

Why Effective Crisis Communication is Critical for the Civil Nuclear Constabulary



Sites that house nuclear materials must be treated with the greatest care and secured with the utmost scrutiny. While security for military nuclear sites is managed primarily by the Ministry of Defence, protecting the majority of nuclear facilities in the United Kingdom falls to the Civil Nuclear Constabulary (CNC). As a public safety agency, its officers are sometimes leveraged for additional police operations throughout the country.

“Our job is to provide physical security for the storage, transportation, and usage of nuclear material,” explains Joseph Shearer-Rust, Resilience Officer at CNC. “To that end, we deploy many highly trained firearms officers across nuclear sites throughout the United Kingdom. We also support local police forces from minor incidents up to national emergencies.”

Civil Nuclear Constabulary

Industry:

Public Sector/Security

Location:

United Kingdom

Product:

BlackBerry® AtHoc®

Website:

<https://www.gov.uk/cnc>



Serve, Protect, and Secure

In recent years, the United Kingdom has had repeated issues with terrorist threats. In light of this, the government has instituted a number of different operational responses and processes to both mitigate damage and minimise loss of life during these incidents, known as Marauding Terrorist Attacks. The largest of these, [Operation Temperer](#), leverages agencies across the entire country.

To date, it has only been put into effect twice. First following the March 2017 bombing of Ariana Grande's concert at Manchester Arena, and a second time following the September 2017 Parsons Green Bombing. The CNC was among the responding agencies in both cases, dedicating a large portion of its personnel to each operation.

Outside of larger-scale operations like Operation Temperer, the CNC also responds to smaller threats and events. The challenge, notes Shearer-Rust, is balancing these responses with its primary duty. It cannot afford to neglect the sites it has been assigned to guard and is required by regulators to keep a certain number of active officers at each site.

Navigating the Challenges of Staffing Shortfalls

To coordinate its staffing efforts, the CNC initially made use of phone trees and pagers. Several officers at each site had a list of individuals they were required to contact in the event of a staff shortfall. This process was time-consuming, and eventually grew obsolete.

The CNC needed a more efficient, effective solution. A means of quickly enabling two-way communication with a large number of people. With this in mind, it began evaluating crisis communication platforms.

Eventually, the CNC's search led it to AtHoc[®] Alert. A powerful two-way emergency alerting solution, AtHoc Alert is able to send messages through a wide range of different channels including text, email, phone, desktop, and radio. It also allows recipients to reply with a variety of preconfigured responses.

A Better Brand of Emergency Alerting

"We did a very detailed product assessment around lifetime cost, user-friendliness, and functionality, comparing BlackBerry[®] AtHoc[®] against its leading competitors," Shearer-Rust recalls. "BlackBerry AtHoc ultimately won. We also found BlackBerry quite helpful in building out our ideas and our usage of their platform."

As part of BlackBerry AtHoc's initial deployment process, Shearer-Rust configured a template for each unit in the CNC and gave small groups of users at each site limited access to the platform. This allowed each unit to manage its own response to incidents and shortfalls, while still providing head office oversight into their usage. In addition to unit-specific templates, the CNC has also integrated BlackBerry AtHoc into its overtime management.

"Whilst we are supporting a major incident or nationwide operation, we still have nuclear sites to defend. We therefore need the capacity to setup overtime shifts on extremely short notice. BlackBerry AtHoc has been incredibly useful in that regard."

-Joseph Shearer-Rust,
Resilience Officer, Civil Nuclear Constabulary

Keeping in Touch, No Matter What

Since deploying BlackBerry AtHoc, the CNC has reduced its average response time for major incidents from several hours to approximately fifteen minutes—and further reduced response time for smaller scale urgent mobilisations. When additional staff are required, a unit no longer needs to send personnel to the office to man the phones. Instead, it's as simple as pressing a button, sending tailored alerts, and waiting for a response.

BlackBerry AtHoc also makes it quicker and easier to bring in people for overtime, saving an estimated £50,000 to £60,000 a year, according to Shearer-Rust. The CNC has also used BlackBerry AtHoc to rid itself of pagers, saving an additional £30,000. A planned expansion will see this increase to an estimated £60,000.

Eventually, the CNC also intends to look into AtHoc® Connect for inter-agency communication and AtHoc® Collect for better communication with field personnel. For now, however, it is more than satisfied with AtHoc Alert, which it uses on a daily basis. According to Shearer-Rust, the organization has sent 2,500 alerts over the past two years.

“Historically, when an event would happen, we’d often pre-emptively prepare to deploy ‘just in case’ even if it wasn’t guaranteed that our help would be needed,” says Shearer-Rust. “Because of BlackBerry AtHoc, we can deploy with much shorter notice. This means our officers are able to return to work that much faster, and we don’t need to worry about setting aside resources until it’s strictly necessary.”

About BlackBerry

BlackBerry (NYSE: BB; TSX: BB) provides intelligent security software and services to enterprises and governments around the world. The company secures more than 500M endpoints including 150M cars on the road today. Based in Waterloo, Ontario, the company leverages AI and machine learning to deliver innovative solutions in the areas of cybersecurity, safety and data privacy solutions, and is a leader in the areas of endpoint security management, encryption, and embedded systems. BlackBerry’s vision is clear — to secure a connected future you can trust.

For more information, visit [BlackBerry.com](https://blackberry.com) and follow [@BlackBerry](https://twitter.com/BlackBerry).

