

MIAMI DADE FIRE RESCUE



The largest metropolitan area in the State of Florida. Miami-Dade County is home to more than 1,217,000 people. Also the largest fire and emergency services department in the southeast United States, Miami-Dade Fire Rescue (MDFR) operates 60 fire stations and manages the Miami-Dade County Emergency Operations Center. It also provides communications support to both the Miami-Dade County Elections Department and the Miami-Dade County 311 Answer Center. For more information, visit <http://www.miamidade.gov/mdfr/>.

Challenge

In the public safety arena, where life and death hang in the balance every day, only total telecommunications reliability will do. Yet public safety departments like Miami-Dade Fire Rescue and the Emergency Operations Center also are held accountable for spending taxpayer dollars wisely.

The legacy PBX and mechanical key telephone system MDFR shared with other county agencies was proving short on features and reliability and long on maintenance and related costs. MDFR sought a solution that would enable it to safeguard the public, increase its communications system's feature functionality and return the most value for the money. An Intelligent Communications solution held the key and laid the groundwork for a communications infrastructure that now supports a multitude of county agencies.

Solution

Located in one of the highest hurricane impact areas in the country, the county has zero tolerance for communications outages. It requires the highest reliability so that it can safeguard its citizens at all times. This was a top priority as MDFR began exploring various communications options.

Working with a platinum-level member of the Avaya BusinessPartner program, and led by MDFR's telecommunications manager, Mike Crisler, MDFR gradually implemented a converged IP telephony solution from Avaya. With Avaya Communication Manager, this solution improved efficiency, ensured business continuity, and enhanced emergency readiness response not just for MDFR but ultimately for other critical agencies as well.

For Crisler, the new Avaya solution was a tremendous time- and money-saver. *"Ninety-nine percent of our Moves, Adds and Changes are done before the next day; 85 percent in the same hour."* Changing MDFR's 1,600 voice mailboxes is just as easy, he says. MDFR later upgraded its system to an Avaya S8700 Server with nearly 50 times more call-processing power. Maintenance services from Avaya provide an added level of backup.

The Avaya solution now serves a growing number of Miami-Dade agencies. MDFR was able to easily and cost-effectively extend the Avaya Communication Manager's call processing capabilities directly to its 60 individual fire stations and eventually to other county departments as well. These include the Emergency Operations Center (EOC), located in the same building as MDFR, the 911 center, and Elections Department headquarters.

The EOC coordinates communications for virtually all Miami-Dade agencies, including Public Works, Transit, Police, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and Homeland Security.

The county's new 311 Answer Center, which moved to its own facility in June 2006, uses the same Avaya IP Telephony Solution and runs off of the same communications server as MDFR.



Residents dial 311 to reach non-emergency police and other government services. This service is gradually being extended to encompass all county departments, making the “One Call to City Hall” vision a reality.

The first multi-jurisdictional 311 telephone system in the nation, the Miami-Dade 311 Answer Center not only gives residents a single point of contact for all of their local government inquiries but also provides much-needed support in times of crisis. The 311 agents are right there ready to help in an emergency, thanks to the county’s Avaya IP Telephony solution. In an emergency, 311 agents are quickly and easily deployed to the Emergency Operations Center to handle citizens’ calls for shelter, evacuation routes and other critical inquiries that previously would have gone to 911. This leaves the 911 agents free for more dire emergencies.

Crisler explains, “*Avaya Communication Manager routes the calls down a structured path, depending on the nature of the call. If an emergency call comes into 311, our operators are able to redirect the call to 911. But in an emergency, they can handle these calls themselves. The Avaya vectoring feature enables us to broadcast announcements in three languages – English, Spanish and Creole – for callers who are on hold. This expedites getting information to the public and takes callers out of the queue by proactively giving them the information they need.*”

Applications and Services

- Avaya MultiVantage® Communications Applications
- Avaya Communication Manager
- Avaya DEFINITY® Communications Server
- Avaya S8700 Server
- Avaya G700 Media Gateways
- Avaya Extension to Cellular
- Avaya INTUITY® AUDIX® Voice Messaging
- Avaya Meeting Exchange® Conferencing Solution
- Call Accounting System (CAS)
- Avaya 4600 Series IP Telephones
- Avaya Global Services Product Support

Results

“MDFR realized its ROI in a little over three years and cut costs by \$1 million over a five-year period.” Mike Crisler, Telecommunications Manager, MDFR

- **Improves responsiveness.** By linking the user’s office system with their mobile phones, Avaya Extension to Cellular is enabling mobile employees to stay in touch any time from anywhere. “*Our battalion chiefs think Avaya Extension to Cellular is incredible — they can get their calls whether they’re in the fire truck, in the back room at the station, or in their office. They can answer the call on their cell phone, walk back into the office and pick up the same call on their office line, with no interruption,*” Crisler says.
- **Reduces phone line costs.** MDFR is saving on average about \$67 per month per station, or a total of \$4,020 per month, as a result of having reduced the number of phone lines at each station. The reduction in the number of lines was made possible by dedicated T1 circuits from headquarters.
- **Reduces maintenance costs.** Substituting Avaya IP phones for the key system phones at the stations is saving internal maintenance charges to the tune of \$8/month/phone.

For more information on how Avaya Intelligent Communications can take your enterprise from where it is to where it needs to be, contact your Avaya Client Executive or Authorized Avaya BusinessPartner, or access other collateral by clicking on **Resource Type** under “**Do Your Research**” at www.avaya.com.

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— Mike Crisler, Telecommunications Manager MDFR