Panasonic CONNECT

CASE STUDY

Greater Manchester chooses TOUGHBOOK 33 rugged devices for latest fire service MDT and demountable requirements.

Fire services across the UK are looking to equip their crews with the most effective and rugged mobile computing technology to become ever more effective and efficient. Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service chose TOUGHBOOK 33 devices for its Airwave Certified & ESN-ready Mobile Data Terminals and as demountable devices in the rear of its appliances.

Client: Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service
Location: North West of England.

Product(s) supplied: TOUGHBOOK 33 Detachable

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Challenge

To provide the latest Airwave Accredited & ESN-ready Mobile Data Terminals and demountable rugged mobile computing devices in the rear of its appliances to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of its fire service.

Solution

Rugged Panasonic TOUGHBOOK 33 tablets, 3tc MODAS Professional and MODAS Web software applications, docking station, power supply and Sure antenna solution.

When Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service was looking to upgrade its Mobile Data Terminals (MDT) across its 93 vehicles, the team reviewed the latest mobile computing hardware and software on the market. It chose 130 Panasonic TOUGHBOOK 33 devices for the front and back of the appliances, using 3tc's MODAS Professional software to ensure effective communication between control and the vehicles on the move.

Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service (GMFRS) is one of the largest Fire and Rescue Services outside London with more than 1,637 members of staff and 41 fire stations. It covers an area of 500 square miles with a population of 2.8 million people.

With an international airport, a major motorway network plus over 200 train and tram stations, Greater Manchester County presents some of the most operationally varied challenges. From modern inner-city developments to traditional mill towns, the area is made up of ten very different districts - Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Stockport, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan.

As well as a modern MDT, approved for use with the new Emergency Services Network, GMFRS was also keen to equip a rugged mobile computing device in the rear of 53 of its appliances with 4G connectivity.

"We wanted the same capabilities as an office on wheels. The most important criteria were that the devices in the front and rear of the appliances would have the same user interface and access to the same information but the rear device would be demountable to use outside of the vehicle."

Ian Parry
Operational Systems and Support Officer
Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service (GMFRS)

After an extensive assessment and procurement process for hardware and software, GMFRS chose the rugged Panasonic TOUGHBOOK 33 device, provided by technology distributor Centerprise, and partnering with 3tc to deploy the MODAS software suite. The TOUGHBOOK 33 device is a popular choice for fire services across the country. It's a 2-in-1, 12.0" fully rugged notebook with the tablet detachable and hot swappable twin batteries, for unrivalled flexibility and performance.

3tc's MODAS Professional ensures effective communication between control and vehicles on the move. Used Internationally and by a third of UK Fire and Rescue Services, MODAS Professional leads its field in Incident Command. Features include comprehensive integration with CAD systems and with Airwave, 4G, ESN, Wi-Fi; full integration with fire and rescue service back-office systems; centralised MDT management and enhanced Incident Ground Safety and Management for operational intelligence at the touch of a button.

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GMFRS is also using MODAS Web, which provides access to mission-critical information such as SSRI data sets, live resource location updates (AVL) and other Points of Interest information using a simple and intuitive web solution. Using the TOUGHBOOK device, fire officers can access hydrant location information, building plans, risk cards, operating guidance, and home fire safety checks.

The software applications integrated with features on the TOUGHBOOK tablet, such as the sensors and cameras, mean the devices in the rear of the appliances can be used for a number of mobile applications. These include carrying out fire risk assessments at vulnerable people's homes and assessing chemical risk data prior to arriving at a location. The devices can even be used for taking a photo of a number plate at the scene of an accident to instantly access full colour schematics for any type of vehicle to assist in safely removing passengers from wreckage.

Identical Install solution for maximum flexibility

An identical total install solution, which included docking station, power supply and ESN-ready Sure antennas, was fitted across 93 different vehicles. This enables TOUGHBOOK devices to be swappable across all appliances. In addition, specialist vehicles that are only used occasionally, can carry a TOUGHBOOK device in the rear as needed – maximising the use of the mobile devices.

Greater Manchester's fleet support operation worked closely with Panasonic and its install partner, Maple Fleet Services, to install the solution over a 12-week period, while minimising vehicle downtime.

Moving forward, all regions under the North West Fire Control will be using Panasonic TOUGHBOOK 33 devices, including Greater Manchester, Cumbria, Cheshire and Lancashire.

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"The combination and close integration of the 3tc MODAS software suite with the Panasonic TOUGHBOOK device provides a powerful tool for fire services like Greater Manchester. As well as the MDT, it allows officers outside of the vehicle to have access to the information they need at their fingertips to deal with any situation – using technology to become ever more efficient and effective. The solution has the flexibility to add more applications as needed but always with the peace of mind of the highest levels of security and availability."

Atul Patel
Product Manager
3tc Software