

US assesses mitigation tactics against jamming

Nearly 100 federal, state, and local public safety and private organizations gathered in week ending 22 July to test tactics and technologies to identify, locate and mitigate illegal jamming of communications systems, such as GPS, radio and wireless systems.

The 2017 First Responder Electronic Jamming Exercise (JamX 17) was hosted by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Science and Technology Directorate (S&T) from 16-22 July, at the Department of Energy's Idaho National Laboratory in Idaho Falls, Idaho.

Representatives from US Customs and Border Protection, US Coast Guard, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and the Marine Corps Warfighter Laboratory, joined nearly 300 participants from across the country.

In the words of Acting Under Secretary for Science and Technology William N Bryan: *'For the first responders who are charged with protecting our communities, communications are a lifeline. Americans rely on first responders, and responders rely on their ability to communicate. S&T is committed to ensuring that responders have the tools they need for consistent, uninterrupted communications – its mission critical.'*

Jamming devices are illegal, and may delay emergency response times, escalate hazardous situations, or result in loss of life. S&T's First Responder Electronic Jamming Exercise initiative is combatting illegal jamming threats through

Said Sridhar Kowdley, JamX 17 exercise director from S&T's First Responders Group: *'Last year, S&T's jamming exercise assessed jamming vulnerabilities in responder communications systems. This year, the focus was on evaluating solutions to increase communications resiliency by helping responders recognize, respond to, report and resolve jamming incidents.'*

It is understood that S&T and JamX 17 participants will analyse the results from the exercise to provide recommendations and operational tools for public safety and law enforcement agencies.

In conclusion Bryan said: *'Homeland security starts with hometown security. Mitigating the potential impacts of jamming is vital to ensure the security of American communities.'*