Client Snapshot
South Snohomish County Fire & Rescue

Location: Snohomish County, Washington

Population Served: 250,000, approximately 50 square miles

Employees: 305

Rescue Hub Go-Live Date: January 1, 2017

Profile

South Snohomish County Fire & Rescue is a Washington state regional fire authority serving Brier, Edmonds, Lynnwood, Mountlake Terrace and unincorporated south Snohomish County. Previously serving the community as Snohomish County Fire District #1 and Lynnwood Fire Department, the new entity provides fire, rescue, medical and hazmat emergency services, along with fire prevention services – to all Snohomish County communities. With 305 employees, approximately 285 either respond to fire, rescue, medical and hazmat emergency services, or work in the prevention division.

Problem

Prior to forming a new entity, each community in the county tackled state and federal training initiatives and reporting differently. In order to align each department into one entity, inconsistencies needed to be identified and rectified.

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Across all departments, paper was the key to data collection and reporting with paper files, paper rosters and paper certificates. At each department there was a designated filing room.

Using these paper files, teams would input, track and maintain records, manually. 50% of time was spent inputting data and pulling reports. The department-wide, year-end report could take anywhere from 7 to 10 days. Pulling just one report could take 90 minutes. These reports were time consuming to create and the instance of human error was high.

Efficiencies weren't much better with email. Employees would receive weekly/monthly/quarterly email blasts with training to complete, or deadline reminders – that may or may not have pertained to their particular training. There was no automation around this crucial responsibility.

Because of the amount of time spent tracking and maintaining paper records, the standards that the organizations were meeting were the bare minimum requisites. So much time was spent on data collection and reporting, that there was no time to develop additional training for the teams, which would only help the communities South Snohomish County Fire & Rescue serves.

Because each fire department had its own standalone, manual system, it was imperative to secure a web-based platform to make systems and knowledge sharing more efficient.

Solution

Consolidating the 14 community fire stations into a regional fire authority was in the works for nearly three years. It was likely to pass the community vote, but it was unanimously agreed within the departments that no matter the voter outcome, at the very least, training and tracking would be consolidated and each department would be on the same web-based system.

South Snohomish County Fire & Rescue went live with Rescue Hub on January 1, 2017. By the end of Q1, Rescue Hub was fully implemented across the organization where everyone had a good sense of the system.

> "...training and tracking would be consolidated...each department would be on the same web-based system"

Rescue Hub is a cloud-based platform and provides the tools and access for each person to manage their own training, rather than one central person manually loading data. Now, the team simply completes the assigned training and, once complete, checks boxes online. These results can be filtered into specific reports.

Rescue Hub offers the ability to customize reports ensuring data can be pulled in a matter of minutes. The department-wide, year-end report can be delivered in half a day, rather than the 7 to 10 day window that had long been the standard.

Not only does everyone know if an individual's training is up to date, but if a battalion chief or captain wants to include ad hoc trainings, it can be done through Rescue Hub. If someone missed a computer-based training, targeted notifications will provide reminders. If a team missed in-person training due to an emergency response or PR event, the chief will know to reschedule. Rather than sending information en masse, the information is targeted only to those who need the information and reminders.

Other solutions are fire-service focused, web-based and offer similar features as Rescue Hub. But, there was little to no customization, which is what was required.

Results

Consolidating the resources from each of these small communities into a larger entity enables South Snohomish County Fire & Rescue to provide higher level services to the wider community than as a single entity. Now, with more resources and less duplication, there is increased efficiency along with significant cost savings to taxpayers.

With the information in the cloud, the process is now automated and easy to use across departments. This offers significant savings in both cost and time. Rescue Hub has increased efficiencies by:

- Maintaining consistencies across multiple departments
- Enabling users to customize data and pull relevant reports quickly and easily
- Eliminating email for training – alerts, reminders, etc.
- Alerting each user to their specific tasks and corresponding due dates
- Storing probationary firefighter manuals in the cloud, making them accessible from anywhere on all devices
- Tailoring drills based on the data – did a crew struggle? How can training be better suited?
- Expanding training to exceed state and federal requirements
- Customizing the development of the program based on existing needs

Significant time savings enable the training team to focus on developing new training based on the department's specific needs as seen from the online reports post-training.

"In 2015, before incorporating Rescue Hub, we had 4 hands-on drills. In 2017, we offered 18 hands-on drills and 15 quarterly drills. Saving time on administrative tasks allows our training team to work on exceeding the minimum standards which, in turn, allows us to better serve the community," said John Puetz, Acting Battalion Chief of Training.

Furthermore, adoption rate across the organization is nearly 100%. At the end of Q1, 75% of all users logged on to Rescue Hub. Of the 75%, approximately 60% were actively completing and logging training. At the end of Q2, the number jumped to 90% logging on and completing training. It is expected to see increased adoption rates once the Q3 report is finalized. Separately, the adoption rate for battalion chiefs and captains is 100% - all logging into Rescue Hub during every shift.

The South Snohomish County Fire & Rescue team has accepted Rescue Hub and its programs as the norm and not just 'something else' to do.

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For more information, contact:

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Jeff Wigal, Rescue Hub
jeff@rescuehub.com
(844) 737-7482

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