

# 2009 EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES SURVEY



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY  
SEPTEMBER 2009

Produced by:

In Partnership With:

GOVERNMENT TECHNOLOGY'S  
**EMERGENCY**  
MANAGEMENT

Sprint  BlackBerry 



## INTRODUCTION

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Natural disasters, public health scares and sophisticated security threats require our nation to be prepared on a moment's notice, yet many emergency management organizations report that they lack the funding, staffing and requisite communications tools to execute effective emergency planning and response. In our most recent survey, the vast majority of jurisdictions are able to cover day-to-day operations, but 87.3% lack the funding to respond to a major disaster. 92.6% don't have the necessary staff for such an event. In these difficult economic times, it is perhaps no surprise that many emergency management plans are out-of-date; that some fell short of full National Incident Management System (NIMS) compliance; or that full cross-boundary interoperability was not yet achieved.

The conditions are right for emergency management officials to adopt cost-effective mobile technologies to make their responders safer and more effective. The deployment of advanced mobile technology to the field is only scratching the surface of its potential to make communities safer and more secure. Less than 8% of jurisdictions have deployed the type of robust, real-time mobile tools that provide responders with instant situational awareness. Not only would these technologies deliver integrated voice, data services, geographic information, system access, and video surveillance to a handheld platform on the front lines, but they would also improve cross-boundary interoperability.

The purpose of this survey is to give you a high-level understanding of where this community sits in terms of mobile technology usage, and an opportunity to benchmark your own organization's capabilities today, and where you want them to be in the future.

## SURVEY METHODOLOGY & PARTICIPANTS

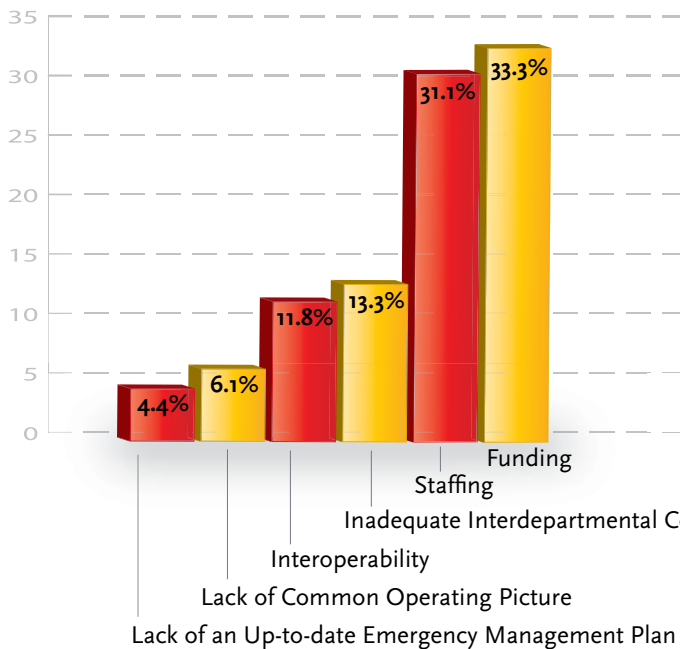
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This online survey was sent to a random selection of emergency management decision makers in specific, targeted roles. **701 responses** were collected from top officials, IT professionals, and agency executives regarding these important issues. Respondents shared candid, detailed feedback about their recent achievements and current challenges. The insights drawn from this data paint a picture of the issues that are top-of-mind for emergency responders today.



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY HIGHLIGHTS

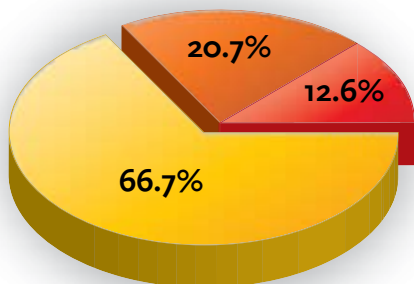
1. Of the below, which is the one biggest challenge your agency/jurisdiction faces today in being able to handle a major incident such as a natural disaster or terrorist threat?



**64%** A wide margin of 64% of respondents said that resource constraints posed the biggest challenge to their plans to handle a major disaster. 33% cited a lack of funding as their top concern, while 31% said they lacked the necessary staff to respond.

2. Which description below best describes your department/agency's staffing levels?

Inadequate to meet day-to-day operational needs.



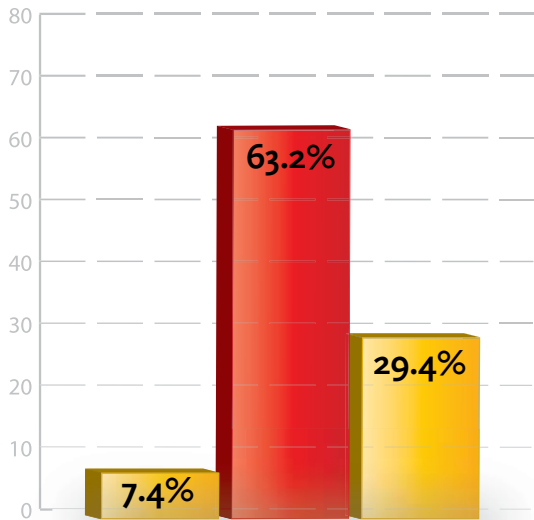
Adequate to meet the needs of day-to-day operations but not able to handle a major incident.

