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## **HISTORIC AGREEMENT TO AID FIRST RESPONDERS ANNOUNCED**

Public/private sector forges alliance to help save lives of  
First Responders and disaster victims

**WASHINGTON, DC – March 26, 2008** – Fire fighters and other first responders must make informed decisions during emergency incidents and rescue efforts. Often they need new supporting information – data that is vital to help save lives or even themselves.

Now, an historic agreement between the Emergency Interoperability Consortium (EIC) and Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has been signed to help further the continued development of data sharing standards for the emergency response community. With the endorsement of Department of Homeland Security Under-Secretary Admiral Jay Cohen, this unique relationship, thought to be the first of its kind between DHS and a non-government entity, strengthens an established alliance between the organizations to jointly promote the design, development, release, and use of standards to help solve data sharing problems commonly encountered during life-saving emergency operations.

“By integrating these data technology capabilities on a platform, we’re making it viable to provide data interoperability among fire, law enforcement, emergency medical services, Hazmat, and supporting agencies such as county health and transportation,” says Los Angeles Fire Department Battalion Chief Robert Cramer. “Creating a common operating picture across multiple agencies and jurisdictions can reduce response times and save more lives.”

By working together, both DHS and the EIC believe that government and industry can more quickly and cost-effectively bridge the data sharing gap between organizations that must be able to interoperate in response to the natural and man-made hazards that form the core of the DHS mission.

Numerous federal, state and local organizations as well as private industry benefit from the collaborative efforts of the DHS/EIC relationship. Utilization of the Common Alerting Protocol (CAP) and the Emergency Data Exchange Language (EDXL) OASIS standards, and several other supporting standards form an interoperable data sharing communications bridge linking organizations, government entities and the general public.

"The collaboration between the EIC and DHS is integral to the successful acceleration of data messaging standards," says DHS Command, Control and Interoperability Program Manager Denis Gusty. "DHS looks forward to its continued work with the EIC in support of improved interoperability standards for emergency management."

Specific objectives of the alliance, as specified in the Memorandum of Agreement, are to:

- Improve information sharing capabilities to protect the nation and its citizens from the consequences of disasters and other emergencies, regardless of cause;
- Encourage broad-based participation in the design, development, acceptance, and use of XML standards to enable emergency organizations to receive and share data in real time;
- Educate federal, state, local, and tribal governments, the media, citizens, and industry on the meaning and importance of data sharing within the emergency response communities;
- Promote innovation in these communities around open architectures and standards;
- Foster a collaborative working environment among federal, state, local, and tribal jurisdictions on these matters.

"Having a DHS/EIC Agreement provides significant credibility to the commitment private industry continues to make in the development of commercially sustainable interoperable solutions built to Federal standards," commented David Lamensdorf, EIC Chairman and CEO of

Los Angeles based Safe Environment Engineering, a manufacturer and developer of Hazmat and first response solutions. “The proven success of this alliance provides revolutionary solutions to data interoperability issues to aid all first responders and emergency management officials in their life-saving mission for the public.”

### **About the EIC**

The Emergency Interoperability Consortium (EIC) recommends and assists with the implementation of technical interoperability standards for emergency and incident management. The Consortium consists of both public and private entities to ensure the practical use of open standards. Most notably, the EIC maintains a formal agreement with the Department of Homeland Security, as well as membership in OASIS (the Organization for the Advancement of Structured Information Standards), an international open standards consortium.

The EIC has cooperated with DHS, worked with and in its practitioner working groups to develop detailed requirements for standards, organized interoperability demonstrations using draft and final standards, and submitted requirements to OASIS to initiate formal standards development. Through participation in OASIS Emergency Management Technical Committee, the EIC has contributed to the ratification of an alerting messaging standard called the Common Alerting Protocol (CAP) and a distribution method called the Emergency Data Exchange Language (EDXL) Distribution Element, both of which are approved OASIS standards. Current and future work includes Resource Management, Hospital Availability, Resource Messaging and Incident Reporting.

Membership in the EIC benefits both private sector and the emergency response community by influencing the standards and best practices that enable data information interoperability.

For more information on the EIC, see [www.eic.org](http://www.eic.org), or contact Tracy Ryan at 703-242-8445 or [tracy.ryan@eic.org](mailto:tracy.ryan@eic.org).

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