



Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service equips vehicles with Panasonic rugged tablets

Used as Mobile Data Terminals for vital information on emergency calls and for asset management of equipment and inventory

Client - Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service

Location - Cambridgeshire, UK

Challenge

Update outdated Mobile Data Terminals in all vehicles

Help firefighters to work more efficiently

Solution

The Panasonic TOUGHBOOK CF-D1 for use as a Fire Appliance Mobile Data Terminal

Panasonic TOUGHPAD FZ-G1 tablets for use outside of the vehicles

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John Barlow,
Communications project
manager and former station
commander



Transforming life for firefighters on the frontline

The service has deployed 13 inch Panasonic TOUGHBOOK CF-D1 tablets in the front cabs of its fire appliances. These Mobile Data Terminals (MDTs) are permanently mounted in the front of the vehicle and are connected to the existing Tetra Network. They are being used to provide vital information on the way to a call out, including routing, sending status updates to command and control, meeting risk assessment requirements and locating nearby hydrant locations.

Used day-to-day for the asset management of equipment and inventory

Smaller and lighter 10 inch Panasonic FZ-G1 TOUGH PAD tablets have been installed in the back of the appliances for use by firefighters inside and outside of the vehicle when at the scene of an incident. These devices are used day-to-day for the asset management of equipment and inventory and in the future could be used to provide valuable emergency information on site, such as vehicle crash rescue data, as well as for regular community duties such as home fire safety checks and hydrant defect management.

John Barlow, the communications project manager and a former station commander with 35 years of experience in the service, is responsible for modernising Cambridgeshire Fire & Rescue Service's frontline communications devices.

"We have invested to change all the existing MDTs to a more agile device to allow the crews to work more efficiently and smartly," he explained. "The Panasonic devices are ideal for all the conditions we work in. We can read the device in bright sunlight and it is built to be used outside and in wet conditions without any problems. Feedback from the firecrews has been overwhelmingly positive and that's partly because they were very involved in choosing the device."

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The smaller mobile rugged Panasonic tablets in the back of the appliances are used with a bluetooth connected barcode reader for the asset management of equipment, Inventory and inspections/ checks.

Tablet with bluetooth barcode reader

Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service Project Manager Stuart Grey explained that the solution is used for equipment health and safety checks, full inventory checks of equipment on each appliance and for recording use of equipment.

In the future, he sees other big advantages for firefighters in being able to use the Panasonic FZ-G1 tablets at the scene of an emergency. For example, at a road accident to identify important information about the safety features of a vehicle, such as airbags, so that they can quickly be turned off before releasing trapped passengers from the car.

Excellent support

"Panasonic has been incredibly helpful throughout the process," said Stuart. Panasonic Computer Docking Solutions team has designed the mounting solution for the Panasonic CF-D1 tablets in the front of the vehicle. The team utilised as much of the existing infrastructure as possible, such as the power management units, to keep costs down. It also future proofed the vehicles by fitting antennas that will work with the imminent introduction of the new Emergency Services Network. For the rear vehicle mounted tablets, the solution team designed a bespoke bracket for Cambridgeshire that can be fitted on all its vehicles generically. The design also incorporated into the bracket the handheld barcode reader, so that it could be installed in a convenient location next to the tablet.

Smooth deployment

A smooth deployment of the solutions was critical for the fire service as appliances could not be off the road for long periods. Both devices were fitted at the same time.