More than adequate to meet needs for a major incident as well as day-to-day operations.

**67%** 67% of government officials feel that their staffing levels are sufficient to handle day-to-day operations, but only 12.7% said the same about their ability to handle a major incident.



**3. In your opinion, how would you describe your department/jurisdiction's current funding levels for emergency management or responder operations?**



**7.4%**

Only 7.4% of respondents reported having enough funds to handle a major disaster. 63.1% said they only had sufficient funds for day-to-day operations.

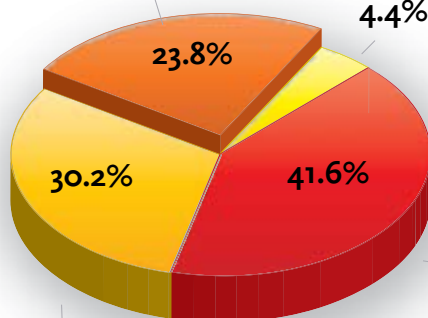
Inadequate to meet day-to-day operational needs.

Adequate to meet the needs of day-to-day operations but not able to handle a major incident.

More than adequate to meet needs for a major incident as well as day-to-day operations.

**4. Which best describes the level of interoperability deployed by your department/agency?**

Fully operational with federal, state & local and non-governmental responder partners.



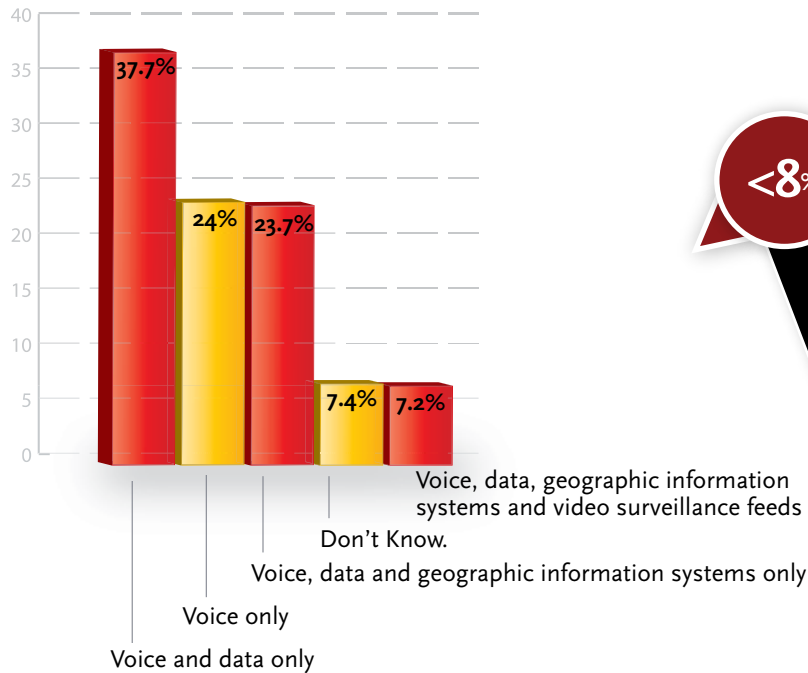
**24%**

Interoperability has come a long way in recent years, but only 24% of government officials reported that they are fully interoperable with federal, state, local, and non-governmental response organizations. There is still much work to be done to bring the remaining 76% up to speed.

Fully operational with other departments in our jurisdiction only.



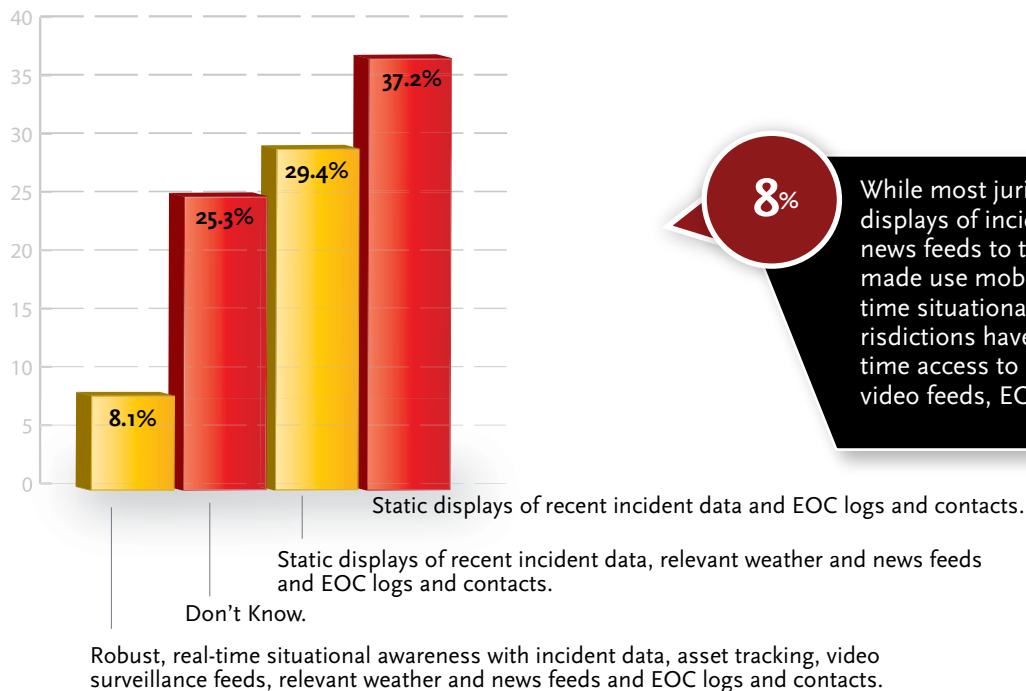
5. In your opinion, what responder information has your department/agency deployed on mobile devices?



