

PSCR to Focus on Public-Safety Broadband Interoperability Tests (4/16/12)

The Public Safety Communications Research (PSCR) team said it is changing its test plan for the 700 MHz public-safety demonstration broadband network because of the passage of the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012.

“The need to test interoperability has become a major concern and point of interest to all of our stakeholders,” said Emil Olbrich, PSCR lead project engineer for the public-safety broadband network. “Interoperability has and continues to be a key requirement for the FCC waiver recipients (e.g. FCC interoperability showing), and the creation of an FCC Interoperability Board to support FirstNet has been a primary requirement by public safety in the creation of a nationwide network.”

Therefore, PSCR will suspend all Phase 2.1 and Phase 2.2 testing indefinitely and accelerate Phase 3 testing, which includes device and system interoperability testing, in addition to other multiuser and load tests.

About two years ago, PSCR staff put a three-phase test plan in place for the network. Three vendors — Alcatel-Lucent, Motorola Solutions and Harris/Nokia Siemens Networks (NSN) — completed Phase 1 or basic functionality testing with artificial network loading, and Alcatel-Lucent completed the first part of the Phase 2 testing, which includes the physical layer and throughput.

The second part of Phase 2 was planned to test alarming and performance. Phase 3 will test interoperability between public-safety systems and how they interact. For example, it will test how a public-safety network in Harris County, Texas, connects to a public-safety network in Charlotte, N.C., with equipment from different vendors.

The new Phase 3 focus will be on radio access network (RAN) and evolved packet core (EPC) interoperability testing, but if time permits, the federal group will execute some high-level device interoperability tests. In March, [Olbrich said public-safety LTE devices](#)

were still in short supply.

PSCR plans to release a draft test plan outline in early May. Input from cooperative research and development agreement (CRADA) vendor stakeholders will be important, and PSCR will set up meetings with its CRADA partners to facilitate the change, Olbrich said.



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