Hexagon Mobile Dispatch Extends Incident Management to District's First Responders

Office of Unified Communications
Washington, D.C., United States

Washington, D.C.'s Office of Unified Communications (OUC) handles call-taking, dispatching, radio communications, and first responder command-and-control functions from the Unified Communications Center (UCC). The UCC, which opened in 2006, is one of the nation's premier call centers and emergency response facilities, encompassing the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD), Fire and Emergency Medical Services (FEMS), and other public services. This consolidation of personnel, equipment, and technology has enhanced coordination among the numerous municipal and federal public safety entities operating in Washington, D.C.

Already a long-time user of Hexagon's industry-leading computer-aided dispatch (CAD) software, the District had other legacy mobile applications with limited functionality and was searching for a true enterprise mobile solution. Mobile communications and automatic vehicle location (AVL) were not seamlessly integrated with CAD and required separate logins for each application layer. This method also resulted in wireless communications bills from several companies each month, which was not cost-effective. The OUC needed a mobile solution that would not only streamline the process with a single login and simplified billing, but also improve response by providing first responders with access to the same geographically aware, map-based interface dispatchers have in the command center.

Overcoming Challenges

- Implement an all-encompassing mobile dispatch solution that would consolidate mobile applications for police, fire, and emergency medical responders

- Give first responders access to the same intelligent map-based interface, routing capabilities, global positioning system (GPS), and other tools dispatchers use in the command center

- Provide a more effective means of communication between first responders and dispatchers, and among responders in the field

- Improve efficiency and reduce costs by delivering a single application for all mobile dispatch operations

Realizing Results

The OUC's successful history with Hexagon's CAD software played a major role in its decision to implement the company's powerful mobile technology. Seamlessly integrated with CAD, Hexagon's mobile solution enables dispatchers and first responders to share the same intelligent map-based interface. This was an important consideration for the UCC, which needed to ensure timely and accurate communications for fast and appropriate response.

With the help of Hexagon's support team, including a Hexagon resident engineer, the OUC began its implementation with the District's fire and emergency medical services. The mobile solution is now fully deployed in fire and emergency medical vehicles, and the process is underway at the MPD. A well-planned schedule of around-the-clock installation, training, and practice is in place to ensure all officers are trained on the system, while access to the legacy system is still available to officers who have not yet been trained.

According to OUC Chief Technology Officer Teddy Kavaleri, the OUC is already experiencing benefits from Hexagon's mobile solution.

"Field officer productivity has increased and radio traffic has been reduced," Kavaleri said. "The incorporation of an improved graphic map with District-supplied spatial features, such as building footprints, alleys, sidewalks, etc., provides a mobile map, resulting in greater situational awareness. AVL, along with better field communications, helps officers easily locate one another and assist officers in distress. Plus, self-service lookup of license tags and location-of-interest information is readily available without intervention from the communications center."

The mobile system has already proven successful in the District's challenging public safety environment. For example, Hexagon's CAD and mobile technologies successfully managed a record influx of nearly 10,000 calls associated with the inauguration of former U.S. President Barack Obama. During the event, mobile technology extended incident management capabilities to remote field and mobile units stationed near the event area. By doing this, response time was reduced as dispatchers swiftly deployed field personnel on foot and bike. Officers have responded favorably to the new capabilities.

"Hexagon's mobile solution improves the relationship between the dispatcher and the first responder, because they're literally looking at the same page," said James Callahan, OUC CAD manager. "It also provides another avenue for responders to talk to one another. We've received a lot of positive feedback from the field."

Moving Forward

The OUC will continue to upgrade its Hexagon software as appropriate to ensure field officers gain the benefits of new features and enhancements as they become available.

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> **James Callahan**
> CAD Manager, Office of Unified Communications