



# Panasonic

Panasonic recommends Windows 8.



## Case Study: Miami-Dade County Public Schools Police Department



Toughbook 31

Toughbook U1

*SOLUTIONS FOR K-12*

### CHALLENGE

Provide reliable in-vehicle and mobile computing, connectivity and seamless communications to enhance situational awareness for police officer safety. The computers need to be used eight to 16 hours per day, every day, in Miami's hot and humid environment without fail.

### SOLUTION

The Miami-Dade County Public Schools Police Department chose the rugged Panasonic Toughbook® 31 as the in-vehicle workhorse and the Toughbook U1 handheld computer outside the car for issuing traffic citations. Both devices are purpose-built to offer the right mix of performance, durability and enhanced security that day-to-day police work demands.

### RESULT

Utilizing Panasonic Toughbook computers has enabled Miami-Dade County Public Schools Police Department officers to stay reliably connected and informed and has given them the tools they need to do their jobs more effectively while serving a jurisdiction over a vast geography including 400 city schools and more than half a million students and staff.

**TOUGHBOOK®**



## Miami-Dade County Public Schools Police Department Improves Officer Safety and Mobility with Panasonic Toughbook Mobile Computers and Handheld Tablet PCs

The Miami-Dade Schools Police Department (MDSPD) was founded in 1957 to support Miami-Dade County Public Schools, the fourth-largest school system in the U.S. The MDSPD is one of only three full-service school police departments recognized by the state of Florida's Department of Law Enforcement and is considered a leader in school policing. As such, its officers are armed, have full arrest powers and conduct their own uniformed crime reporting (UCR) to the state of Florida and the FBI.

According to the FBI, the U.S. averages more than 2 million juvenile arrests per year for primarily non-violent offenses. During the 2009-2010 school year, 85 percent of public schools reported that one or more crime incidents had taken place at school, amounting to an estimated 1.9 million crimes. This translates to 40 crimes per 1,000 public school students enrolled, according to the most recent data from the National Center for Education Statistics. MDSPD has jurisdiction over a vast geography of school board-owned and leased properties as well as 400 city schools that serve more than half a million students and staff. With more than 170 sworn officers, the department answers 4,500-5,500 calls per month, on average, ranging from theft and vandalism to more serious crimes such as assaults and even homicide.

### RUGGED TECHNOLOGY DELIVERS RELIABILITY

Since 2011, MDSPD has relied on Panasonic Toughbook® mobile computers to support the communication and mobility requirements of its officers in the field. Every officer in the department is assigned a Toughbook mobile computer, leveraging the Toughbook 31 as the in-vehicle workhorse and the Toughbook U1 handheld computer outside the car for issuing traffic citations. Both devices are purpose-built to offer the right mix of performance and durability that day-to-day police work demands. In addition, the MDSPD relies on these devices to provide its officers access to online training. This helps reduce department liability and aids in the accreditation process. "Prior to purchasing the Toughbook computers back in 2011, we had regular commercial laptops in the vehicles and were having problems with keyboards and hinges breaking due to the wear and tear of these devices being used for 8-16 hours a day," said Capt. Joseph Bevilacqua, a 15-year veteran of the Miami-Dade Schools Police Department. "We needed something that was more durable."

After evaluating a number of solutions, the department selected the fully-rugged Panasonic Toughbook 31. Its unmatched ruggedness can survive drops of up to six feet, provides protection from water and dust, and is well-suited for Miami's hot and humid environment. Its magnesium alloy case, shock-mounted hard drive and enhanced security features protect highly sensitive data, which is especially important for confidentiality requirements related to the department's interactions with juveniles. Its daylight-readable touchscreen was a key selling point for the department, and its Gobi™ mobile broadband capabilities enable officers to stay connected no matter where they are throughout the county.

### RELIABLE CONNECTIVITY ENSURES SITUATIONAL AWARENESS FOR OFFICER SAFETY

For MDSPD, police officer mobility is especially important. The department assigns an officer to every high school and middle school in the district and tries to ensure those officers are present at the busiest times—in the mornings, at lunch and at the end of the day when most incidents occur. However, the department's officers are also tasked with responding to calls throughout the district and Miami-Dade County, making reliable connectivity and mobility critically important.

The Panasonic Toughbook U1 handheld device offers the department a lot of flexibility when officers are outside the car or in the schools. According to Capt. Bevilacqua, the department likes the form factor of the Toughbook U1 because it's small and portable and it can be attached to a hand or forearm, enabling officers to walk around outside the car and still issue citations with a portable printer. Since 2005, the department has managed its own computer-aided dispatch (CAD) system while utilizing the radio frequency and channels of the Miami-Dade Police Department. "Managing our own communications center was a challenge because it limited our visibility to what was happening around us," said Capt. Bevilacqua. "We're not like a typical municipality where we work in a city with distinct boundaries. Our schools and other properties are spread throughout Miami-Dade County and we work with many different municipalities."

Recently, the Miami-Dade Police Department opened a large, state-of-the-art communications center to enable seamless communications between various county agencies. As such, the department is moving its operations to the new communications center because of the cost and complexity of running a separate communications center. This move will help improve officer safety by providing more awareness of what is happening throughout Miami-Dade County and help the department reduce costs.

The department has been so satisfied with their Toughbook mobile computers that they are currently looking to purchase additional Toughbook 31 mobile PCs and are evaluating the new Panasonic Toughpad™ FZ-G1 tablet to support new hires and anticipated growth planned throughout 2014. The Toughpad line offers customers the same mix of ruggedness, performance and reliability in a lighter, smaller form factor. "We want to provide our officers with the latest technology to assist them with day-to-day operations. We're really happy with where Panasonic is going with the Toughpad and like the idea that we could dock the tablet and run a separate wireless or Bluetooth® keyboard to get even more mobility and flexibility," said Capt. Bevilacqua.

The rugged design of Toughbook computers has served the department well. "Of the 150+ devices we've had since 2011, we've only had a few issues," Capt. Bevilacqua said. "When we do have an issue, we make a call and Panasonic responds immediately. They send a shipping box, we send it in and two to three days later we have it back, which makes it very easy for us." For the Miami-Dade Schools Police Department, mobility and reliability aren't simply a business advantage, they are a safety imperative. By deploying Panasonic Toughbook mobile computing solutions, the department has allowed its officers to stay reliably connected and informed and given them the tools they need to do their jobs more effectively.

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