

## Bedford, Massachusetts keeps Commitment to Community and Personnel with Leading-Edge In-Car Video Technology.

### Background

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For the Bedford Police Department in Massachusetts, equipping their officers with the best tools available is part of a philosophy that some say dates back to the Bedford Minutemen, who battled the British at Old North Bridge in Concord (1775). So when they began seeing functionality issues with their existing VHS in-car video recording systems, the decision to go digital was not about “fixing” a problem. It was about continuing their commitment to their community and their line personnel. “We have a chief and an administration that believe strongly in getting ahead of a situation,” says Officer Craig Naylor, patrolman, field training officer and video system liaison. “We knew we needed a solution that was more dependable and easier to use than the one we had.” Bedford takes fiscal accountability as seriously as they take their law enforcement responsibility, so they approached their next-generation, in-car, video-capture solution with an eye on both. “When you make a municipal purchase, it needs to be a responsible one,” says Sgt. Paul Saunders, patrol supervisor. “Not only should a system such as this have a lifespan of at least five years, it should integrate easily with both existing and future systems.”

Saunders, who was tapped to lead the upgrade to digital, researched available options thoroughly. He sent out a questionnaire to police departments across the country that asked:

- What systems each was using
- What functionality each offered
- What their break-fix rates were

From that information, he narrowed his options to two, and then did further research to determine which would meet the needs of his department best. Bedford's long-standing commitment to provide equipment that solved problems for today while meeting challenges of tomorrow created three priorities for their video solution – ease of use, durability, integration. “If you want people to use new equipment and use it regularly, it has to be easy,” says Saunders. “Short-term we needed something our men and women could start using right away. Long-term, we needed something that was built to last and that we could add to as our department grows.” Saunders selected L-3 Mobile-Vision because, in his words, “There's nothing out there that compares to what they offer. **It's so good it's as if it is military grade.**”



## Solution

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In March 2006, Bedford installed L-3 Mobile-Vision systems into all six of its marked patrol cars. To address **ease of use** requirements, L-3 Mobile-Vision used the FLASHBACK™ DVR system. The solution includes L-3's compact, digital video recorder, which records to a solid-state flash memory card, VoiceLink Plus® wireless microphone, and Nite-Watch™ camera with auto-zoom and "near dark" capabilities. The entire system is completely wireless. The result is a system that self-activates based on preset protocols (lights, siren, collision, wireless microphone or custom input.), records to a highly durable, re-usable memory card and uploads all data automatically when the car drives within range of Bedford PD's wireless hotspots. "The best part," says Officer Naylor in his role as training officer and L-3 Mobile-Vision system liaison, "is that there is no need for manual up-keep. In the past, we had to change out tapes and make copies by hand. That meant there were a lot of people with keys, lots of tapes and lots of ways the system could break down." Because L-3 Mobile-Vision's system transfers data to the server automatically, in-car media can be re-used indefinitely. There is no need for tapes to be changed or stored – which saves man-hours, costs and improves efficiency.

Bedford's concerns about **durability** applied to all aspects of the in-car system, including the DVR itself, the media used within it, and the peripheral components. L-3's solution met the requirements in the following ways. First, the system is rugged and all-digital. It has no moving parts that can be easily broken. The Nite-Watch enabled video camera is mounted directly to the windshield, and designed to withstand extreme temperatures and operating environments. "Placement of the camera and durability of the mount were big for us," says Saunders. "L-3's camera is secured directly to the glass with a very solid mount that just doesn't break." The system is also **designed for integration and expansion**. Units (and associated in-car DVRs) can be added to Bedford's fleet, without the need for additional infrastructure. L-3's Digital Evidence Pro™ video management software, responsible for initiating **automatic data transfer**, also manages data upload for all vehicles. The software can manage multiple uploads simultaneously, **ensuring fast, secure data transport** for all units. In addition to managing the data transfer, the Digital Evidence Pro system records **chain of evidence with 100% accuracy**. It is also designed to manage, automatically, all of the administrative tasks associated with storing and archiving the data.

## Results

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What kind of results has Bedford seen from their new generation digital solution? For Sgt. Saunders, the biggest priority was a long lifespan. He wanted a solution that lasted more than the five-year minimum they'd set for past solutions. He wanted a solution that required little to no maintenance or repairs. "The old system was nickel and diming us even before we hit the five-year mark. In more than two years with the L-3 system, we've seen no issues with video quality, no breaks in camera mounting, no maintenance issues at all!" Adds Saunders, "With what I've seen, we will have these systems as many as 10 years. And that's fantastic!" From an ease of use perspective, Officer Naylor says, "We knew training wouldn't be an issue. This is our third generation of in-car video, so our personnel know "how" to use it. The problem was "getting them" to use it. L-3 is so easy, consistent use is no longer a problem. The system takes care of everything for us."

On a personal level, Naylor (who wears many hats) is also pleased. "When I acted as court liaison, I spent a lot of time and department money locating tapes for evidence and making copies for the DA and defense attorneys. Today, I have a master file that I can access from my desk, and I make copies in a click."

