PUBLIC SAFETY CLOUD STANDARDS

Transitioning to the Cloud with Confidence

Ryan Yoakam | Founder

Public Safety in the Cloud: What Agencies Need to Understand Before Making the Move

My Background

The Public Safety Cloud Expert

17+ Years in Public Safety | Last 7 Focused on Cloud Operations

Wrote the book on Public Safety in the Cloud

Technical, operational, security, compliance, and leadership background

Led evolution from lift-and-shift to cloud-optimized/cloud-native models

Supported first customer go-live and scaled cloud operations across 100+ agencies

Oversaw DR, observability, incident response, patching, security, and compliance

Why Public Safety Cloud Standards

You can be

Compliant with

CJIS + SOC + NIST

And still be down for Days

They do not cover Operational Standards

PSCS Covers SLA, RPO/RTO, DR, and more

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What we'll cover

1. Intro
2. Cloud Project Workflow
3. Tech Download
4. Assessment
5. Additional Questions

Common Cloud Operational Questions

What are the networking requirements for the cloud?

What visibility do agencies have into system health?

Is the cloud stable?

What does a maintenance window look like?

What happens when I lose connection?

Are upgrades faster?

How does monitoring and alerting work?

What is the SLA? RPO/RTO?

Can I stop the maintenance window if there's an emergency?

Will I have access to servers?

What's the Disaster Recovery protocol?

How much does it cost?

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Agency & Vendor Assessment

Where Are You in Your Cloud Journey?

Stage 0 - Stay On-Prem

- No active cloud initiative
- Maintaining current operating model
- Cloud unnecessary or too risky

Stage 1 - Evaluating

- Reviewing proposals or contracts
- Reviewing Architecture
- Internal discussions around risk

Stage 2 - Transitioning

- Contract Signed
- Migration planning underway
- Testing, validation, go-live prep

Stage 3 - In Cloud

- Live In Production
- Monitoring Uptime and Performance
- Navigating Incidents and Resiliency

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Everything fails, all the time.
Werner Vogels, Amazon CTO

Cloud Project Workflow

CONTINUOUS THROUGHOUT ALL STAGES

RISK MANAGEMENT
Identify, assess, mitigate, and monitor risks.

REQUIREMENTS TRACEABILITY
Ensure requirements drive decisions and deliverables.

DECISION LOG
Document key decisions and the rationale.

ISSUE TRACKING
Maintain one authoritative issue list across all parties.

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES
Clarify ownership and ensure accountability at every step.

Prior to Discovery

What problem are we trying to solve?

- Hardware refresh
- System upgrade
- Operating system / SQL version migration
- Hypervisor transition (VMWare to Hyper-V)
- New feature requirements
- Compliance requirements
- AI integration or evolution
- Vendor pushing for cloud
- Switching vendors for various reasons
- Or… is there actually a reason to change?

Agency Assessment

Understand where you are before deciding where to go

- What makes us unique?
- How do we operate today?
- What absolutely cannot break or disappear?
- What do we expect to improve? (ROI/TCO)
- What constraints does the future solution have to live within?

Why ask the questions?

- Establish the baseline
- Define expected outcomes
- Identify risks and constraints
- Measure value and success

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Leadership, IT, and Operations need to be aligned

Vendor Assessment

Make sure the solution matches the requirement

Weigh against Agency Assessment

- What are they providing?
- How is the solution designed for resiliency and downtime?
- What access, control, and data rights do we retain?
- What limitations and responsibilities remain with the agency?
- What does it really cost, and does it meet our requirements?

Why ask the questions?

- Validate the solution against agency requirements
- Identify gaps before implementation
- Understand cost vs. capability
- Establish what needs to be addressed in the contract

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Understand the true cost

and what you're getting for it

- TCO / ROI
- What does it really cost?
- What costs disappear, remain, or move somewhere else?
- What new costs are introduced?
- What value are we gaining in return?
- What does the full lifecycle cost look like?

Contract

Make sure the agreement matches the expectations

- Are the requirements from the previous stages reflected in the contract?
- What is the vendor committing to?
- What happens when expectations aren’t met?
- Are responsibilities clearly defined?
- What happens when things change — or when the relationship ends?
- On my last contract review, my first pass identified 25 P1s, 7 P2s, and 3 P3s

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Implementation

Turn the design into an operationally ready system

- Are all interfaces and integrations accounted for?
- Is connectivity built and redundancy configured?
- Is data conversion completed? (if applicable)
- Are security, access, monitoring, and support components configured?
- Does the implemented environment match the agreed design?

