



## In Tribute . . . New Orleans Police Motorcycle Unit



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## Improving Safety through Communications

By Jim Roberts



Whether out on patrol or in a high-speed pursuit, police motor officers have a tremendous number of critical tasks to perform in order to do their job well and get themselves and their bikes safely back to the department garage at the end of every shift.



While the helmet often comes to mind as an officer's top piece of safety equipment, the proper communications gear is no less important. Communications have become more and more critical to law enforcement over the years, and the ability to easily access, respond, and monitor vital communication's traffic saves lives.

communications gear in the helmet. After turn signals, the PTT is the second most used electronic function on the bike for me. Having your hand off of the handlebar to press the PTT on the shoulder mic increases your reaction time to a situation by at least 1.5 seconds. Because of this, not having modern communications equipment on the bike is a dangerous proposition."

### The Benefits of Modern Communications Equipment

Until the early 1970s, motor officers were at the mercy of primitive communications equipment. To speak with dispatch, an officer needed to grab a dashmounted hand microphone. Wind and engine noise often drown out the external radio speaker on the bike, reducing an officer's ability to hear incoming radio traffic.

Today's police motorcycle communications kits offer a range of safety features and benefits and come in a variety of configurations. ComKits include a motorcycle cable kit with a handlebar push-to-talk switch for

Officer Kevin Devlin who rides for the Egg Harbor Township Police Department in New Jersey states, "I have a hard time understanding how motor officers ride without the radio PTT (push-to-talk) on the handlebar and com-

either the mobile or portable radio, depending on the configuration. They also include a helmet kit which consists of a rugged microphone and speakers, conveniently mounted in or on the helmet.

### Modern Police Motorcycle Communications Technology is:

**Hands free.** With a radio push-to-talk button mounted on the handlebar, an officer is just a thumb's reach away from transmission. Some of the more advanced systems, such as Setcom's 83 Series, also integrate the public address (PA) system so that the PA is also just a thumb's reach away.

**Consistently clear.** Advanced helmet kits incorporate sophisticated speakers and noise-canceling micro-



phones, allowing officers to receive and transmit communications at speeds greater than 100 mph.

**Discreet.** Many systems, such as Setcom's Mobile + Portable Configurations, incorporate an officer's hip-mounted portable radio, allowing him to communicate through the helmet kit even when he is off the motor. This allows discreet monitoring of communications traffic when at a routine traffic stop or dealing with a potentially dangerous suspect.

While it's common knowledge that most states require motorcycle riders to wear helmets, the majority also require that both hands be on the handlebars at all times. Handlebar-mounted push-to-talk technology keeps an officer in compliance with the law.

Setcom invented the first police motorcycle ComKit in 1972, allowing officers to communicate with the dispatcher without having to take their hands off of the handlebars.

Hundreds of law enforcement departments rely on Setcom equipment, including San Francisco, Miami, Orlando, Dallas, Las Vegas, Detroit, Cincinnati, Pittsburgh, and Los Angeles County Sheriff. Over the life of the company, Setcom has deployed its equipment to public safety workers in all 50 states and over 20 countries throughout the world.

Communications equipment plays a critical role in fire service and industrial environments. Over one thousand structural fire departments and 75% of the nation's major airport fire departments rely on intercom systems.

Numerous oil rigs, steel mills, construction sites, and mines across the United States also use equipment for their communication needs. While everything Setcom manufactures is designed to meet an individual customer's needs, the diversity of the customer base ensures constant innovation and product improvement.

### Long Term Quality and Reliability

Setcom has a long tradition of quality and reliability which would not be possible without talented and loyal employees. They design and assemble all of the company's prod-

ucts at its manufacturing facility in Mountain View, California. They are a diverse group who are dedicated to the highest standards of quality and customer satisfaction.

### Introducing the Liberator

Users from motor departments across the country presented a tough challenge to the company's engineering team: create a helmet commu-



nications system that does not require a motor officer to be tethered to the bike while riding. Setcom's wireless system, the Liberator, is hitting the road with motor officers across the country.

The team spent a lot of time evaluating different frequency bands on which to base the Liberator technology. Highly used frequencies are prone to interference from other users. Setcom engineers avoided this problem by basing Liberator technology

on the ISM (Industrial, Scientific, and Medical) 902 to 928 MHz frequency band.

Police Officer Bob Valdez, who patrols the San Francisco Airport on a 2005 Harley-Davidson® Road King®, says unequivocally, "I've been riding motors 16 years and this is a great

product. Not hooking up and hooking off is a huge benefit. To be honest, it took me a couple of weeks to get used to the increased freedom. I kept looking for the cables to unhook when I got off the bike."

In addition to the primary benefits of the Liberator – increased freedom and ease of movement – a number of other features were incorporated for increased functionality, durability, and ease of use. They include:

Backward compatibility. System is compatible with most current Setcom equipment, saving users money and upgrade hassles.

No additional batteries required. System runs off of portable radio and motorcycle batteries. Power draw is low.

No syncing or pairing required. Once an officer is within range of the bike, he is automatically linked up. No buttons to push, no time to wait; he just gets on the bike and hits the road.

FCC Approved. Setcom's product went through rigorous testing by the Federal Communications Commission and its Canadian equivalent. Both agencies gave the Liberator product a unique identification number. Their certifications authorize Setcom to market the Liberator in the US and Canada.

Officer Stephen Mello of the Mountain View Police Department in California rides a 1999 Harley® Road King® and says, "I've been using Setcom equipment for a long time. Their products and service have always been the best in the business. The Liberator continues in this tradition. With the Liberator I never have to take my eyes off of a vehicle that I'm pulling over. From what I've seen in the marketplace over my 18 years of riding motors, it's the best tool for motor officer safety in the 21st Century."



ALTHOUGH WE FELT "WIRES SUCK"  
WAS HARDLY CONSTRUCTIVE  
CRITICISM, WE GOT THE MESSAGE.

Introducing the most advanced wireless system on the market today, Setcom's Liberator Wireless SuperMic. Put an end to plugging and unplugging when getting on and off your motor. To learn more, give us a call at 1-888-6-SETCOM, or visit us on the web at [www.SetcomCorp.com](http://www.SetcomCorp.com).

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