



Note: This document has been prepared with excerpts from a similar session at the E11P forum and various other documents created by the EDXL Project Team.

What is the DHS/FEMA DM EDXL initiative?

The mission of the Disaster Management (DM) e-Gov Initiative, one of 24 initiatives established by the President's Management Council, is to create a better prepared nation. The program is doing so by meeting the needs of the emergency response community by facilitating the development of practitioner-driven interoperability standards. This is not a federal standards effort; it was initiated to improve the nation's preparedness and serves responders at the local, state, tribal, and federal levels.

What is EDXL?

EDXL stands for "Emergency Data eXchange Language". EDXL is intended to be a suite of specific XML-based messaging standards.

Why is this important, and why should I care about data standards?

If you take a quick look around the country, you will see that the standards process needs further development. Most organizations don't have software to help manage emergencies, and if they do, they cannot share incident information with other organizations very well. By creating standards for information exchange, we can bridge the gap between different software products.

Who is involved in this initiative?

The EDXL initiative is a national effort including a diverse and representative group of local, state and federal emergency response organizations and professionals, following a multi-step process.

Since the key purpose of this effort is to enable cross-profession messaging, each scenario and subcommittee was designed to include participants from a broad range of emergency response practitioner organizations. They are:

- 9-1-1
- Emergency management
- EMS
- Fire
- Hospitals
- Law Enforcement
- Public Health
- Transportation

What has been developed or adopted so far in the process?

The following summarizes EDXL standards components and message sets identified to date, which are at different development cycles. While some have been developed by the project team, others have been adopted.

- EDXL Distribution Element
- Common Alerting Protocol
- Resource Message Set
- Hospital Availability Exchange

What is the Standards development process?

The standards development effort is simplified and summarized below:

- Step 1 : Initial meeting of practitioners to define and prioritize requirements
- Step 2: Iterative discussion and development of draft specification by the Standards Working Group
- Step3: Limited trials and demonstrations by technology companies to validate and vet the technical feasibility
- Step 4: Endorsement by the responsible executive committees and other strategic committees
- Step 5: Submission of the specification to the appropriate standards organization.