

Public safety

/ Case Study /

Getac V200 drives safety at Bedfordshire FRS



/ Challenge /

Access to site-specific information is essential if fire crews are to determine the best course of action for handling emergencies as quickly as possible, and to be aware of any potential safety issues. Ideally, that information has to be available in the fire appliance cab on the way to incidents and outside the vehicle once the crew has arrived at the scene.

/ Solution /

The Getac V200 fully rugged convertible notebook can be mounted within fire appliance cabs to provide fast access to information en route to incidents and can then be de-mounted to provide officers with a mobile data terminal (MDT) to help plan operations. The device's rugged build means that the V200 can withstand the demanding environment in which fire crews have to operate.

/ Benefit /

Access to site-specific risk information (SSRI) and standard operating procedures reduces the risk to fire crews and improves their ability to deal with emergencies at individual locations.

/ Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service /

"Overall, the Getac V200 is making a safer environment for our fire fighters."

Risk Information Project Officer, Jason Tai.



/ Getac V200 /
Fully Rugged Convertible Notebook

/ Challenge /

Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service crews can be called to a wide range of different incidents at varying locations, from road traffic accidents to factory fires – and each carry their own challenges. And arriving on the scene with some advanced information about the location and its potential hazards is a big advantage.

“We keep essential information on specific risks for over 4,000 separate premises in our area, including industrial and chemical sites and other premises such as airports and hospitals, which means we need a high performing unit that can store all of that data and give us access to it quickly,” says Risk Information Project Officer, Jason Tai. “We also require a unit that provides the necessary level of security and protection for all the data captured.”

“We compile this information so that our crews have ready access to it when they arrive at a scene or even whilst en route and it’s invaluable to them,” says Jason. “It also means that we can pre-plan rescues and evacuations to ensure we prioritise those most in need, and our teams arrive on-site fully equipped with all the knowledge they need to handle the situation.”



As well as being mobile, the units have to be able to cope with the physical demands of being used in emergency situations where light conditions may be far from ideal and they may be subject to rough handling, water, dust, smoke and chemicals.

/ Solution /

Following a 12-month trial, Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service has installed Getac’s V200 rugged convertible notebooks across its fleet of 22 fire appliances.

The new devices are mounted in the cab but can also be de-mounted and carried from the vehicles, avoiding the need for crews to return

to the appliance to get vital information. The fully rugged build means they are able to stand up to demanding use at emergency scenes, while providing crews with mission-critical risk assessment data.



“Using the current software that we have on our MDTs, the moment crews are mobilised for an incident we can carry out a search for the particular premises that we’re going to,” explains Jason. “On arrival at the incident, crews are able to access the information immediately. So, for instance, at a high rise incident, the driver can use it to locate the hydrants, so they will be able to find our nearest water source, as the water supply on the fire appliances can be exhausted quite quickly.”

The officer in charge can also access information on the premises, and then in the first 30 seconds will have enough information to carry out a dynamic risk assessment and then start directing operations of the crews.

Crews are able to see plans of particular buildings, helping them plan the best route for tackling the emergency and evacuating civilians. The V200 is also used to access chemical data – allowing crews to search for a range of hazardous materials and guidance on what to do if they encounter such a scenario. Finally, when crews return, they can use the MDT to de-brief other officers on their actions.

/ Benefit /

The key drivers for upgrading to the V200 were the increased computing power, the rugged design and the ability to mount devices in-cab and use them as mobile units.

“The V200 notebooks are subjected to some fairly tough treatment, especially given the scenarios in which our crews work. Reliability was something that was high on our agenda when sourcing our replacement equipment,” says Jason. “We are impressed with Getac’s device as it stands up to the demands of operational use really well.”

The Fire Service is using MDTs for an increasing number of applications, so the ability to store information while maintaining fast processing speeds is very important to firefighters.

The V200 screen has also proven to be beneficial when the units are being used on a call-out.

“What attracted us to the V200 was the large hard drive and also the 12.1” screen, which was an improvement on the 10.1” screen we had before, as it allows us to display information on a wider, clearer screen, using a larger hard drive.”

Another big advantage is the fact that the Fire Service has been able to customise the V200 to match specific operating requirements.

By working with the experts at Getac, the Fire Service has put a night mode on all its MDTs across the entire fleet. Because of the glare at night from the screens distracting the drivers, the colours can be inverted at the push of one button. This allows the crews to drive without distraction, and then if the V200 is required at any incident, by pushing the same button, it will revert back to its normal operating mode.

“Having the V200, especially the fact that they are de-mountable, allows us to reduce the risks to our crews giving them access to site-specific risk information and to the standard operating procedures that we have to carry out when faced with those hazards. So overall it’s making a safer environment for our fire fighters.”



Bedfordshire
Fire and Rescue Service

The Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service covers an area of approximately 123,500 hectares with a population of around 620,000 which includes a number of special risks such as London Luton Airport and the M1 and A1.

Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service have 14 strategically positioned Fire Stations; five wholetime stations, one day crewing station and 8 retained stations. An emergency communication centre, training centre and headquarters are located on the same site and there are other offices located in the north and south of the Service.