

DHS Science and Technology Directorate

Project 25 Compliance Assessment Program

Formal compliance testing for land mobile radios

To successfully respond to both day-to-day and large-scale incidents, first responders must be able to communicate regardless of equipment make or model. Today, this can be challenging because communications equipment manufacturers often use different technical approaches that leave their products incompatible. Although the use of broadband networks is increasing, land mobile radio networks are still the network of choice for first responders' mission critical voice needs. Project 25 (P25) is a suite of standards which enable interoperability among digital two-way land mobile radio communications products created by and for public safety professionals. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security Science and Technology Directorate (S&T) partnered with the Department of Commerce Public Safety Communications Research program to establish the P25 Compliance Assessment Program (P25 CAP).

P25 CAP is a formal, independent process for ensuring that communications equipment declared by the supplier to be P25 compliant, in fact, is tested against the standards with publicly published results. Through this open standards testing process, P25 CAP provides responders confidence that the communications equipment they use will be interoperable, regardless of manufacturer. Specifically, this voluntary program provides public safety agencies with evidence that the communications equipment they purchase is tested against and complies with the P25 standards for performance, conformance and interoperability. Compliance testing concludes with official summary test reports and suppliers' declaration of compliance documents. S&T makes test results available to first responders at <http://www.firstresponder.gov/P25CAP>, a one-stop shop for all information on P25 CAP.

Helping to ensure interoperability by informing procurement decisions

By arming first responders with the necessary information they need to make informed procurement decisions, P25 CAP helps advance interoperability in the public safety environment. In addition, by encouraging the purchase of P25 CAP-compliant communications equipment in grant guidance, P25 CAP helps to ensure federal grant funds are used to purchase interoperable solutions for local, tribal and state first responders. Ultimately, this promotes interoperability and reduces waste and poor investments in untested equipment.



A series of P25 CAP logos for use by DHS and participating stakeholders

Program framework and path forward

S&T selected three internationally recognized laboratory accreditation bodies to review and accredit participating P25 CAP laboratories. Once accredited, S&T assesses and recognizes the laboratory for participation in the program. With this distinction, the laboratory can test land mobile radio equipment for P25 CAP compliance. Recently, S&T developed a series of program logos to help make these distinctions and better communicate among its stakeholders.

S&T has partnered with the Association of Public Safety Communications Officials to support its efforts with the program and specifically to help with the re-establishment of its governance structure. To this end, S&T created the P25 CAP Advisory Panel (AP), which provides the views of active local, state, tribal, territorial and federal government officials who use or whose offices use portable handheld and mobile vehicle-mounted radios. The duties of the P25 CAP AP include reviewing and commenting on new proposed Compliance Assessment Bulletins (CABs), proposing changes to existing CABs and addressing P25 user input for improving functionality through the standards-making process. The P25 CAP AP, in coordination with S&T, will establish a charter and meet on a regular basis to address P25 CAP matters.