

New Brighton Department of Public Safety

Reaching peak efficiency with digital evidence management



Name

New Brighton Department of Public Safety

Industries

Law enforcement

Location

New Brighton, Minnesota, United States

Products

Genetec Clearance

Partners

i-PRO, CentralSquare

New Brighton Department of Public Safety digitizes evidence management and saves countless hours using Genetec, CentralSquare, and i-PRO solutions.

New Brighton is a suburb bordering the Twin Cities of Minneapolis-Saint Paul in Minnesota, United States. Being so close to the two largest cities in Minnesota, New Brighton offers its 24,000 residents a blended urban-suburban feel. The century-old city is also a nature lovers' hub with over 13 parks, an executive golf course, and the beautiful Rice Creek at its northern border. To protect this family-friendly suburb, the New Brighton Department of Public Safety works diligently to keep its city and residents safe.

Facing the limitations of older data management processes

New Brighton has always taken a technology-forward approach in their public safety initiatives. In recent years, the department invested in CentralSquare Public Safety Suite Enterprise for their records management system (RMS) and computer-aided dispatch (CAD). This gives them a powerful and fully integrated solution to manage 911 calls, first-responder dispatching, and incident response while streamlining information sharing with other police departments across the county.

New Brighton DPS also upgraded to the i-PRO body-worn and in-car camera systems. The new mobile cameras ensure they

can collect high-resolution video of situations in progress. More than that, the i-PRO automatic synching features between the wearable and in-car devices help officers focus on what's going on, rather than the technology.

In addition to the RMS data and mobile video evidence, investigators collected cellphone footage, doorbell video, audio recordings, and more. Digital evidence storage requirements were growing, and data sharing was complicated and time-consuming.

“Our records staff gets about 1,000 digital media requests per year. They had to burn media onto DVDs. Each DVD took an hour, or sometimes several hours, to burn. Handling those investigations as well as managing data storage and data dissemination was using a lot of our resources,” explained Trevor Hamdorf, Deputy Director of Public Safety.

That is when the team learned about Genetec Clearance™ digital evidence management system (DEMS). They saw how Clearance provides data management to support investigations and how seamlessly it works with the CentralSquare RMS and i-PRO cameras as a comprehensive public safety solution.

According to Hamdorf, “Clearance did everything we needed it to do, and more.”

Investing in an innovative public safety bundle

Since implementing Clearance, CentralSquare RMS, and i-PRO body-worn and in-car video systems, the New Brighton DPS has seen huge efficiency gains. This innovative public safety portfolio has heightened automation across tasks and processes, saving countless hours for everyone from dispatch operators and police officers to records staff.

“The time savings we’ve experienced has been significant. All our processes from evidence collection and sharing to data retention and deletion have been streamlined,” notes Hamdorf.

With the new systems, when a 911 call comes into the dispatch center, the operator creates an incident number and determines the caller’s location. As soon as they assign the call to New Brighton DPS, a case number is created in the RMS, which then automatically creates a case in Clearance.

As officers respond to the scene, the body camera turns on. They capture witness statements on their body cams while in-car cameras capture more of the scene and anything else that’s happening. All cameras upload directly to Clearance, where that evidence is easily associated with the case file.

“We’ve completely digitized the evidence collection process with Clearance. On the scene, officers can create and share a QR code with witnesses who then use that to upload files from their phones into the DEMS case file. At the station, officers simply create an evidence request link and email it to recipients. These recipients then retrieve video from their doorbell cameras, video systems, or even their mobile phones and securely share it with investigators using the link,” said Hamdorf.

