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**DHS Needs to Improve Grant Guidance for
Public Safety Communications Equipment**

A new audit by the Department of Homeland Security Inspector General concludes that DHS grant guidance does not contain specific requirements for acquiring interoperable emergency communications equipment. The OIG initiated the audit at Congress' request, following various media reports that questioned Motorola's business tactics in the public safety communications equipment market.

Without clear grant guidance requiring interoperability, grantees could use DHS grant funds to purchase non-interoperable equipment, preventing first responders from communicating effectively during an emergency. Between Fiscal Years 2012 and 2014, \$5.16 billion in DHS grant funding was eligible for the purchase of interoperable communications equipment.

After 9/11, congressional concerns led to legislation intended to improve the interoperability of emergency communications equipment. As recently as January 2015, the significance of interoperable communications equipment was demonstrated when radios failed to operate during an emergency incident in the Washington, D.C. Metro system.

"Ensuring interoperable communications is a vital aspect of the homeland security mission," said Inspector General John Roth. "I am pleased that the Department has agreed with our recommendations to improve its grant guidance, which should ensure that taxpayer funds are used to purchase equipment that will actually work in an emergency."

This report follows prior OIG audit findings that DHS' own components have not achieved radio interoperability.

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