

Case Study:

GTG Helps the City Become the First to Meet
Federal E911 Wireless Standards
City of Alexandria, Virginia

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Have you ever wondered if all that technology seen on popular crime dramas is for real? Look no further than the Alexandria, VA Police Department to answer that question. Alexandria has equipped its Communications Center with the latest technology – making quicker response times and officer safety a priority for the Department.

Geographic Technologies Group's LGdispatch was integrated seamlessly with other systems and technology currently in place, allowing 911 dispatchers to see a detailed map of the caller's surroundings on a giant plasma screen. They can instantly see complete information on neighbors, business and services, and the real-time location of any police or rescue vehicles in the area.



LGdispatch uses Global Positioning System (GPS) satellite coordinates to locate the caller, and translates the location into an icon on the map. It integrates with other software used in emergency response, such as Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) and various wireless messaging capabilities used by officers in the field.

"There's a huge difference between seeing an address on your computer screen and looking at the caller's location on a map on a plasma screen," said Alexandria CAD Manager Bob Mains. "You can zoom in on an area, or get a wider view, and you can see where the police vehicles are at any moment. It's phenomenal for the supervisor coming on duty to just walk in the room and see what's happening all over the City."

The Alexandria Police Department has also become one of the first wireless Phase 2 compliant police departments in the United States. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has mandated that E911 calling services must be extended to wireless customers. With nearly a third of all 911 calls initiating from cell phones, tracking callers to within 100 meters of the call became a challenge. The Department boasts a 95-percent accuracy rate at a distance of 300 meters and 67-percent rate at 100 meters from the location of call.

In addition to its value in coordinating emergency response, LGdispatch helps enhance the safety of Alexandria's more than 300 sworn officers. "Even if we lose contact with the officer, the icon of the vehicle remains on the screen," said Mains. "Or in the case of foot pursuit, the officer can say 'I'm passing the third house from the corner,' and we know exactly where he is."

Mains has cited a number of advantages to using LGdispatch. He notes that it is easy to customize the program to meet specific needs, and the widespread acceptance of the technology - even by staff members with less computer experience - has been tremendous.

"We showed off the new system at a community open house recently, and our citizens were very impressed," added Mains. "I think we all realize we have entered a new era in emergency response. I'm proud that Alexandria is leading the way."

Technology has taken Alexandria to new heights with the establishment of the department's Tactical Computers Section (TCS). The TCS administers to more than 300 mobile computers utilized by officers each day for mobile communications, report writing, and instant information updates. Since its formation in 1999, the unit has developed an expertise in mobile computing that has put Alexandria at the forefront of this kind of technology. The staff is known nationwide for its expertise and knowledge in law enforcement technology.



LGdispatch

“Any police department would love this system (LGdispatch),” said Mains. “It is very intuitive and easy to use, and we’ve had absolutely no problems integrating it with our other systems. We have been extremely pleased with the product and the company.”

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