

### CASE STUDY

# LAPD Takes Hands-Free Communications to the Next Level

Like many of us, Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) officers use Bluetooth earpieces to remain hands free while on their cell phones. However, they must still use their hands to simultaneously monitor two-way radios. It wasn't until recently that the option to use a Bluetooth with a police radio became available.

Thanks to the foresight of Officer Sean Fox, radio and communications unit leader for the LAPD incident command post of the Emergency Operations Division, the force uses hands-free radio operation daily. One of Fox's responsibilities is to set up the radio and command posts throughout the department. In the process of conducting research at law enforcement trade shows, Fox discovered a new product that had recently been introduced by Pryme Radio. He was happy to learn that there's a way to use a standard cellular Bluetooth earpiece with a police radio.

PRYMEBLU Bluetooth Adapters are wireless adapters with Bluetooth 2.1 technology that allow first responders to use any off-the-shelf Bluetooth wireless headset with their two-way radio. Fox confirmed that the adapters are compatible with many different types of radios, including Motorola XT 5000 handheld radios, the brand that members of his department use.

"As police officers, being hands-free is important ... whether it be for writing a report or dealing with a suspect," says Fox. "Also, the ability to have the audio from the police radio come directly to your ears allows you to concentrate. Having control, especially in a physical



situation, is vital. With a Bluetooth earpiece and adapter, you can still utilize a weapon or other tool on your belt."

Fox previously tried other technologies, such as near-field communications, but wasn't satisfied with the audio quality. He claims that with PRYMEBLU the police radio audio is much cleaner. One of the other issues that officers typically have to deal with is the chatter of the police radio, which often interrupts when talking on the phone. Fox determined that the PRYMEBLU adapter, if used with a headset that supports multiple pairings, allows you to use the same Bluetooth headset with both a cell phone and a two-way radio.

"When using the PRYMEBLU adapter, it mutes the radio audio out of

the earpiece and allows me to answer my phone call," says Fox. "When you are finished, it drops the phone call and brings back your police radio audio and allows you to either transmit or just receive police radio traffic."

If the two-way radio has priority, the "never-miss-a-call" feature also applies in the event of a headset link failure. Pryme's patent pending "Smart Switch" technology ensures that the device automatically reverts to handheld radio operation if the Bluetooth headset stops working. "It's a really great product for us to use. It allows the officer to monitor cell phone calls using their Bluetooth earpiece; and at the same time, be able to use a police radio in a hands-free environment while they are working,"

says Fox. "You also can use any type of surveillance earpiece in situations where you cannot hear the radio."

PRYMEBLU features a Hirose connector that lets users easily attach other devices, such as throat mics. But once unplugged, the adapter automatically switches back to normal. Additionally, the accessory jack allows you to connect any PRYME QuickDisconnect (QD) wired audio accessory, such as a remote push-to-talk (PTT) or lapel microphone in combination with the wireless headset.

"If you're doing a surveillance type of detail, it [PRYMEBLU] has a PTT button that attaches to your finger, as opposed to using the PTT feature on the actual adapter. You simply push the button on your little finger trigger, which is a handy tool, whether you're doing plain clothes surveillance, courtroom duty or just wearing a long-sleeved uniform," Fox says.

Initially, Fox purchased one adapter to test and ended up using it on a daily basis. Soon, the idea spread, and dozens of LAPD officers, including several command staff members, adopted the PRYMEBLU Bluetooth adapter. Fox has recommended that when the funds become available, the adapters be purchased for more department officers.

"As of right now, the LAPD has 21 patrol divisions and numerous specialized units. I could see potentially purchasing one for every captain or commander in the city," Fox says. "It's absolutely reasonably priced—about \$140—and other manufacturers are charging much more for similar solutions."

Fox has been familiar with Pryme for about 10 years, having used the company's speaker mics and antenna products for amateur radio. He maintains that the customer service is excellent. Fox says, "I think it is important when you're dealing with a company that they stand behind their products and that they want to make sure you understand their products. That is important in any industry."