

ICE Participation Benefits

The Industry Collaboration Events (ICE) program, spearheaded by the National Emergency Number Association (NENA), plays a pivotal role in the development and implementation of Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG9-1-1) systems. As the future of emergency response, NG9-1-1 relies heavily on the interoperability of various technologies and systems provided by vendors. ICE helps vendors understand how their products will work in an environment populated by products from other vendors. Where there are issues with interoperability, participating in ICE can help them understand why. Whether it's a misinterpretation of a standard, lack of clarity / flaw in a standard, or simply a bug, participating in ICE can help identify issues of critical importance to NG9-1-1 multi-vendor interoperability.

ICE has, historically, tested standards that are emerging or that cover topics of significant importance to the future of 9-1-1. By participating in the ICE program, vendors can test their production and in-development products and services with other vendors against standards defining what 9-1-1 systems will be in the future helping them to get ahead of the technology curve regarding these important topics. It also helps vendors increase their confidence level that their implementations will be built on a common understanding of the standards, consistent with their peers. This common understanding and interpretation of standards is key to interoperability.

OVERALL BENEFITS OF THE ICE PROGRAM INCLUDE:

Accelerated Product Development Cycles: Non-interoperable systems inevitably lead to real-world deployments that create unexpected behaviors, extending project timelines, and potentially leading to product development schedules being adjusted to address the unexpected behaviors. ICE gives vendors and their product development teams an opportunity to dramatically reduce the potential for these types of outcomes in a safe and protected environment, increasing the vendor's efficiency and customer satisfaction.

Increased Market Opportunities: By participating in ICE events, and letting customers know they did so, vendors can demonstrate to their customers that they take the future of 9-1-1 seriously and are willing to work with their competitors in a common effort to improve that future. While specific test outcomes of ICE are not available to the public, there are ample opportunities for vendors to highlight their participation in ICE and demonstrate their commitment to the 9-1-1 community. ICE participants are awarded a certification of participation that can be used for marketing purposes subject to the ICE Code of Conduct.

Better Contributions to Industry Standards: Industry standards are the bedrock of an effective and interoperable 9-1-1 system. ICE helps vendors exercise these standards and test the theories and concepts developed in the workgroups of various standards development organizations (SDOs), including NENA. ICE helps expose issues with standards and allows vendors to collaborate on recommendations for changes to the applicable standards and SDOs. ICE must be a critical element of a vendor's test plan as they evolve their NG9-1-1 products from concept to successful customer deployment.

For information on ICE, visit the website at <https://nena.org/ICE>.