



**INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE CHIEFS
CHANTILLY, VIRGINIA**

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PRESS RELEASE

**9/11 Communications Lessons Forgotten
Almost 2 Decades Later Emergency Radio Channels Used for COVID & Terrorism Scheduled to be
Cut**

Key radio channels used by FDNY and fire departments across the country will be lost if action isn't taken soon. Radio channels used for COVID-19 and terrorism response will be auctioned off by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), leaving some of the nation's fire departments with limited options for crucial emergency radio traffic.

"Only Congress can save the day. Without intervention in the coming weeks, the FCC will be forced to auction the spectrum known as T-Band," says Chief Gary Ludwig, International Association of Fire Chiefs' (IAFC) President (2019-2020). "This will be a major setback to the interoperability infrastructure the U.S. has built in response to the lessons learned from the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001."

Losing T-Band will leave New York and ten other major metropolitan fire and EMS departments with serious communications problems - and this comes at a time when there is already very

little money available for new equipment. The estimated cost to replace public safety communications systems is more than \$5 billion.

In Los Angeles, the T-Band provides a crucial link between fire, EMS, law enforcement, and the 9-1-1 public safety answering point. Recently the FCC allowed New York to expand its use of T-Band as part of the city's COVID-19 response.

FCC Chairman Ajit Pai and the Government Accountability Office (GAO) believe a change of course from the original congressional mandate of an auction is necessary. Both have taken the position that public safety agencies should retain the T-Band spectrum. Most experts have serious doubts that an auction would be successful in covering the costs of relocating public safety agencies.

Chief Ludwig says, "We know of the great support in Washington for public safety around the country. We are confident every member of Congress will want to join us in making sure we don't halt the progress that fire, EMS, and law enforcement agencies have made since one of the darkest days in our country's history."

The T-Band spectrum is scheduled to be auctioned in February of 2021.

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About the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC): The [IAFC](https://www.iafc.org/) represents the leadership of firefighters and emergency responders worldwide; our members are the world's leading experts in firefighting, emergency medical services, terrorism response, hazardous materials spills, natural disasters, search and rescue, and public safety policy. Our mission is to LEAD, SERVE, and EDUCATE.