# U.S. Coast Guard Aids Investigations with Records Management Solution from Hexagon

## U.S. Coast Guard Investigative Service

*Washington, D.C., United States*

The Coast Guard Investigative Service (CGIS) is the premier maritime investigative arm of the U.S. Coast Guard, with nearly 500 agents in the U.S., and others deployed overseas. CGIS investigates crimes such as drug smuggling, human trafficking, and illegal pollution caused by ships, as well as criminal internal affairs investigations of Coast Guard personnel.

Previously, CGIS and its agents relied on paper-based records management that was inefficient, time-consuming, and cumbersome to navigate. Agents reported case findings in password-protected documents that were emailed to central headquarters. There, a case management specialist would review the cases and re-enter a limited set of information about each case into a database.

The original reports were printed and placed in hardcopy files. The process for both the redundant entry and extraction of information from these sources served as an information bottleneck. Only limited data was collected, so data mining required an analyst to physically look through each report to garner information like crime type, victim, and location. A typical report on crime metrics would take up to a week to research and prepare. The review and approval process was also challenging, taking agents days to document their actions and forward to their supervisors for review and approval.

### Accessible, Effective Information Management

CGIS decided to improve this process through the deployment of an enterprise records management system (RMS), which could enhance productivity, cut down on redundant data entry, and provide key metrics to guide decision-making. CGIS contracted with Hexagon's Safety & Infrastructure division to configure, install, and certify its web-based enterprise information management system.

The first agency in the U.S. to fully deploy the system, CGIS replaced all paper reports and streamlined the process of tracking cases during investigations. Easy to deploy and use, the solution ensures critical information reaches CGIS personnel and supervisors through a secure, tablet-friendly platform.

CGIS also selected Hexagon's robust RMS to allow agents to file and upload reports in a disconnected mode in the field. Another business intelligence solution included with the RMS reports key metrics via custom dashboards and pre-configured or ad hoc reports that provide valuable insight into investigative data.

Using Hexagon's technology to manage records electronically has dramatically improved the overall efficiency and effectiveness of CGIS and its agents. For example, the

case inception-to-approval process used to take up to three days to complete. Now, it is completed in less than one business day. The system eliminates the process of re-entering records in the database, further reducing inefficiencies and costly errors that can be challenged in subsequent court proceedings.

## Proactive Investigations Yield Results

Because CGIS has a wide investigative footprint, the new RMS supports easy sharing of investigative tasks whenever and wherever agents are posted. A homicide of a Coast Guard member and the wounding of a police officer in Cape Cod, Massachusetts, demonstrated the power of this information sharing, as agents tracking leads around the country were able to access all reports and provide updates in real time.

As persons, vehicles, vessels, and aircraft are added to the Hexagon database, agents can also establish patterns and links. With the relational database elements of the system, agents can now see relationships between current suspects and other known criminal offenders, as well as criminal movement from area to area. This intelligence enables easier identification of possible suspects, locations, and criminal activity, allowing CGIS to be proactive – not reactive – to criminal behavior.

The system's flexibility has allowed CGIS to configure agency-specific fields, creating a huge set of data for mining and analysis.

## Protecting Investments, Securing the Future

A commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) solution, Hexagon's system can expand to accommodate future upgrades and technology enhancements with minimal investments needed. This means CGIS can easily stay current with U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) technology requirements, even as security measures and technology evolve.

The system also greatly enhances management oversight within CGIS, both in terms of the agency and individual agents. Thus, CGIS now has access to actionable information for deciding office and staffing needs. CGIS can identify which agents are busy with investigations, which are initiating cases, and which are reacting to calls. CGIS can even map the hours spent in investigative functions versus responding to calls – a significant issue in a program where one office may cover as many as 7-8 states.

At a time of budget constraints placed on U.S federal government agencies, the U.S. Coast Guard's investment in Hexagon's RMS has been a cost-effective force multiplier, helping CGIS make the U.S. a safer place to live, work, and visit.

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