



Real-time Emergency Dispatch for Europe's Largest Fire Brigade

Bouches-Du-Rhône Fire Brigade France

Located in the south of France, Bouches-du-Rhône is not only favored by tourists, but is also an important industrial region. This region is renowned for its large forest fires – major incidents that demand a strong public safety organization like the Bouches-du-Rhône Fire Brigade, also known as the Service Départemental D'incendie et Secours des Bouches-du-Rhône (SDIS).

Located in Marseille, the Brigade's command and control center receives all emergency calls from within the department and responds to a wide range of events, including major forest fires, sea and mountain climbing accidents, industrial site events, and emergency medical services – often involving tourists.

In the event of an emergency, the public dials 112, or historically 18 for fire, 17 for police, and 15 for emergency medical services. The Brigade manages both the 112 and 18 emergency numbers, and in the last several years, has experienced an increased number of emergency calls from the 112 number from both European tourists and the French public. When receiving a 112 call, the Brigade either manages the emergency itself or transfers it to the region's other public safety organizations.

Overcoming Challenges

- Speed emergency response time
- Provide automatic location identification and messaging from the field
- Better manage large forest fires
- Increase firefighter and equipment availability

Realizing Results

To help manage its large volume of calls, the Bouches-du-Rhône Fire Brigade implemented an intelligent computer-aided dispatch (CAD) solution from Hexagon's Safety & Infrastructure division. The CAD system uses a highly graphical, digital map-based environment that helps speed call-taking and dispatch and incorporates various telephony interfaces, including automatic location identification and messaging using GSM mobile phones. The vector map for the entire street network, plus main building footprints and aerial photos of the region, are also fully integrated into the system.

At the Brigade, 16 call-takers and dispatchers, two supervisors, two remote dispatchers at the emergency

medical agency of Marseille, and 20 remote web-based employees use the CAD system. In addition, all 67 fire stations are connected the solution via ISDN and analog / digital radio. A portion of the Brigade's fleet of operational vehicles is also equipped with automatic vehicle location and mobile data terminals, allowing firefighters to change the status of the vehicle directly from the field.

In partnership with Brigade firefighting units, Hexagon provided an additional module known as FireTactic to help the Bouches-du-Rhône Fire Brigade better manage large forest fires. FireTactic helps emergency services optimize service using quick, high-performance modeling and decision-making. Based on conventional meteorological data (i.e., wind speed and direction, temperature, sun exposure, and water reserves), the system helps the Brigade predict a fire's progress and provides tools to analyze situations and react in real time.

"We have been using the CAD system since 1998," said Lieutenant-Colonel Marc Vitalbo, head of the IT department of the Bouches-du-Rhône Fire Brigades.

"Centralizing the 112 and 18 emergency call numbers and the management of vehicles and firefighters could not have been carried out without this reliable and powerful system."

"The solution has proved its efficiency not only in daily operations, but also during crisis situations – forest fires, floods, and other major incidents."

Lieutenant Colonel Vitalbo also added, "The system has increased the availability of our firefighters and their equipment and allows us to run all operations in real time. It also improves the quality of the information provided to local authorities. And by ensuring we assign the right type and quantity of units, based on event type and level of incident, it optimizes our resources and reduces our incident-handling costs."



The solution has proved its efficiency not only in daily operations, but also during crisis situations – forest fires, floods, and other major incidents."

Lieutenant-Colonel Marc Vitalbo

Head of the IT department, Bouches-du-Rhône Fire Brigades

Hexagon is a global leader in sensor, software and autonomous solutions. We are putting data to work to boost efficiency, productivity and quality across industrial, manufacturing, infrastructure, safety and mobility applications. Our technologies are shaping urban and production ecosystems to become increasingly connected and autonomous — ensuring a scalable, sustainable future.

Hexagon's Safety & Infrastructure division provides software for smart and safe cities, improving the performance, efficiency and resilience of vital services.

Hexagon (Nasdaq Stockholm: HEXA B) has approximately 20,000 employees in 50 countries and net sales of approximately 3.8bn EUR. Learn more at hexagon.com and follow us @HexagonAB.