CASE STUDY

A unified approach to public safety response

Richmond Department of Emergency Communications, Preparedness and Response | *Virginia*



Industry

- Public Safety

Solutions

- Octave I/CAD, Octave OnCall Analytics, Octave I/CAD Mobile Responder, Octave I/CAD Mobile for Public Safety

Challenges

- Call-taking and dispatching for many departments / entities
- Multiple systems across departments
- Sharing critical information and coordinating responses

Results

- Centralized CAD system
- Shared situational awareness and enhanced coordination
- Faster, more accurate responses

One of the oldest major cities in the United States, Richmond, Virginia, is well known for its historic landmarks and emerging arts and culinary scene. It's also quickly growing thanks to its affordable cost of living, strong job market and overall livability. In fact, about 40,000 people moved to the Richmond area between 2020 and 2023, the greatest influx of new residents in the region's history.

Critical to keeping its quarter of a million residents, as well as visitors, safe, the **Richmond Department of Emergency Communications, Preparedness and Response (DECPR)** is one of the busiest emergency communications centers in the state – answering more than 450,000 calls for service every year.

A longtime customer, it leverages a growing suite of Octave technologies, including computer-aided dispatch (CAD) and mobile and analytics solutions, to dispatch for multiple organizations and agencies across the city. This multidepartment approach drives greater emergency response efficiency across the region.

Legacy of multidepartment coordination

The DECPR is the forward-thinking public safety answering point (PSAP) for the city of Richmond's E-911 telephone system. It provides call-taking and dispatching for a citywide network of departments/entities. These include the Richmond Police Department, the Richmond Fire Department and even Richmond Animal Care & Control.

Before Octave's solutions were implemented many years ago, there were multiple systems across these different departments, which made sharing critical information and coordinating response efforts challenging. Now, calls for the departments are routed through the centralized system at the DECPR. This kind of enhanced coordination was critical during a 2023 incident that occurred at the VCU Medical Center. The CAD solution was able to interface with the VCU CAD system, which facilitated rapid and seamless information sharing for a faster response.

"Whether it's police, fire or EMS, everyone gets to see the same information, which helps in delivering a faster and more accurate response."

Chantell Jones
Emergency Communications Supervisor, *Richmond Department of Emergency, Communications, Preparedness, and Response*



"The ability to have multiagency responses to calls helps us all see the same information in real time," said Chantell Jones, emergency communications supervisor for the DECPR. "The responders can see everything as it unfolds, even while the call-takers are still on the line. Whether it's police, fire or EMS, everyone gets to see the same information, which helps in delivering a faster and more accurate response."

Beyond basic CAD

In addition to using Octave's solutions for integrated call handling and dispatching, intelligent mapping, field communications, data reporting and analysis and application integration, the DECPR also uses mobile and analytics solutions, all part of Octave's comprehensive public safety platform.

For example, it extended its CAD technology into smart phones and tablets, which allows responders operating away from their vehicles to stay on top of event changes and share real-time information with the control room. The department also leverages Octave OnCall Analytics (formerly HxGN OnCall Analytics), a suite of solutions that provides intelligent data visualization and analytics tools for evidence-based reporting, analysis and communications. This allows it to leverage its public safety data in new ways to better assess performance, allocate resources and improve operations.

"The CAD solution is highly flexible and plays a key part in allowing many of our other systems to be integrated and all of the information automates in CAD," added Jones. "In addition to being more convenient for our call-takers, by not having multiple applications open at one time, it enhances overall response data interoperability."

Future-focused public safety enterprise

The DECPR is always focused on new innovations for enhancing its public safety mission. These include the ability for residents to text or place video calls to 911, and a call-back feature that automatically calls a resident back if he or she has hung up or been disconnected during an emergency call. It is also exploring the use of AI solutions for handling non-emergency calls.

In addition, the department has embraced teleworking. Currently, it has 10 call-takers who work from home. Thanks to Octave's CAD solution, these employees have the flexibility to take calls from their own homes, which enhances employee morale and is a driver in employee retention.

This future-forward approach to leveraging public safety innovations helped the Department earn its national Public Safety Communications Accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies Inc. (CALEA) in 2019. Less than 2% of all emergency communications centers in the United States earn this accreditation.

"Overall, we certainly aim to be a future-focused public safety agency," Jones said.

About Octave

Octave is a leader in enterprise software, turning data into decisive action and intelligence into your edge. Our software solves for and simplifies complexity, from the design and build to operations and protection of people, property and assets – for any scope, at any scale. For decades, we've partnered with customers to sharpen performance, elevate efficiency and amplify results. From factory floors to entire cities, our solutions are tuned to scale up what's possible from day one onward.

©2026 Octave Intelligence plc and/or affiliates. All rights reserved.