



## Kootenai County 911 Dispatch Case Study



The Sheriff's office of Kootenai County, Idaho manages all 911 service emergency calls and dispatch for multiple agencies in the county which include the Sheriff's Department, Fire Department, ambulance services, and EMS. The dispatch center works with a limited staff and is located at its county seat, Coeur D'Alene, a resort town that gets very busy in the summer.

**PROBLEM:** The Kootenai County Sheriff's Office was using computer-aided dispatching (CAD) software from Spillman Technologies, along with a paging system from Emergin, which was designed to provide responders with CAD call information via text messaging. Emergin was purchased by another company, and as a result, support to Emergin's customers was discontinued. Kootenai County recognized the critical need to find reliable paging software that would improve their efficiency, integrate seamlessly with their Spillman CAD system, and increase communication capabilities.

**SOLUTION:** HipLink Application Paging software was implemented to interface with the existing Spillman CAD system and it is used across the board by each of the agencies. Text messaging to smartphones and cell phones now extends the reach and function of the CAD system while still supporting pagers.

When asked about the reliability of HipLink Software, the Computer Systems Specialists commented: *"One of the biggest strengths that the users don't see is that it is stable. Holy cow is it stable! We have never had down time related to HipLink. It's probably the stablest part of the whole system."*

**GROWING NEEDS:** The number of pages sent out by the dispatch with the original system was initially less than one per day or about 20 pages per month. This increased over time to roughly 3 per day or about 100 per month. *"With Emergin, we weren't paging that much. We weren't able to touch people."*

**RESULTS:** Utilizing HipLink, Kootenai County dispatchers now send 400-1,000 pages per day on average. This equates to roughly 100 times more timely messaging reaching the right people at the right time.

*"It is a huge change! Everyone is getting accurate information now that is coming across their pagers, so they can see the address of where they are supposed to go."*

HipLink parses out the details so that they are delivered to the correct people, whether medical, a structural fire for a specific facility, or any emergency personnel. Paging has become more than just notification. The right people are paged *and* informed. *"A difference from "I just got a page." Now they have more information than they've ever had before in front of them."*

**PROBLEM:**

While the dispatch staff are seasoned and have been around for a long time, the number of employees has never reached full staffing. Yet, the work load has increased and call loads have risen for each of the various county agencies.

**SOLUTIONS & IMPROVEMENTS:**

Once call information is entered into Kootenai County's Spillman CAD system, an interface automatically transfers that data into the HipLink program. All of the call notes taken by the call taker are added. *"The first responder is getting closer to a first hand of what's transpiring."* HipLink is a huge time saver because the automated features reduce the work load and make it easier for dispatchers to coordinate more calls. *"Before, dispatchers had to look up what they are supposed to do, who they are supposed to be calling, send out the pages, see if they are responding. I couldn't tell you how much of a time saver this is because HipLink just automates everything."*

The HipLink Department Module has reduced the work load of data entry for 750 plus Receivers by distributing maintenance to other supporting agencies. HipLink tracks who is paged within each of these various Departments.

The system is set up so that each agency can independently manage administrative roles and configure its own Receivers or Groups. Groups are suited to the preferences and requirements at each agency of who needs to know what information and how they want to receive it. *"By leveraging the Groups configurations, we solve the manpower issues."*

During paging, a call may go out to a number of individuals. Once they receive the call, another page goes out with all of their call times, response time, and report number. Some of the agencies don't want that information so HipLink filters out who actually receives the call completions and automatically reduces duplicate paging.

Kootenai County has created various Groups where messages selectively go out. Within Groups, paging goes out to the homicide detectives, canine teams, and even a dive team for example. In addition to emergency communications, the Groups are pushing out administrative communications for persons to man the fire station, sending messages to all members or to a paid off duty Group. The coordination and selectivity of using the Groups configurations are limitless.

**PROBLEM:**

Radio communication limits the time and the number of responses and communications possible. The firemen who receive radio dispatches may not hear all of the information or remember details, such as the exact street address.

**SOLUTION:**

The HipLink Automatic Paging system frees up an incredible amount of air time on the radio. Now responders can handle 6-7 incidents at the same time because they are not on the air as much to handle all of these different calls. They are not tying up frequencies or waiting for a frequency to become available, which is a huge time saver. The address and details are paged and literally placed in their hands of the people who need the information.

*"A structural fire had 1,000 pages go off in twenty minutes as things progressed. The paging happened faster than that. Someone arrived on scene and needed this and that. If we page this person, then we need to page that person. The Grouping features, who is on duty, automated it all through HipLink."*

— David Vaughn  
Kootenai County Sheriff's Department

**CONCLUSION:**

The Kootenai County 911 service successfully manages increased emergency calls with the same number of people, providing more detailed information to responders, notifications to selected Groups, and is independently managed across multiple agencies.

What does the Kootenai Sheriff's Computer Systems Specialist have to say about HipLink?

*"It really exploded, more so than I ever thought. HipLink is so ingrained with what we do around here. It is how we do business. That is how Fire and EMS get their messages— 100% dispatched initial notification. It has changed the way we do work."*



**HipLink Software**  
408-399-6120  
800-524-7503  
HLsales@hiplink.com  
[www.hiplink.com](http://www.hiplink.com)