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Validation and Readiness

Prove it works — and prepare for the transition

- Have critical workflows been tested end-to-end?
- Have interfaces, connectivity and failover been tested?
- Have maintenance, upgrade, recovery and DR scenarios been tested?
- Is shared responsibility understood?
- What must be completed before we proceed?
- Do we have clear go/no-go and fallback plans?
- Does everyone understand their role on go-live day?

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Go-Live

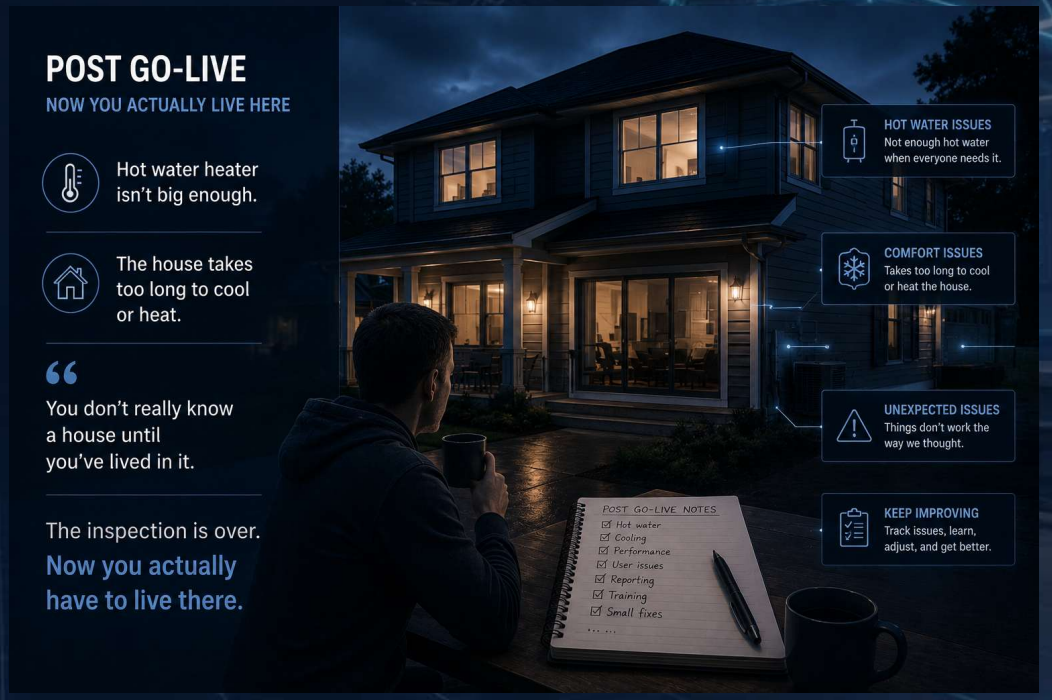
Execute the plan — and be ready to adapt

- Praying
- Not sleeping
- Follow the plan
- Communicate constantly
- Expect the unexpected
- Make decisions quickly
- Preparation determines how well you recover from problems
- Shared lists – issues, changes, enhancements, FAQ

Post Go-Live

Stabilize, validate, and learn

- What didn’t work the way we expected?
- What was missed or misunderstood?
- Are issues being tracked through resolution?
- Are support, maintenance, DR, and escalation processes working?
- Are we seeing the outcomes we expected?
- Do we understand shared responsibility?



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TECH DOWNLOAD
DEEPER INSIGHT. TECHNICAL DETAILS.
THE TECHNOLOGY BEHIND THE TRANSITION.

Tech Download — The Numbers That Matter

What do the commitments mean?

- SLA / Availability — what counts as “down”?
- RTO — how long can recovery take?
- RPO — how much data could we lose?
- Planned maintenance — is it included or excluded?
- DR / Failover — has recovery been tested?

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Tech Download

What Actually Changes in the Cloud?

- Architecture — lift-and-shift, cloud optimized, cloud native
- Shared responsibility — who owns what?
- Support & incidents — who do you call when something breaks?
- Visibility — monitoring, logs, health and troubleshooting
- Access & data — servers, databases, reporting, exports
- Connectivity — the network becomes part of the system

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Assessment

How ready are you?

What Happens to On-Prem Software?

On-prem software rarely disappears quickly – but over time it becomes a supported legacy platform while innovation and investment move to the cloud

Vendors shifting to cloud-first models

Cloud receives most investment

On-prem becomes secondary focus

Long-term cloud migration expected

Why ask the questions?

