



Cherry Hill Fire Department

“GoToMyPC is one of the greatest technology tools we ever bought.”

Lt. Chris Dollarton
Cherry Hill Fire Department



Cherry Hill Fire Department optimizes staff productivity using remote access with GoToMyPC

Located in southern New Jersey, the Cherry Hill Fire Department is a combination fire department – with paid and volunteer staff – that provides fire and emergency services to the 80,000 residents of Cherry Hill Township. The department operates seven fire stations with about 240 people, including: 120 career firefighters; about 45 full-time and per diem emergency medical technicians; 65 volunteers; and 12 staff personnel.

The challenge: getting administrative work done from the field and home

Cherry Hill Township has experienced significant growth over the past decade, which is reflected in the increasing number of fire and EMS calls per year. Today, with the inclusion of emergency medical services, the department handles about 12,500 calls annually, compared to about 3,960 in 1998. As its workload grew, the fire department sought ways to streamline administration and reduce paperwork in order to save time and budget and free up more firefighters for field responsibilities.

One strategy was implementing a network to connect local PCs at fire stations and make it easier to submit documentation to state and federal government databases, such as the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS). The department worked with a consultant to implement a robust network that connects all PCs across the organization, which helped reduce duplication of effort caused by reporting on paper and then entering that information into a dedicated machine.

However, even with its new network, the department needed a solution that would allow key personnel at home to access office resources. There were several reasons for this. First, although the majority of firefighters are salaried and work a set shift, operations go on around the clock and issues could arise that required expertise from a staff member at home.

Key benefits

- Enables fast response in time-critical situations
- Increases efficiency of key staff members
- Aids in retention by permitting work from home
- Easy to use for people with limited technology skills

For example, Lt. Chris Dollarton was previously assigned to administrative duties. He recently moved back to the field, but retained his collateral assignment as the public relations officer and auxiliary network administrator for the department. “Now that I am in the field full time, I needed a way to get PR and other work done from home and avoid having to drive in to the administrative center during off-duty hours,” he explained.

Remote access was also viewed as a way to retain staff members whose personal situations changed. “We do a lot of geographical mapping to be sure we can direct the closest resources to an emergency and be informed about all aspects of a particular location. Some of this work is time-sensitive. We rely on the technical expertise of a geographic information systems (GIS) analyst for this function, but there was a period when she needed to stay at home to attend to her new baby. To enable her to continue work on critical projects, we needed to provide remote access from her home office to her office computer with all of its specialized resources,” Dollarton said.

Implementing GoToMyPC for flexible working

As an important addition to its IT infrastructure, Cherry Hill Fire Department implemented Citrix® GoToMyPC® for remote access to computers at the administrative center, fire stations and the field command office, where the battalion chief/shift commander of the day directs operations. “We chose GoToMyPC for its ease of use, security and hosted model – and the fact that it is provided by a well-known and reputable company,” said Dollarton. “It was very simple to set up, and is user-friendly even for staff with limited technology expertise.”

Currently, the fire chief, the GIS analyst, Lt. Dollarton and several other staff members use GoToMyPC on a regular basis. The solution is also set up at the field command office, providing 24/7 access to that PC from anywhere.

Optimizing staff resources when every position counts

With its critical mission of fire protection, emergency response and environmental safety, Cherry Hill Fire Department must focus its staff on front-line operations as much as possible. “As in any community, budget is always an issue, and we need to make every position count,” Dollarton explained. “That is why a number of people have dual roles, such as several firefighters who are also certified to repair our various specialized firefighting equipment – like our air packs.”

GoToMyPC plays an important role in helping the department make the most of its personnel assets. “In my case, GoToMyPC allowed me to rejoin the field but still carry out my administrative responsibilities without having to drive across town to the administrative building each time I have to write a news release on a major incident,” Dollarton said. “It gives me the freedom to work from home so I can act quickly and work at my convenience during off-duty hours.”

The fire chief, who also uses GoToMyPC regularly, values the tool as a way to keep in constant touch with the office. “He is very hands-on and dedicated to the department, but he can’t be there every minute. Connecting to his computer remotely is a great way for the chief to get work done and stay up to date, but still have some personal time,” Dollarton noted.

For the GIS analyst, Danielle Gardner, GoToMyPC provided the flexibility to work from home while caring for her child. “Without the ability to access my computer remotely, it would have been extremely challenging to maintain the level of quality on our projects. GoToMyPC gives me access to all the resources and applications I need so that I can meet deadlines for critical projects. I could also complete less time-sensitive work at my own convenience – such as in the evenings. With GoToMyPC, I can accomplish everything I need to do while being available for my family.”

According to Lt. Dollarton, “GoToMyPC has proven to be a huge help to a mid-size fire department like ours. It’s an invaluable asset for flexible working – it saves time, provides better work/life balance and enables each user to be more efficient. In fact, GoToMyPC is one of the greatest technology tools we ever bought.”



Citrix Online Division

Product information
www.gotomypc.com

Sales inquiries

gotomeeting@citrixonline.com
T +1 888 646 0016
T +1 805 690 5780

About Citrix Online

Citrix Online provides secure, easy-to-use online solutions that enable people to work from anywhere with anyone. Whether using GoToMyPC® to access and work on a remote PC, GoToAssist® to support customers, GoToMeeting® to hold online meetings or GoToWebinar® for larger Web events, our customers – more than 35,000 businesses and hundreds of thousands of individuals – are increasing productivity, decreasing travel costs and improving sales, training and service on a global basis. A division of Citrix Systems, Inc. (Nasdaq: CTXS), the company is based in Santa Barbara, California. For more information, visit www.citrixonline.com or call +1-805-690-6400.

©2009 Citrix Online, LLC. All rights reserved. Citrix®, GoToMyPC®, GoToAssist®, GoToMeeting® and GoToWebinar® are trademarks of Citrix Systems, Inc. and/or one or more of its subsidiaries, and may be registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office and in other countries. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners.