



## CASE STUDY: METROPOLITAN POLICE DEPARTMENT

### CHALLENGE

Police in a metropolitan area experienced numerous failures with their previous mobile computers. The department wanted to invest in reliable technology that offered the flexibility and portability needed for officers to use their laptops both in and out of the vehicle.

### SOLUTION

The department invested in 300 fully-rugged Toughbook 31 laptops that are mounted in-vehicle and can be quickly and easily removed for use wherever an officer needs to go.

### RESULT

The department has experienced much less down-time with their new laptops resulting in more flexible and mobile in-field reporting.

### Local Police Department Chooses Toughbook Laptops to Enhance Officer Mobility

A local police department with over 600 officers and almost 200 professional staff is responsible for keeping its 371,000 residents safe. In order to effectively and efficiently protect their local community, officers rely on mobile devices in their patrol cars and out in the field.

When officers spend the majority of their eight hour day in their vehicle, they depend on their computer for everything from receiving or sending emergency information to using GPS mapping to accident reporting and more.

A little over four years ago, this agency was struggling with constant laptop reliability issues. From hard drive crashes to replacing screens to failure issues due to extreme temperatures. If a computer stopped working, officers had to leave patrol and return to the station to get another car with a functioning device. If there was no car available, all of the officer's instructions needed to be given over the radio.



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According to one of the officers, “Having these down-time issues impact the entire police force. It ties up the radio channel because now an officer has to give information that normally wouldn’t have to give out. When the channel is tied up, other officers can’t get their information. If an officer’s trying to make a routine stop to pull someone over, he has to wait for the radio traffic to stop, so he can tell the dispatcher where he is and the license plate number. It has a trickle effect. You have one computer that’s down and then it affects everybody else.”

In addition to the inconvenience of tying up the channel, an officer then has to rely on pen and paper to hand write all of the necessary information, such as addresses, license numbers, suspect information and other important data from the incident. This created a huge delay in getting to calls and getting where the officers needed to be.

### Adding Mobility to its Arsenal

In order to provide the reliability and portability they were looking for, the police department evaluated a few devices and chose to invest in fully-rugged Panasonic Toughbook laptops. The department purchased 300 Toughbook 31 laptops to be mounted in-vehicle for use wherever an officer may need their device.

The previous computer system that was being used was more of a desktop set-up with a monitor and keyboard. With the transition to the Toughbook 31 laptops, officers can now take the laptop out of the car and use it wherever needed it instead of being confined to the patrol vehicle.

Officers spend a lot of time on their radios and are now able to use their Toughbook devices to take notes, respond to calls and enter information. Before the Toughbook 31, they couldn’t take their computers out of the car, which meant they would have to fill out their report in the car in a parking lot or on the side of the road which can be dangerous.

With the ability to unmount their Toughbook devices, officers can now take them with them to monitor service calls out in the field, respond to a scene or refer to during lunch. If there is a critical incident where a command post is needed, the officers can now take their device to the post and work off that laptop. This was not an option before, so it has drastically improved efficiency, now that SWAT commanders can take their devices into command centers to operate directly from that location.



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In addition to utilizing rugged Toughbook mobile computers, the local police department also uses Panasonic’s Arbitrator HD in-car video evidence solution. By using Arbitrator in conjunction with their Toughbook laptops, officers are able to connect to a web-based accident reporting application where they can manage and upload video to a secure server. Several of their patrol cars also have license plate recognition, which they can capture through their Toughbook and Arbitrator solution. Soon the department will be doing field based reporting, where officers will be connected to a record management system and entering reports directly into the system from the laptop. This will help to improve productivity and efficiency in the field and allow officers to spend more time directly with the community.

Given the past issues with computer failure, durability was an important consideration for this police department. Temperatures inside a police vehicle can reach up to 180-plus-degrees. They wanted a reliable device that could withstand the heat, while still providing the quality features they need. They looked at everything from screen brightness to the sensitivity of the touchscreen and conducted a field test of Panasonic devices against another rugged brand.

“When we started evaluating our options, we looked at industry leaders and best practices. We wanted an experienced computer manufacturer that would stand by their product which is why we chose Panasonic. We’ve had the Toughbook devices for about four years and we haven’t experienced any major issues,” said an officer. “At the end of the day, officers just want it to work.”

### DEMAND FOR DURABILITY

Over the four-year deployment, the department’s Toughbook computers have taken a few beatings according to a Sergeant in the department. “There was a vehicle fire that originated in the trunk with the flares. It melted a lot of things you wouldn’t have thought it would melt, and the car was in pretty bad shape. When officers went through the vehicle after the fire, the Panasonic Toughbook 31 was recovered and, while it had extensive smoke damage, the screen was still visible and it boot up. The fact that the fire melted most of the items in the car, including a shot gun, and the Toughbook could still power back on is a testament to its durability.”

Beyond the durability of the Toughbook brand, it also was important for the department to find a manufacturer that offered quality support services. When failures happen or parts need to be replaced, it is especially critical for law



**TOUGHBOOK**

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enforcement agencies to quickly receive the support they need to better serve the community and keep officers safe.

“With our previous vendor, when a computer would break, we would send the device to the manufacturer to fix it and they would keep it for several months. At Panasonic if a device is broken we can swap them. When an officer’s computer breaks, they come to see us, we give them a new one and they’re back on the road. We went from having to wait 120 days for a repair with our old manufacturer to three days with Panasonic and that’s been great,” said an officer.

“My advice for other agencies would be to look at both the product and the support you will be investing in. It’s the people that stand behind the product that make the difference - the reseller, account manager, support network, it’s a team. Panasonic was very helpful in creating what we needed for our agency.”

As the jobs of officers continue to evolve and their technology needs change, this law enforcement agency continues to evaluate new form factors and capabilities that can help their agency in the future. With their new in field reporting and enhanced mobility capabilities, the department also is considering 2-in-1 detachable devices in the future.

For more information on Panasonic’s rugged Toughbook solutions for law enforcement, visit [www.toughbook.com](http://www.toughbook.com).