNet cell site was used to provide extra network coverage and capacity for public safety and healthcare workers in and around this critical healthcare facility. “With this support, our first responders and healthcare personnel will have the priority connectivity they need, when they need it.” – **Dennis Townsend, Tulare County (CA) Supervisor**
- The FirstNet Authority is actively working with tribal public safety agencies to support their unique communications needs and challenges for responding to COVID-19. FirstNet deployable assets have been deployed to multiple tribal areas to support communication needs where first responders need connectivity, including on the Navajo Nation. “We appreciate that FirstNet answered our call when we requested the deployable asset to provide critical connectivity for federal and tribal officials responding to the COVID-19 crisis.” – **Chris Becenti, Executive Director, Navajo Nation Telecommunications Regulatory Commission Office**

KEEPING 9-1-1 DISPATCHERS CONNECTED

- Emergency Communications Centers are critical for an effective emergency response, taking calls for assistance from the public and directing first responders to emergencies. In the [City of Alexandria, Virginia](#), hotspots and smartphones powered by the FirstNet network are enabling 9-1-1 dispatchers to take calls and handle Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) operations from their homes and remote locations. “We didn’t want to rely on people’s home internet because we know they can lose connectivity. We know we won’t lose connectivity with FirstNet.” – **Renee Gordon, Director of Department of Emergency & Customer Communications (DECC), City of Alexandria, VA**

COORDINATING MULTI-AGENCY RESPONSE

- In Indiana, Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) medical supplies were received and distributed from a central location at Stout Field, Indiana Air National Guard Headquarters. Multiple state and local agencies came together to ensure that critical supplies reached local communities as quickly as possible. FirstNet provided seamless interoperability with the statewide radio system, which helped multi-agency communications and improved operations at Stout Field, Indiana Air National Guard Headquarters. “The Indiana State Department of Health team leading this effort carried either radios or cell phones – or both – and communication became quite difficult. We suggested they try FirstNet, and connected an existing LMR talkgroup to the FirstNet ePTT app. This solution really simplified and streamlined their communication process. They’re now FirstNet believers.” – **Kelly Dignin, Executive Director, Integrated Public Safety Commission**

FirstNet: Connecting and Protecting Communities

While COVID-19 has been front and center for all of public safety, agencies have had to respond to other emergencies and incidents, and FirstNet has been there to assist. The network covers more than 99% of the U.S. population, making rural coverage a top priority, and is the only nationwide, high-speed broadband network that is dedicated to America’s first responders.

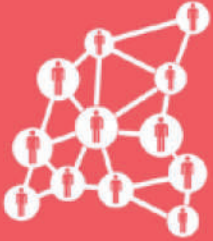
Rural and Remote America – FirstNet is bringing more connectivity and innovation to first responders operating in rural communities across the country. This includes adding rural coverage where it did not previously exist, such as the purpose-built FirstNet cell site on the [Red Cliff Reservation in Wisconsin](#).

Telehealth – Health facilities are increasingly using telehealth applications to treat patients from a distance, and these applications can be data intensive and have a low tolerance for latency or jitter. FirstNet provides the bandwidth and capacity that enables video and photos to be used for telehealth purposes. The data prioritization on FirstNet gives first responders and health workers a network that will be there when they need it most.

Innovation – FirstNet is enabling a growing ecosystem of devices and apps for public safety personnel. More than 100 apps have been tested for additional security and reliability and are identified for public safety’s use in the FirstNet App Catalog. Further, while consumers are using more apps to manage working from home and helping their children with distance learning, public safety agencies across the country are using the FirstNet App Catalog as they adjust and modify their response to COVID-19. In addition, the FirstNet Authority guides the future technology evolution of the network through its Roadmap and investments.

