



Capitol Region Education Council and U.S. Security Associates

CASE STUDY



Wide-Area Radio Network for School Security

CREC and U.S. Security Associates in Hartford,
Connecticut created a safer learning environment with
Hytera DMR Radios and trunking systems

Hytera developed a radio solution customized to the needs of both partners by creating a system that allowed for direct messaging, strong signals, prompt location guarantees, and clear channels.

Getting a quality education is a prerequisite for children and young adults to succeed in today's global market. Students have a right to feel secure in the educational environment, and parents want to ensure their children are guaranteed as much safety as possible. Optimum safety measures include a reliable and rapid response communication system for school and security personnel. In situations such as a fire or medical emergency, a top tier communication system is indispensable.

This communication system will also be used during the improbable event of a serious safety emergency for lockdown measures to warn personnel, to ensure that sensitive areas within the school are properly secured, and to summon law enforcement authorities and rapid responders.



Known communication problems with both cell phones and many standard model radios include the inability to decisively locate other individual security or educational personnel, along with many other issues that could affect the effectiveness of the security of a school.

Capitol Region Education Council (CREC) provides educational programs and services to 35 member districts and magnet schools in the Greater Hartford area. The CREC assists up to 145,000 students each year through 120 educational programs annually and manages more than 40 facilities in a dozen towns.

U.S. Security Associates (USA) is a market-leading safety and security solutions provider. With over 160 locally responsive offices, and over 50,000 dedicated professionals, they offer the most complete array of physical security, remote surveillance, and global consulting and investigations.

Kevin C. McCrewell, Sr. is Supervisor of Security Operations for U.S. Security Associates. His operation regularly serves 35 member districts in Greater Hartford, Connecticut. As Supervisor of Security, McCrewell is familiar with the issues that come from using a sub-par communication system.



Problems with Alternative Communication Systems:

McCrewell experimented with security communication alternatives that included cellular phones and standard model radio communication systems, and he learned that both alternatives had significant problems.

McCrewell knew he needed to find a better option for the member districts his operation serves. Neither a cell phone nor standard radio models can guarantee the prompt location of other security or administrative staff. He was frustrated with cell phones when calls were dropped due to poor signals, and when a call or message went unnoticed or ignored.

McCrewell also noticed that some radio communication systems do not offer easy access direct messaging. Though cell phones can text, if a situation is caused by inclement weather or some other event impacting the general public, cell phones may be unable to establish contact with each other. Furthermore, with many standard two-way radios, it may be difficult for personnel to find a clear channel on which to communicate, and channels may be subject to interference.

These problematic side-effects are also a privacy issue, McCrewell noted. Many messages need to be directed to specific staff members, not accessed by general personnel or the general public. Private messages available to third-parties may easily result in a breach of security or public panic.

Other issues involve technical difficulties that can result in big problems. Something as simple as a dead battery can restrict an entire safety operation by limiting rapid response communication. McCrewell admits to changing the batteries in standard model radios several times during a shift.

Enhanced Campus Communications with Hytera DMR Radios

“Since our upgrade to the Hytera product, it has become a lot easier for me to be a supervisor [and] not be a detective,” McCrewell said in an interview. He notes that prior to switching to the Hytera product, he was constantly asking questions, such as “Where is that person? Who was that who just called on the radio? What was it they just said?”



Hytera radios are built to the DMR Standard and rich in features for both voice and data communication, including built-in GPS. They are certified to ruggedized standards, including MIL-STD 810 testing.

Hytera is the world’s leading supplier of open standard DMR Trunking systems. DMR trunking allows greater channel utilization and efficiency compared to conventional systems.

With the Hytera products, McCrewell is instantly able to receive messages from officers in the field, which ensures the safety the security officers and the safety of the campus. Administrators are assigned their own programmable channels on their radios, allowing for quicker, more efficient communication. The easy-access menu enables users to quickly locate each other by way of the Direct Connect feature. The innovative technology of the system provides for an immediate response, which is critical in the case of a security issue or medical emergency.

Additionally, the product allows for private communication in a lockdown situation. This is an invaluable feature when you must alert a select few individuals promptly while guarding against information leaks.



“By being able to take the call from individuals directly, I can keep the message simple and very secure. It doesn’t go out to the masses for things like if I have a lockdown or I have a medical emergency. I can keep those things discrete with my own direct connection. It’s better than a cell phone,” McCrewell says.

He is now able to complete an eight to eleven-hour shift without changing the radio batteries. This power-saving capability is not only convenient, it is essential to security personnel. Additionally, McCrewell praises the hardened features and maneuverability of the product.

The sleek look and feel of Hytera DMR radios offer optimum functionality for supervisors and security personal. McCrewell says, “**Hytera is the new standard**” compared to previous radios.



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