



Customer Profile

Cypress Creek EMS speeds response time with Infor EnRoute Dispatch



Facts at a glance

Product: Infor® EnRoute Dispatch

Industry: Public Sector

Country: USA

“Infor EnRoute Dispatch allows for easier, detailed customization because it’s more map intensive—it’s easier to define particular response types in certain areas. It works very well for all of the agencies that we dispatch for.”

—Toivo Sari, Information Technology Manager, Cypress Creek EMS

About the company

Founded in 1975, Cypress Creek EMS provides 24-hour skilled emergency care to North Harris County. Since its beginning as a volunteer-run EMS organization, Cypress Creek EMS has expanded its services to meet the challenges of a burgeoning population on the northern periphery of Houston, the nation’s fourth largest city. In addition to its own agency, Cypress Creek EMS coordinates the response of several other EMS agencies, nine fire departments, and the county fire marshal’s office. To learn more, please visit, www.ccems.com.

With Infor EnRoute Dispatch, Cypress Creek EMS upgraded its CAD to coordinate 14 different agencies responding to nearly 60,000 incidents a year.

Managing the diverse needs of multiple agencies

Located in a busy area of suburban Houston, Cypress Creek EMS Communication Center serves as the dispatch center for northern Harris County, Texas. In addition to dispatching its own EMS units, Cypress Creek EMS coordinates the response of several other EMS agencies, nine fire departments, and the county fire marshal’s office. It also acts as a secondary public safety answering point in the Harris County 911 Network. In 2014 alone, the Cypress Creek EMS communication center handled more than 58,000 incidents.

Cypress Creek EMS’s agencies frequently respond together, but each agency has its own unique needs and policies. Some want first responders dispatched to EMS calls if the ambulance is responding from beyond a certain distance. Others want to ensure that resources in a jurisdiction are not completely depleted by an incident, preferring to have some units respond to larger incidents from slightly further away, rather than using every company in the local area.

Cypress Creek EMS’s legacy computer aided dispatch (CAD) system made those unique agency protocols difficult to implement. An abdominal pain call, for example, was programmed to receive a first responder and an ambulance, and the CAD was not able to adjust the dispatch assignment based on which units were responding or where they originated. Dispatchers had to make changes to each response plan manually, while also managing 14 diverse response protocols and meeting call-processing time standards.

Cypress Creek EMS hoped to identify and implement a more efficient and user-friendly system for its IT staff. Previously, any change to dispatch assignments or maps was a cumbersome process that required the communication center to take the system offline to install updates. When an agency requested data on call processing or response times for its area of service, one of the Cypress Creek EMS staff members would have to manually run a report—time that quickly added up when trying to serve the needs of so many customers.

“Infor EnRoute Dispatch is not a cookie-cutter system. We dispatch for many fire departments and agencies, and they’re not all the same. And now, with the new system, we’re able to provide them with configurations and responses based on their individual business needs. Infor’s solution is more robust, and it really allows us to head into the future.”

—Harry Fair, GIS and data systems expert, Cypress Creek EMS

When Cypress Creek EMS explored implementing a new CAD system, its leaders looked for one that would provide flexibility and allow for a complex set of rules and dispatch policies. They wanted to simplify processes in order to reduce the time that staff spent working on data reporting and updates to the system. And they hoped to ensure they had a CAD system that was prepared for Next Generation 911 and other emerging digital technologies. Cypress Creek EMS found its answer in Infor EnRoute Dispatch.

Reducing response times

With Infor’s EnRoute system, dispatchers can now process calls more quickly and staff can easily make adjustments to dispatch rules without taking the entire system offline. The enhanced mapping capabilities of the Infor CAD have especially helped Cypress Creek EMS meet the demands of not only its own EMS system, but also the 13 other agencies it supports.

“Each agency has its own procedures,” said Toivo Sari, Information Technology Manager for Cypress Creek EMS. “We had to build unique responses for the agencies depending on what the fire chiefs require of their staff and also the mutual aid companies around them. They just wanted to be able to draw an area of the map and say this area of the map gets this type of response.”

Such a complex system of multiple agencies with their own procedures and protocols also means frequently tweaking and adjusting the system. Unlike with previous technologies, Infor EnRoute makes it easy for Cypress Creek to respond to its customers’ requests.

“The reality is that our districts are different in population density, types of housing, businesses, you name it,” said Chief Fred Windisch of the Ponderosa Fire Department, one of the agencies dispatched by Cypress Creek EMS. “All of those things come into play and create challenges.”

When an incident highlights one of those challenges and a change to dispatch protocol is desired, Infor EnRoute’s flexibility allows Cypress Creek EMS to make an instant change. “All along there have been continual improvements based on actual responses,” Windisch said.

With Infor, the communication center can now define specific responses based on geographical boundaries or even target specific neighborhoods and buildings. Responses can also be adjusted based on time of day and other factors. So when a busy office complex has more than 10,000 employees during business hours and only a handful overnight, the CAD can be programmed to send a different assignment to a fire alarm at 10AM on Monday than at 3AM on Saturday.

“Those changes can be automatic and the dispatchers don’t have to think about it,” said Harry Fair, Cypress Creek EMS’s GIS and data systems expert. “Infor EnRoute allows the flexibility to be able to customize for our unique needs.”

When Fair and his colleagues need to make a change to dispatch protocols or the mapping system, they no longer need to take the CAD system offline and spend hours updating the system. After receiving initial training from the Infor team, Cypress Creek EMS can easily make those changes while the system is online.

“In the old system, if we wanted to do updates—that could be adding new neighborhoods being built, things of that nature—I would have to switch to our backup machine, and there could be some downtime with that. It wasn’t very user-friendly,” Fair said. “With this new system, I can push out updates to all the dispatch positions quickly and easily. It really speeds up maintenance time and enhances what we can provide to our customers.”

Infor EnRoute Dispatch also seamlessly integrates multiple technology platforms, including several different vendors’ electronic patient care record (ePCR) and National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) software packages, as well as First In Map, mobile software that several Harris County agencies use to track apparatus, map hydrants, and view pre-incident plans on the scene of an incident. And, with Infor EnRoute Dispatch’s WebCAD, agency leaders can log-in from a home computer.

“Infor EnRoute does a great job of allowing us to interface with these technologies to give our dispatch customers whatever options they are looking for,” Fair said. “Infor also provides more extensive and customizable ways to send automated notifications to multiple devices and platforms,” he added, “such as emails with links to a map of the incident location. We’re not limited to plain old cellphone text messages or pagers.”

Bringing better services to citizens

Only a few months after going live, Infor EnRoute Dispatch has allowed Cypress Creek EMS to better serve both its customers and the community at large. Infor EnRoute Dispatch has reduced the average ambulance travel time to a call by more than one minute. With Infor EnRoute Dispatch, the dispatcher can find the closest unit to the emergency and speed up response time. Overall response times have also decreased, and Cypress Creek EMS expects to see that trend continue as dispatchers become even more familiar with the new system.

Cypress Creek EMS is most excited about the flexibility that Infor EnRoute Dispatch provides for managing communications for such a diverse group of responders. “It’s not a cookie cutter system. We dispatch for many fire departments and agencies, and they’re not all the same,” Fair said. “And now, with the new system, we’re able to provide them with configurations and responses based on their individual business needs.... Infor’s solution is more robust, and it really allows us to head into the future.”



641 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10011
800-260-2640
infor.com

About Infor

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