

Situation Awareness & Collaboration Tool (SCOUT)

FAQ Sheet

Q. What is SCOUT?

A. The California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES)—in association with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) and through a strategic partnership with the Department of Homeland Security's Science & Technology Directorate (DHS S&T)—acquired the Next-Generation Incident Command System (NICS) software for use by California's emergency services professionals. The California deployment of the NICS software is called Situation Awareness and Collaboration Tool (SCOUT). SCOUT provides an information sharing environment to facilitate operational and tactical collaboration among California emergency responders and interagency situational awareness for local, tribal, state, and federal partners on small to extreme scale homeland security incidents, such natural disasters, technological hazards, intentional attacks, and human-caused emergencies.

Q. Which agency administers SCOUT for the State of California?

A. SCOUT is administered by the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services, in association with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. These two agencies are referred to as the "Principal Agencies" within SCOUT documentation.

Q. What is the governance structure for SCOUT?

A. A governance charter is in development. The general approach will include an Executive Committee responsible for SCOUT vision, strategy and funding decisions with a supporting Steering Committee to manage program operations and subject-specific subcommittees to address defined operational needs. As the designated Principal Agencies, Cal OES and CAL FIRE will establish the SCOUT charter.

Sample Structure



Q. What is the administration structure for the SCOUT platform?

A. There are three levels of administration for the SCOUT platform:

Principal Agency & Administrator is responsible for determining the SCOUT strategy and sustainable funding model, as well as, overseeing statewide use of SCOUT, platform maintenance and support, and managing the training curriculum.

Functional Area Administrator is responsible for Participating Agency management, coordination and support.

Agency Administrator is responsible for managing the Participating Agency's SCOUT standard operating procedures and user account set up, training and helpdesk support.



Q. How will SCOUT be rolled out to the user community?

A. SCOUT will be rolled out in three phases through 2017.

Phase 1 - April 2016: Agencies participating in the NICS pilot are invited to transition to SCOUT.

Phase 2 - Summer 2016: Select agencies will be invited to join SCOUT in a controlled expansion.

Phase 3 - 2017: SCOUT will open to all interested and eligible agencies.

Transition to each phase will be based on the stability and performance of the platform and program operations. Visit www.caloes.ca.gov/scout for the most current status of the rollout plan.

Q. What information will authorized users be able to access through SCOUT?

A. Authorized users will be able to view, search and add incident information—based on user roles and permissions—for a variety of incident types, including but not limited to wild land fires, floods, search & rescue missions, special events, earthquakes and homeland security incidents. Also, SCOUT will integrate incident information with other relevant geographical information, such as weather conditions, road conditions, utilities, census information, known hazards, and government boundaries.

Q. How will authorized users access SCOUT?

A. Authorized users can access SCOUT through any network connected device (e.g., PC, laptop, tablet, or smartphone) that is approved through their internal agency policy.

Q. Will there be a limit to the number of users per Participating Agency?

A. No. Participating Agencies are responsible for managing internal use of SCOUT, in accordance with SCOUT policy, procedures, and protocols (PPPs), and are authorized to determine the appropriate users within their agency.

Q. Will a Participating Agency be required to contribute data in order to participate?

A. No, agencies will not be required to contribute data to access SCOUT.

Q. How much will it cost to become a Participating Agency in SCOUT?

A. The Principal Agencies expect to implement participation fees in 2017. The Principal Agencies will conduct a cost analysis of the first year of operating expenses associated with maintaining, supporting and operating the SCOUT platform and will develop a Sustaining Funding Model for implementation in 2017. In addition to any expected participation fees, Participating Agencies are responsible for providing staff resources for internal administrative and training support needs. If a Participating Agency chooses to integrate their local system(s) with SCOUT, the local agency is responsible for the local system costs incurred to integrate with SCOUT. There are no participation fees in 2016.

Q. How does my agency join SCOUT?

A. We are currently in Phase 1 of the SCOUT rollout, which is open only to agencies already participating in the NICS pilot. Phase 1 eligible agencies have been contacted by the SCOUT Deployment Team. All other agencies will need to review and complete the **SCOUT Onboarding & Registration Process** to join SCOUT. The **Onboarding & Registration Process** is expected to be available at www.caloes.ca.gov/scout in May/June 2016.

Q. Who do I contact for more information about SCOUT?

A. Local Agencies can contact their Cal OES Regional Mutual Aid Coordinator or Regional Administrator.

CAL FIRE Units can contact their Regional Functional Area Administrators:

Northern Region – Chief Dan Dennett and Chief John Erwin

Southern Region – Chief Ron Arbo and Chief Dan Johnson

For more information please visit www.caloes.ca.gov/scout