Case Study

Northamptonshire Fire & Rescue Service

The client.

Northamptonshire Fire & Rescue Service (NFRS) is a County Council authority sitting within the Customer and Community Services Directorate of Northamptonshire for which the Chief Fire Officer is Head of Protective Services.

NFRS has 22 Fire Stations throughout the County in addition to a Central Headquarters based in Northampton, where the Stores and Workshop functions are located.

NFRS maintain a fleet of 35 first attendance appliances and 8 specialist appliances and respond to over 15,000 emergency calls per year.

The requirement.

Managing equipment in NFRS is a complex requirement. A fire appliance can contain up to 300 different items of equipment, with critical items requiring regular conformance testing. Some equipment always remains with the vehicle whilst some equipment may move between vehicles following an incident.

NFRS required an equipment management system which would allow stations to manage their own inventories, record the results of standard tests and track equipment movements.

The Brigade Management also specified that the system be visible to Operational Management and support services departments.

NFRS were also concerned with the impact of the system on operational personnel with a desire to keep it simple, while still being able to achieve a fast and accurate inventory check.

This bought into the specification the need for bar code readers supporting a major change to working practices.

It was initially agreed to use bar code readers purchased by NFRS for another application many years earlier.

The solution.

An electronic database system was determined as the only means of effectively managing this complex asset environment and Redkite Systems supplied a web based system capable of being accessed and updated by any authorised user at any location.

Configurable access rights gave Operational Management and support services departments the facility to oversee inventory, test and inspection records as well as equipment movements.

Based at Service HQ, the central data base can be updated by both PC and scanner, at all NFRS locations, providing fast and accurate asset recording.

Redkite Systems bought in expert developers to create a bar code application for the existing bar code readers.

However, Redkite Systems quickly identified that NFRS could significantly reduce the on-going cost of maintaining the third party software needed to support the scanners and it was agreed that these would be replaced with readers capable of using web based software.

Redkite Systems redesigned to software for the readers at no additional cost.

The benefits.

NFRS have greatly improved the accuracy of asset data. Managers have a view of equipment status and the history of critical tests is visible ensuring that NFRS are correctly managing their health & safety responsibilities.

Due to the improvement in accuracy and visibility, user ownership of assets has improved and savings have been made due to less lost or damaged equipment.

On-going development will provide NFRS with the ability to speed up the vehicle change-over process required when assets are being moved from a vehicle going 'off the run'. This development reflects NFRS ongoing commitment to enhancing and developing the use of the Redkite EMS System.