How Elk Grove Police Department Uses Mark43 CAD's Open API to Enable Seamless Integrations—Including Drones as First Responders—for Faster, Smarter, and Safer Emergency Response

BACKGROUND

The Elk Grove Police Department (EGPD) in California is a midsize agency in Sacramento County, committed to leveraging next-generation technology to keep their community safe. Central to that mission is partnering with technology vendors that provide solutions to serve as a force multiplier—enhancing officer safety, increasing situational awareness, and helping them do more with less.

As a longtime Mark43 computer-aided dispatch (CAD) and records management system (RMS) customer since 2020, the EGPD has been a leader in adopting cloud-native solutions that seamlessly integrate to fight crime and improve community outcomes. In 2024, the EGPD expanded its technology with a drone program powered by its integration with Mark43. Key to the program's success was ensuring its compatibility with the department's Real-Time Information Center (RTIC) and systems of record, including Mark43 CAD. Leveraging Mark43's open API was crucial to creating a unified, efficient platform, enabling the EGPD to respond faster, allocate resources more effectively, and enhance officer safety—all while maintaining seamless coordination across their public safety operations.
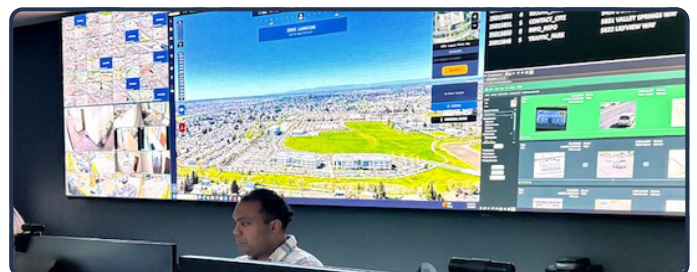
CHALLENGE

Keeping officers safe and increasing situational awareness

With approximately 85,000 calls for service each year, the EGPD faces the constant challenge of maintaining high levels of officer safety while increasing operational efficiency and fast response. The EGPD needed a technology solution that could provide real-time, accurate, and easy-to-use reporting to improve decision-making, reduce delays, and enhance officer safety. They were looking for a dispatch and records management platform that was not only powerful but intuitive—allowing officers to quickly input, access, and share critical information without disrupting their workflow. It was also essential to have a core system of record that could easily integrate into other technology.

> "When technology exists in a silo, it slows us down—we needed a platform that could integrate with other systems to allow us to continue evolving."
>
> – Lt. Nate Lange, EGPD

A major focus for the EGPD was reducing response times in critical situations, while maximizing resources and manpower. **"Our priority is always to keep our officers safe. We're constantly looking for ways to increase situational awareness, and we need to do it all while effectively managing our resources,"** said Lieutenant Nate Lange. Before integrating Mark43 CAD with drones, officers and commanders lacked immediate access to real-time situational data. This gap made it harder to determine the appropriate unit to dispatch and slowed on-the-ground decision-making. **"In emergency response, you want to have as much real-time information as possible to create exponentially safer situations for officers and community members,"** Lange explains. **"Without that intelligence before arriving on scene, officers are walking into the unknown."**
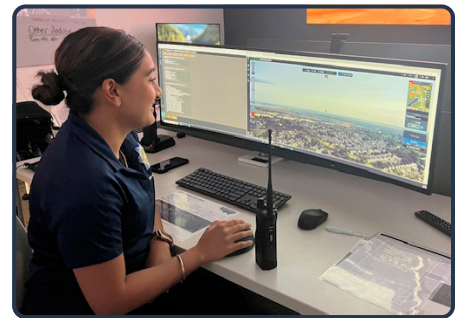
SOLUTION

Integration of Mark43 CAD into other technology systems

By leveraging Mark43 CAD to launch its drone program, the EGPD has been able to respond faster to calls for service and has made its community safer. Certified drone pilots using Mark43 CAD can now listen to live 911 calls and automatically deploy drones to calls for service, saving time for the dispatcher and getting eyes on the ground faster. The drone can survey the scene of a call in seconds and determine whether responders are needed, use heat mapping to isolate a suspect and determine if the issue has been resolved, allowing officers to respond to other scenes or focus on other operational priorities. **"The integration is seamless,"** says Lange. **"Before, drone pilots had to manually enter location information, which caused delays. Now, because of the Mark43 integration, that information is auto populated, and we can have a presence on the scene faster than ever before."**

> **"I also serve as our SWAT commander and am not a tech expert—I need technology that just works. My job is to eliminate every hurdle so my officers can succeed, and this integration does exactly that. Mark43 makes it easier for my team to focus on their job."**
>
> – Lt. Nate Lange, EGPD