- Protect your operators
- Vendors often control the pace, language, and messaging
- When agencies ask the same questions, expectations become clearer
- Clear expectations drive cloud standards

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Cloud Confidence Starts with Better Questions

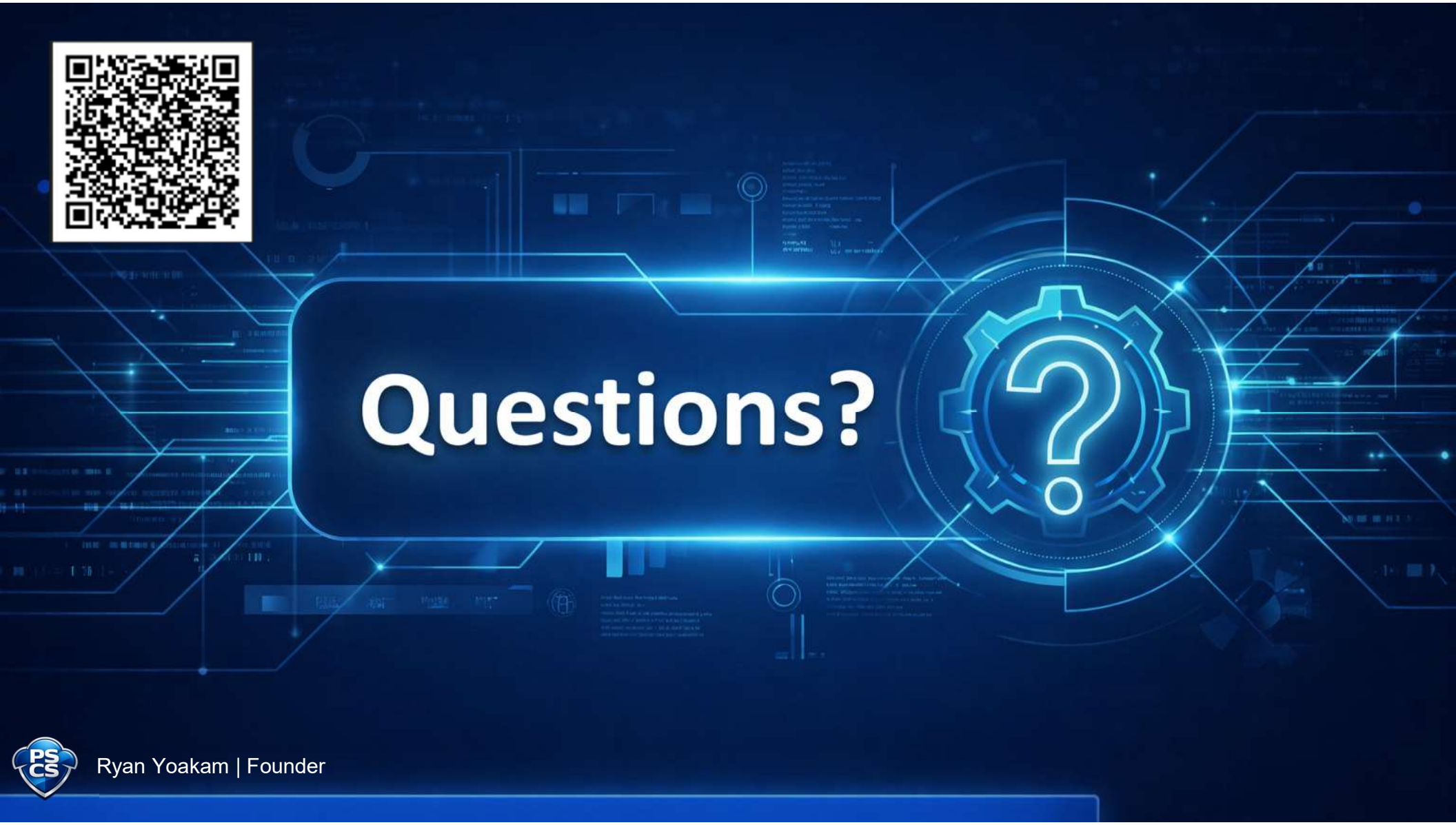
Align internally

Align with the vendor

Put measurable expectations into the RFP and contract

Create a stronger cloud transition and long-term relationship

Proper planning helps agencies evaluate cloud readiness, vendor commitments, and operational accountability before the transition becomes the problem.



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