Fully Rugged vs. Semi-Rugged Mobile Computing Platforms

Since the introduction of mobile computers into police vehicles there have been discussions on whether it is necessary for law enforcement to utilize fully rugged or semi-rugged computing platforms in police vehicle.

What is the difference? The fully rugged computing platforms typically are certified by an independent contractor who tests the computers integrity to shock, altitude, explosive atmosphere, humidity, rain, immersion, gunfire vibration, and mechanical vibration. These standards are set by the U.S. Department of Defense and traditionally known as MIL-STD 810F. While all "rugged laptops" are not created equal they must pass the basic criteria to be labeled MIL-STD810F. In light of this rating you pay a much greater amount for fully rugged computers.

The question is, do you really need a fully rugged MIL-STD 810F rated laptop computer in a police vehicle that is never leaving the confines of the passenger compartment? The answer is most likely **NO**.

Most command staff around the country initially believe that when they implement mobile computers in their police vehicles that the officers will be taking them out of the vehicle, bringing them into the scene to complete their reports. The realization is that this almost never occurs. A computer is just one more instrument that will tie up the hands of the officer and in the case of a sudden altercation the computer becomes an expensive defense instrument. In that the mobile computers are therefore not being removed from the vehicles then expending the extra funds for a computer that is certified MIL-STD 810F is frivolous. If a department wants to save a considerable amount of money and, as the majority of departments do, then they should investigate the use of a semi-rugged mobile computing solution.

There are considerations that should be considered in utilizing the semi-rugged mobile solutions. First, the computer must have a shock mounted hard drive or the ability to be configured with an SSD (Solid State Drive). Second, the computer should have an indoor/outdoor viewable touch screen. Third, the computer must be configured with a rugged, waterproof, backlit, keyboard, preferably one that can be removed and washed. Fifth, the computer must mount is such a way as to ensure its integrity and not interfere with the vehicles airbag system. Finally, the warranty must cover at least three years of accidental damage. The endgame is that if you choose correctly your department can **save approximately $2,000.00 per vehicle** and continue to receive the best mobile computing solution for your fleet.

Brite Computers is a leader in designing Mobile Computing Solutions. Please contact us if you have any questions. (www.britecomputers.com)

Mark Bonsignore
SME
direct: 585.869.6010
mobile: 585.370.2567
fax: 585.758.0222
e-mail: mbonsignore@britecomputers.com

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