Lange says, **"Now, the drone pilots can access these critical analytics through Mark43 CAD and make decisions in real-time. It's all about eliminating as many seconds as possible to get our officers the information they need to stay safe."**

The power of Mark43's open API

Mark43's open API has played a crucial role in the EGPD's success. Unlike many vendors, Mark43 allows seamless integration with other technology systems, which has been essential in the EGPD's efforts to innovate. Mark43's platform is designed to mirror the way a user thinks; data input is logical and sensible, but flexible when needed. Design patterns are codified and reused, making all parts of the application feel familiar, improving processing speed and data accuracy.

"Mark43 plays nice in the sandbox," Lange shares. **"We were looking for a partner that understood the value of open API systems. The bottom line is, if you're not playing nice in the sandbox and creating an open agnostic ecosystem, your technology likely has a shelf life and a ceiling, and we're eventually going to go with someone else. But with Mark43, they have always made it easy for us to integrate with other technology like license plate readers, community engagement platforms and our drone operations. Mark43's openness is one of the main reasons we were able to roll out this drone program and have it be so successful."**

Lange also stresses the importance of vendors having confidence in the technology they are providing. **"If a vendor isn't willing to share and create open ecosystems, it shows they aren't confident in their product. Mark43 has shown they not only have a great product, but they believe in their technology and are committed to improving public safety and supporting officers by enabling these integrations. Ultimately, it should be about the end user and how to improve their access to information. For public safety, vendors should all want the same end goal of keeping our officers and community safe. That's what we get with Mark43."**
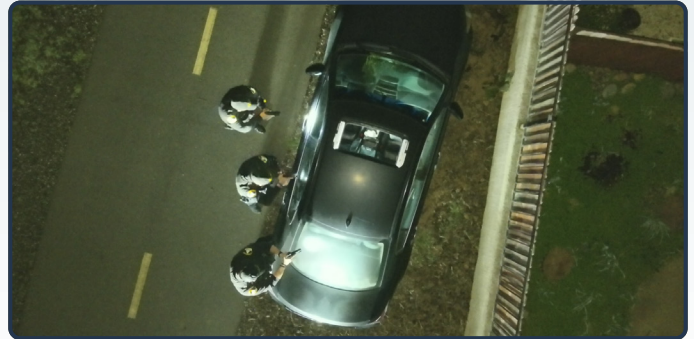
IMPACT

Increased efficiency, officer safety, and data effectiveness

With Mark43 CAD's open API, the EGPD can now use real-time drone footage, to see exactly where suspects are located, which supports tactical decision making based on live feeds, including thermal imaging. **"Instead of walking into a potentially dangerous situation blindly, we now have a clear understanding of what's happening in real time,"** Lange says. **"This dramatically enhances officer safety."**

The ability to use drones as first responders allows the EGPD to get on scene faster, often reducing response times to mere seconds. **"In many situations, the drone is on scene before the officer is, and we're seeing those critical seconds make a huge difference,"** Lange adds. **"It's about being proactive in our response rather than reactive."**

In addition, it was seamless to add a "DFR" tag into Mark43, making it easy to track metrics and benefits of the program. **"Without a way to monitor the time savings and direct impact, it's hard to improve the program and demonstrate effectiveness. With reliable data from Mark43 CAD, we can continue to improve our program and better support our officers and community,"** said Lange.

> **"We've become much more efficient – I'd estimate an efficiency increase of approximately 20%. Our officers aren't responding to calls where they aren't needed, and that's a huge win for public safety and resource allocation."**
>
> – Lt. Nate Lange, EGPD

LOOKING AHEAD

Continuous improvement

The EGPD is not stopping here. The next step is to enable drone pilots to insert comments directly into the Mark43 CAD system, making the information-sharing process between drones, dispatchers and officers even more efficient. The integration of Mark43 CAD with the EGPD's drone program has powered faster response times, enhanced officer safety, and better community outcomes. With Mark43's open API and seamless integration capabilities, the EGPD has strengthened its commitment to innovation—empowering officers to make smarter, data-driven decisions, optimize resource allocation, and improve public safety.

> **"We're excited about where this technology can go. With Mark43's open API and our continued focus on seamless integration, we can keep our officers safer, improve community response, and use tax dollars more efficiently."**
>
> – Lt. Nate Lange, EGPD

To learn more about Mark43's integration capabilities and 150+ partner ecosystem, visit www.mark43.com.