<8%

Only a few jurisdictions – less than 8% – were tapping the full emergency management potential of their mobile devices. 24% cannot yet access video surveillance from a handheld, and 36% don't yet provide mobile access to geographic information systems. 62% of jurisdictions report that they are still only using their mobile platforms for voice and/or data services.

6. Of the below, at what level of common operating picture (incident situational awareness) has your department/jurisdiction deployed to mobile responders?

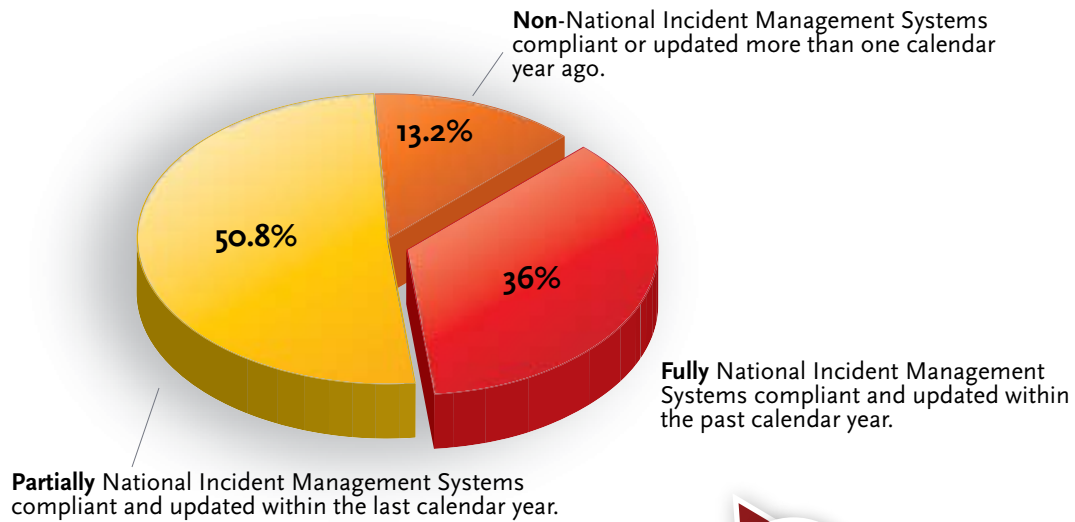


8%

While most jurisdictions are getting static displays of incident reports, weather, and news feeds to the field, very few have yet made use mobile devices for robust, real time situational awareness. Only 8% of jurisdictions have given their responders real-time access to incident data, asset tracking, video feeds, EOC logs, news, and contacts.

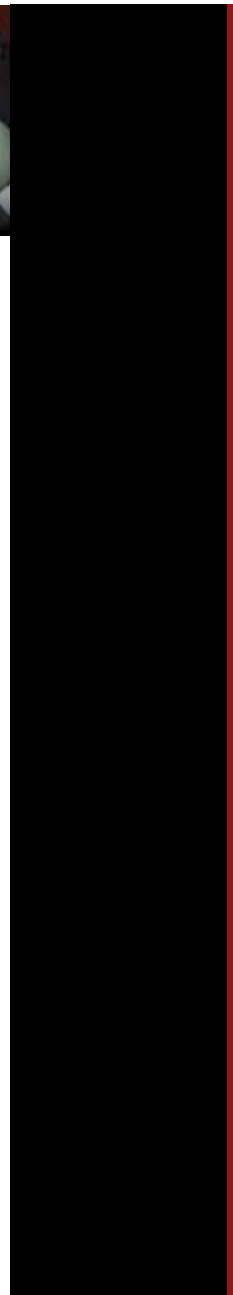


7. In your opinion, how up-to-date is your department/jurisdiction's emergency management plan?



**36%** Only 36% of emergency management plans are fully National Incident Management Systems (NIMS) compliant and were updated in the past year. 51% were partially compliant and updated, while 13% were neither compliant nor up-to-date.





This survey has been conducted in partnership with:

