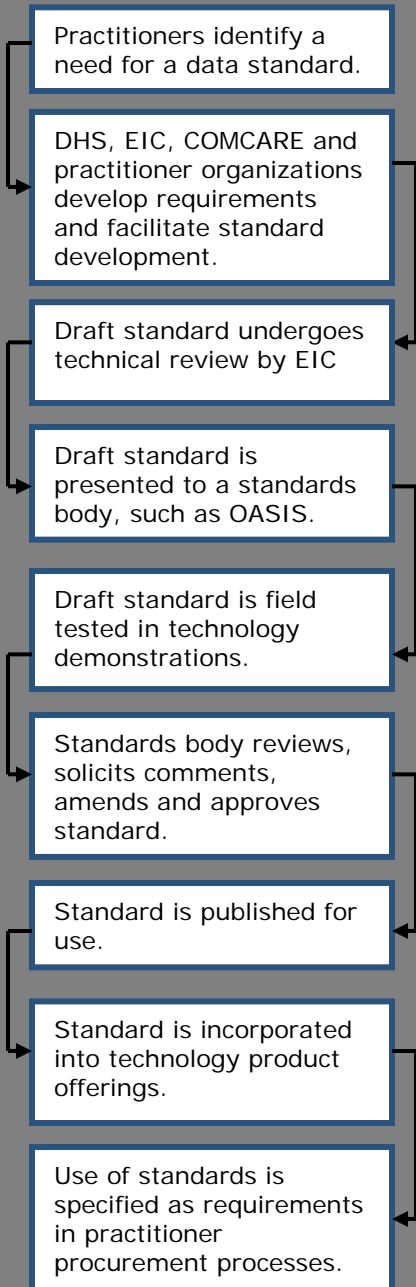




# Interoperability Pavilion\*

## Standards Development Process



## Emergency Standards Development Process

### NEED FOR STANDARDS

Emergencies demand real time data and all phases of emergency response would benefit from having data from a variety of sources. This need for data underscores the need for data standards. Without standards, widespread information sharing cannot occur. By standardizing data elements across domains and reusing these data elements in message standards, the data interoperability dream can become a reality across the entire emergency response community.

Messaging standards specify “how” electronic messages should be formatted or structured. Terminology standards deal with the content or vocabularies of the actual data elements, basically the “what” of the message.

### THE EDXL PROCESS

The Emergency Data eXchange Language (EDXL) process is sponsored by the Department of Homeland Security’s Disaster Management E-Gov Initiative. It uses a local and state emergency responder perspective. The process brings together leaders from a wide diversity of national emergency response practitioner organizations to create detailed requirements and draft specifications for information exchange among all emergency response agencies and professions based on specific emergency response scenarios. Technical input is provided by the vendor community, led by EIC.

EDXL is focused on message structure – the “how” discussed above. Its messages draw on the content (the “what”) developed by other initiatives such as the National Information Exchange Model, the Global Justice project, and others.

Once draft message standards are complete, they are confirmed by a broader audience of practitioners and validated by the technology vendor community through live demonstrations. Then they are submitted to an official standards development body, such as OASIS. The OASIS Emergency Management Technical Committee solicits and addresses broader public comments concerning the specifications. At the end of the comment period, the standard is amended, voted on, and made available for broad scale use. Vendors can incorporate the standard into their current product offerings; practitioners can require the use of the standard when procuring technology products.

### IMPORTANCE OF OPEN STANDARDS

An open standard means that the standard was developed and approved using a published transparent and vendor neutral process that utilizes public comment and input. It is available in stable, persistent versions.

By using and supporting open standards, an emergency organization can increase the value of its technology investments and can realize greater data portability. They provide emergency agencies with the beginnings of a data interoperability blueprint. Agencies can leverage their existing technology by having their vendors modify systems to meet new standards instead of developing one off interfaces for each agency with which they want to communicate.

\*Sponsored by IAEM, COMCARE, EIC and Roaming Messenger.