

Case Study

TeleStaff™
Scheduling and Notification Solutions

Key Benefits

- Automates scheduling
- Speeds scheduling communications
- Supports client-specific configuration
- Improves operation efficiency
- Increases staffing accuracy
- Ensures compliance
- Controls labor costs
- Promotes employee satisfaction
- Integrates with third party systems



Profile

Monterey Park
Fire Department
Monterey Park, California

132 Employees
7.73 Square Miles of Service Area
63,000 Residents with a daily population of more than 100,000, including commuters and university students

PDSI offers easy demonstrations of TeleStaff on the Web, call 800.850.7374 to request yours today.

To learn more about TeleStaff, please visit www.telestaff.com.



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Monterey Park Fire Department Shifts From Manual Scheduling to TeleStaff Fortifying Operations

The Challenge

Situated in Hollywood's backyard, the City of Monterey Park has long been home to movie shoots and other commercial filming. East Los Angeles College had been the site for most of the stadium shots in the film, "Forrest Gump." Monterey Park Fire Department was accustomed to ensuring safety, but their manual scheduling process had some major accuracy and accountability challenges. The process by which shifts were staffed not only drained resources, but had created issues among the ranks and with city departments. For years, they had relied on a 12-year-old binder to staff personnel. They called it the "green book" because it was a handwritten notebook in a green folder. Fire administration kept it locked in a desk drawer. The book contained years of timesheets, a page for each month, with employee names listed by rank, a column for overtime and a note marking who had accepted or rejected a shift. Unfortunately, there was also only one copy that the department shared.



"It was never accurate, caused a lot of distrust and bookkeeping nightmares," said Battalion Chief Jim Birrell. "It was terrible."

When it came time to tabulate overtime, the battalion chief in charge and several other department personnel would bring the green book to the kitchen table and settle in for hours of work. The team had to take apart the pages, hand them around the table and with calculators, pencils and a pad, figure out the hours utilized by each firefighter during a selected period of time.

"I remember sitting there for three days with seven guys and the BC," said Birrell. "It takes less than a minute now." The city financial officers found it difficult to determine the fire department's budget with the imprecise manual record-keeping process. It was also nearly impossible to identify or analyze organizational trends.

Other resource allocation issues arose when firefighters called in sick. They were required to do so by 7 a.m. on the morning of an absence. The chief officer would then have to pull out the green book and start making calls to fill the shift, which sometimes took an hour from his detail. When personnel needed a day off, they had to fill out a form in triplicate.

The Solution

With TeleStaff, the department graduated from a single user manual system with minimal and problematic accountability, to a modernized, electronic and automated system with audit capabilities that could be used by the whole department concurrently. When last-minute staff absences occur, calls are made automatically by TeleStaff to fill the position. Time off is requested with the click of a mouse or a phone call to the system. Fire personnel, including prevention bureau specialists, a management analyst, the department's clerk-typist and the Chief's administrative assistant, now use the program as part of their regular duties. They further customized their system by creating two databases, one for essential employees and a second for the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) workforce. The department can also produce reports for work and non-work codes, for instance, Injured on Duty hours, and has the capability to set up codes for specific work assignments, such as Strike Teams, which help combat wild land fires. Specified codes are used to produce reimbursement reports, which are submitted to the State. The city's management analyst can also generate statistics needed to apply for grants, verify overtime hours and put together payroll summaries.

The Result

Since utilizing TeleStaff, MPFD has increased efficiency, improved communication, maintained consistency and rebuilt their reputation. Fire personnel can review calendars for future shifts and days off, electronically enter leave requests and remotely sign up for extra duty details through Web Access. More than 90 percent of their workforce keeps tabs of schedules and calendars through the Internet. They are able to produce leave, backfill and other reports in minutes, instead of hours. Scheduling staff are also able to manage rosters and assign overtime using established rules. TeleStaff also integrated well with Firehouse, the department's record management system, enabling MPFD to streamline training processes. The program can easily depict which staff member is utilizing which piece of equipment or apparatus, providing an accurate accounting of department resources and an audit trail. Regarding overtime hours, the city's finance department has allocated more funds due in part to the new process. "They believe what we're telling them now," said Birrell. The organization has saved hundreds of staff hours and reams of paper.

"TeleStaff has proven to be a great resource for all our staffing needs. Our end users enjoy the ease of Web Access to access their specific calendars and work assignments. It is the most user-friendly program we've ever experienced. It saved us."

Battalion Chief Jim Birrell