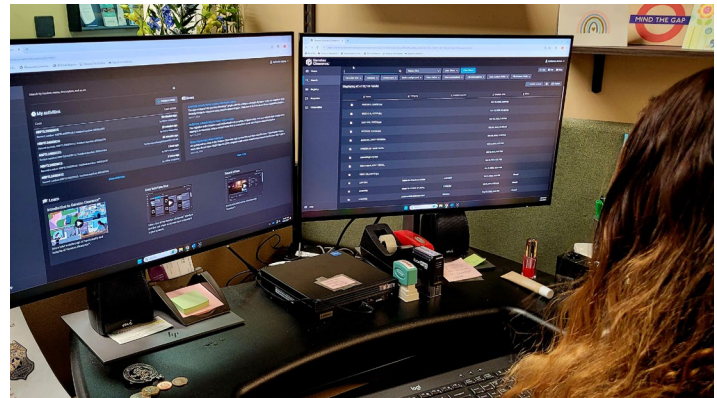
Simplifying evidence management

During an investigation, officers have everything at their fingertips. Finding evidence is as simple as entering the case number in Clearance. They can also input quick search parameters in Clearance such as date, time, types of files, GPS coordinates, and much more. Switching to a map view in Clearance displays all available evidence that matches the search criteria on a city map.

Since Clearance is a web-based system, officers can access information from anywhere. Being able to set user permissions for viewing, downloading, and exporting evidence within Clearance allows the New Brighton DPS to further protect and compartmentalize data.

“Our officers know that every user interaction is tracked within Clearance, and we can pull audit trails any time. These audit logs are also very helpful when we share data with attorneys. We have confirmation when they receive the evidence and when they view or download it,” said Hamdorf.

Likewise, most of the data management is automated. When an officer closes a case, the data retention period begins. When the retention period ends, data is automatically deleted. This not only



optimizes data storage but also enhances data protection and privacy compliance by ensuring the Department only keeps video and data for as long as the State Records Retention Schedule requires.

Strengthening data security with a cloud-based DEMS

Ensuring evidentiary integrity is particularly important for criminal cases and discoveries. And Hamdorf knows that they can rely on the Microsoft Azure Government Cloud, to securely host their digital evidence:

“Our data security and privacy are strong with Genetec Clearance. All of our data is stored in the cloud and protected by built-in cybersecurity features in Genetec, as well as by Microsoft,” he explained.

Automated virus checks on files sent from third party sources help ensure there are no issues with malicious files that could be redistributed if downloaded to their network. According to Hamdorf, “We’re soliciting files from the public, and we don’t always know where those files are coming from. With Genetec Clearance, we have extra assurance that all files are being scanned for malware. And we’re lessening our risk exposure by not inserting random USB sticks into our computers or receiving emails with random links. Everything we do today is backed by cybersecurity best practices.”

Hamdorf further shares how automatic redaction capabilities have been useful. “In Minnesota, requests for bodycam video of somebody who’s not the data subject are private,” he notes. “In situations where our records team needs to share footage with insurance companies, for example, we must also redact that video. The automatic redaction feature in Clearance makes this process smooth and effortless.”

Boosting city-wide collaboration and data dissemination

Instead of burning DVDs and manually sharing evidence, everything related to data dissemination has been streamlined in Clearance. New Brighton has created user groups for both county and city attorneys with specific user permissions. This allows them to handle their disclosures and share evidence with public defenders as well.

“Before Clearance, the defense attorneys would request disclosures through the City Attorney’s Office, and they would give them a form to request evidence directly from us. Now, the county and city attorneys have access to Clearance and can handle disclosures without our involvement,” explained Hamdorf.

Supporting other agencies with new digital evidence strategies

Using the Clearance camera registry feature, New Brighton DPS has started collaborating with other local organizations. They see the potential to continue enhancing safety and security in their community through this technology.

They’re currently collaborating with the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT). Some of the interstate cameras are linked on a city map with Clearance. When an incident occurs, they can quickly locate nearby cameras and send MnDOT a video evidence request, all from the DEMS.

“We’ve gained a lot from this solution. We want to share what we’ve learned with other agencies and help them achieve these efficiencies too. From a time, resources, and safety perspective, there’s great value in this cloud-based public safety technology,” concluded Hamdorf.



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