



# Fact Sheet

## Communications Sector-Specific Agency

**What Federal Government agency has the responsibility for coordinating the communications sector activities?** The National Communications System (NCS) serves as the Sector-Specific Agency (SSA) for the Communications Sector. NCS is responsible for coordinating the reduction of risk for the Communications Sector under Homeland Security Presidential Directive 7 (HSPD-7); and is accountable to the Executive and Legislative branches to demonstrate progress in the sector's Critical Infrastructure and Key Resources (CIKR) protective posture.

**What are Sector-Specific Agencies?** The SSAs are Federal departments and agencies identified under HSPD-7 as responsible for the protection activities in specified CIKR sectors. The SSAs implement the National Infrastructure Protection Plan (NIPP) framework and guidance as tailored to the specific characteristics and risk landscapes of each of the CIKR sectors.

**What agencies work with the SSAs?** The private sector owns the vast majority of the communications infrastructure in the United States. This requires the NCS to work closely with the private sector and its industry associations to identify critical infrastructure, assess and prioritize risks, develop protective programs, and measure program effectiveness. The private sector and government have organized two councils that support the communications sector – the Communications Sector Coordinating Council (CSCC) and the Communications Government Coordinating Council (CGCC).

**How does the CSCC provide support to the Communications Sector?** The CSCC consists of 31 member private sector organizations representing cable, commercial and public broadcasters; information service providers; satellite communications providers; utility telecommunications providers, service integrators, equipment vendors, and the wireless and wireline owners and operators, as well as their respective trade associations. The CSCC assists the CGCC by coordinating initiatives to improve the physical and cyber security of sector assets; to ease the flow of information within the sector, across sectors and with designated Federal agencies; and to address issues related to response and recovery under all hazards to assure the continued operation of vital communications services. A full list of CSCC members is available at <http://www.commscc.org>.

**What Government Agencies comprise the CGCC?** Currently, the CGCC consists of members from the Federal Communications Commission, Department of Energy, Department of Homeland Security, National Telecommunications and Information Administration, Department of Commerce, Department of Interior, Department of Justice, and Department of Defense.

**How does the CGCC provide support to the Communications Sector?** The Communications Government Coordinating Council provides coordination of CIKR strategies and activities, policy, and communication across government and between the government and the communications sector to support the Nation's homeland security mission. In addition, the CGCC coordinates with and supports the efforts of the CSCC to plan, implement, and execute sufficient and necessary sector-wide security to support CIKR protective postures. The CGCC serves to leverage complementary resources within government, as well as between government and industry.

**How is the Communications Sector defined?** The communications sector is an integral component of the U.S. economy, as it underlies the operations of all businesses, public safety organizations, and government. Over the last 25 years, the sector has evolved from a predominantly voice-centric monolithic service into a diverse, competitive, and interconnected industry using terrestrial, satellite, and wireless transmission systems. These services are very interconnected; satellite, wireless, and wireline providers depend on each other to carry and terminate their traffic, and companies routinely share facilities and technology to ensure interoperability. Long established processes and procedures for network security and rapid response and recovery under all hazards ensure the continued operation of vital communications services. Focused risk management and infrastructure protection are integral to the sector's business continuity planning and network design processes.

**What is the Sector Specific Plan?** Sector Specific Plans (SSPs) detail the application of the National Infrastructure Protection Plan (NIPP) risk management framework to the unique characteristics and risk landscape of each sector and provide the means by which the NIPP is implemented across all critical infrastructure and key resources sectors. The NCS developed an SSP through a coordinated effort involving their public and private communications sector partners. The last Communications SSP was published in June 2010. The SSP can be downloaded at the following link: <http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/nipp-ssp-communications-2010.pdf>.

**What is the Sector Annual Report?** The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in conjunction with the CSCC writes and releases the Communications Sector Annual Report, detailing the communications sector progress toward achieving goals and objectives. DHS incorporates the sector's annual report into the National CIKR Annual Report which details all eighteen sector-specific agencies' progress on goals and objectives for the past year.

**For Further Information:** contact [ncsweb1@dhs.gov](mailto:ncsweb1@dhs.gov) or visit the link provided <http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/IS860a/CIRC/communications1.htm>.