



GALWAY MOUNTAIN RESCUE TEAM SCALES NEW HEIGHTS IN CRITICAL COMMUNICATIONS WITH MOTOTRBO™

CLEAR, RELIABLE COMMUNICATIONS CAN MEAN THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH



GALWAY MOUNTAIN RESCUE TEAM

The Galway Mountain Rescue Team (MRT) is a voluntary organisation providing 24/7 emergency response services to the upland and remote areas of counties Galway and Clare. The team covers an area spanning more than 1,800 km² (700 square miles), including some of Ireland's most rugged terrain. Therefore effective communications are vital to their mission of saving lives.

In 2017 the Galway MRT spent 3,500 hours rescuing people from remote and mountainous areas. And, when the team realised its radio communications equipment was no longer up to the task, it turned to SFL Mobile Radio, a long-term Motorola Solutions Platinum Partner and Application Developer.

Having assessed Galway MRT's needs, SFL recommended a MOTOTRBO™ radio system comprising an SLR 5500 Repeater and 25 VHF DP3661e Compact Portable Two-Way Radios. The new solution is delivering clear, robust, enhanced communications across the whole area. Teams can now work and coordinate themselves more efficiently and effectively during an incident, which ultimately will save lives.

CUSTOMER PROFILE

Organisation:
Galway Mountain Rescue Team (MRT)

Industry:
Public Safety

Location:
Ireland

Partner:
SFL Mobile Radio

Motorola Solutions Products:

- MOTOTRBO SLR 5500 Repeater
- 25 MOTOTRBO VHF DP3661e Compact Portable Two-Way Radios

Applications:

- TRBOnet™ Enterprise Dispatch System

CASE STUDY

MOTOTRBO FOR GALWAY MOUNTAIN RESCUE TEAM

“Good communications are vital to successful operations. We can all remember operations where poor communications have caused delays and misunderstandings. To be as efficient and effective as possible, we need to have clear, robust communications at all times. With MOTOTRBO, we now have that. Moreover, we now have added functionality, such as the ability to track the location of every team member on the hill, which is simply fantastic. Seeing a marker for every team member on a single computer screen allows the search manager to see the progress of the search in real time and adjust the search plan as required. It also ensures a heightened level of safety for every team member, as we can track their location accurately despite darkness or poor weather conditions. We have also been very impressed by the TRBOnet Enterprise Dispatch software. The ability to contact individual handsets or handset-groups is great, and the text messaging facility means vital details such as National Grid references can be issued to some or all members, with few of the errors seen with the older system.”

Rory Sherlock, Galway MRT



CHALLENGE

Galway MRT was previously using a VHF analogue radio system with an eclectic array of handhelds from various suppliers; however, this was outdated, could not always provide clear, robust communications and lacked some of the functionality Galway MRT wanted. Due to the nature of the terrain that Galway MRT operates in and the complexity of a mountain rescue operation, the new radio system had to be lightweight, yet fully waterproof and shock-resistant, have built-in GPS for tracking purposes, be able to provide interoperability with other mountain rescue teams in Ireland and, ideally, facilitate encrypted communication.

Galway MRT approached a number of suppliers to upgrade its communications. Mobile phones were simply not an option, as most of the terrain it patrols is uninhabited so has no network coverage, networks go down in full-scale emergencies and mobile phones do not allow voice communications for one to many. SFL showed itself to be extremely responsive and knowledgeable and presented a really well-thought-through and bespoke package, which reflected Galway MRT's requirements and working methods. Indeed SFL has many years' experience providing mission critical radio systems for sectors such as public safety, emergency services and the MoD; SFL Sales Director, Steven Landsborough comments: "It is fantastic to be working alongside Motorola Solutions, as a Platinum Partner and Application Developer, and we are proud to be in a position to provide applications to this important sector." Following in-depth advice and guidance, SFL recommended that Galway MRT install a VHF MOTOTRBO system. VHF is the frequency of choice for Galway MRT, as it allows for effective communication and coordination between various search and base groups, as well as with the local Coast Guard helicopter for patient evacuation.

SOLUTION

Galway MRT has deployed a MOTOTRBO radio system comprising a MOTOTRBO SLR 5500 Repeater, 25 MOTOTRBO VHF DP3661e Compact Portable Two-Way Radios and TRBOnet Enterprise Dispatch software, which runs on the mobile control vehicle's PC. As a volunteer-run organisation, time is a limited resource for Galway MRT, so the deployment has been a gradual process; it rolled out the new handsets quickly and easily, but the necessary modifications to its incident command vehicle and making the repeater operational have taken a little longer.

The team uses the system for radio calling, text messaging, recording communications and message encryption, as well as dispatch and GPS tracking of the individual team members when they are operating beyond line of sight. The SLR 5500 Repeater is usually housed in the mobile control support vehicle and is connected to the vehicle's telescopic pump-up mast; however, if the team is conducting a search in a very remote location, it has invested in a rugged IP68 Peli Case to transport the SLR 5500 Repeater by foot beyond the base vehicle, to extend network range. In this case, the repeater works in stand-alone mode.

BENEFIT

The MOTOTRBO radio system is improving Galway MRT's efficiency and communication during operations. Audio is crystal-clear and the devices are robust, reliable, compact and lightweight, perfectly suited to mountain rescue. The system was very easy to deploy and the handsets are very easy to use, which is important when training new members of the team, who may not have previous radio experience. And SFL has been an excellent partner.

Galway MRT is delighted with the added functionality and the flexibility of the MOTOTRBO solution, for example the option to contact individual radios or groups and the text messaging facility, which allows Galway MRT to accurately send vital details such as National Grid references, helps teams to work as effectively and speedily as possible. Personnel safety has also improved, as the mobile teams' locations can be tracked accurately, despite poor weather conditions or if they are working overnight. The tracking facility meanwhile enables the search manager to have a real-time overview of the rescue and to adjust the search plan as required as it is progressing and as information is received. Moving forward, Galway MRT is looking to benefit from further features of the MOTOTRBO system such as priority and emergency calling and event logging. All this added functionality and reliable, clear communications ensure faster, more efficient rescue operations, which could mean the difference between life and death.

Usage:

- Voice and data communications for mountain rescue teams across the upland and remote areas of Galway and Clare
- Group calling, individual calling and dispatch
- Team member tracking via GPS
- Real-time monitoring of the search and adjusting of search plan
- Recording of all communications

Benefits:

- Effective, clear, reliable communications across 1,800 km² (700 square miles) of mountainous, remote terrain
- Reliable, lightweight, easy-to-use, fully waterproof and shock-resistant radios, perfectly suited to the requirements of mountain rescue
- Built-in GPS for tracking purposes enhances safety of teams out in the mountains
- Radio network facilitates interoperability with other Irish mountain rescue teams and the Irish Coast Guard
- Galway MRT benefits from the added functionality such as text messaging, individual or group contact, communication recording and message encryption
- Flexible and easy-to-deploy network, with ability to deploy gradually as resources allow and the option of placing the repeater in a location away from the base vehicle, to extend network range
- The system has improved Galway MRT's efficiency and communication during rescues, which will ultimately save lives

For more information on MOTOTRBO, please visit us on the web at www.motorolasolutions.com/MOTOTRBO

MOTOROLA, MOTO, MOTOROLA SOLUTIONS and the Stylized M Logo are trademarks or registered trademarks of Motorola Trademark Holdings, LLC and are used under licence. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners. ©2018 Motorola Solutions Inc. All rights reserved.