10 WAYS FIRSTNET WILL HELP PUBLIC SAFETY SAVE LIVES AND SECURE COMMUNITIES

Across the country, public safety personnel bravely serve their communities every day, answering the call when emergencies strike and risking their lives to secure and protect others. FirstNet is developing the first nationwide public safety broadband network to provide them the advanced communication and collaboration technologies they need. Here are ten ways FirstNet will help public safety save lives and secure communities:



1. Improving communications through an interoperable network

Today, first responders rely on more than 10,000 separate, incompatible, and often proprietary radio networks to communicate with each other during emergencies. Sometimes it's hard, or even impossible, for public safety to communicate and work together to save lives. To help address this challenge, the FirstNet network will be a single, nationwide, interoperable LTE network dedicated to public safety communications.



2. Connecting responders in rural America

Emergencies don't happen only in highly populated areas – which is why reaching rural America is one of FirstNet's top priorities. FirstNet is addressing rural coverage needs in multiple ways to deploy the network in places where coverage may be difficult. High-power towers can cover more rural space with less total infrastructure, as can deployable and satellite solutions.



3. Enhancing situational awareness in emergencies

FirstNet will carry high-speed data, location information, images, and video that can mean all the difference when seconds count. Just as smartphones have created a new era of real-time information and connectedness for individuals, the FirstNet network, devices, and applications will enable the awareness and collaboration the public safety community needs to save lives.



4. Giving public safety true priority

During emergencies, public safety needs to be able to communicate without interruption – lives depend on it. It is vital that our nation's law enforcement officers, firefighters, paramedics, and other responders have true priority for their daily and emergency communications needs. This is why FirstNet is deploying a wireless broadband network dedicated to public safety.



5. Offering vital capacity for planned events, large crowds

Emergencies aren't the only times when public safety needs capacity to communicate and send data. Planned events – like concerts, festivals, and sporting events – draw crowds to a single location, making it difficult for public safety to get the robust network capacity they need to do their jobs. That's where FirstNet will help, by providing needed bandwidth to coordinate public safety resources and respond to any incidents.

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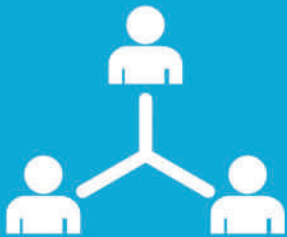
6. Delivering actionable data via innovative apps, devices

Public safety needs data communications in the field and innovative public safety communications technology. That's why the FirstNet network is designed to deliver applications, devices, and services tailored to the needs of public safety. FirstNet will be a resilient, reliable network, enabling everything from smartphones to laptops, tablets, dongles, and specialty devices to work when public safety needs them the most.



7. Providing reliability and security when disaster strikes

First responders in every state face the challenge of preparing for and responding to natural disasters. Having reliable communications is an integral component of any plan or response effort. FirstNet can help public safety save lives and secure communities by ensuring a reliable communication system is in place to assist public safety and rescue crews before, during, and after a natural disaster.



8. Ensuring coordinated response to man-made disasters

In the face of man-made attacks or natural disasters, the ability to communicate is essential to first responders. Incident commanders need to convey vital data to every first responder—fast. They need to know if resources from neighboring jurisdictions can be available. FirstNet is working to deliver a broadband network with interoperability built-in from day one to enhance public safety's ability to protect and serve.



9. Driving innovation in life-saving, public safety communications technology

With the potential for millions of users on a single LTE network, FirstNet hopes to foster creation of a new ecosystem in which entities compete to deliver applications and other services through the FirstNet network. The nationwide scale brought by FirstNet will maximize the value of every public safety dollar spent by allowing public safety end-users to take advantage of an increasingly competitive marketplace.



10. The network first responders need to keep our communities safe

FirstNet is taking a “for public safety, by public safety” approach to planning and deploying the network. Through its consultation and outreach program, FirstNet has worked hand-in-hand with the public safety community to understand the capacity, coverage, service, and other public-safety-grade features they need to communicate and use 21st-century tools on the job.