



Skyguard service provides reassurance and backup for staff at Cheshire East Council...

You are a Civil Enforcement Officer. It's late, and you're working alone issuing penalty charge notices to illegally parked vehicles.

It is a daunting but necessary task normally met with displeasure by members of the public who are on the receiving end. Suddenly, a member of public starts to behave abusively and becomes aggressive. Unfortunately, situations of this type are not uncommon for employees within Cheshire East Council, one of the largest unitary authorities in the North West of England. Cheshire East's Officers are, however, never truly alone in such situations. Since 2008, help and reassurance is just a button push away thanks to their Skyguard personal safety devices, accessible to all of the company's lone workers in Parking Services.

Following a thorough evaluation of personal safety services and devices, Cheshire East started using the Skyguard service to provide the best possible protection for its employees, and to help meet its duty of care in relation to the Corporate Manslaughter Act and other legislation.

Of particular interest to Cheshire East Council was the audio monitoring function offered by Skyguard. This means that, once a device is triggered, it continuously transmits audio to the Incident Management Centre (IMC), where it is monitored in real time by an operative and simultaneously recorded.

The council was quick to see that this would be very useful to provide a record of verbal exchanges between its officers and members of the public, providing evidence of an incident, which could, if necessary, be used in court. In addition, since the operative at the IMC would be listening to the live audio feed from the incident, they would have a very clear picture of how the situation was developing and whether it would be necessary to call for police assistance.

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IAN LOCKETT

SUPERVISOR FOR THE NORTHERN SECTOR
OF CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL PARKING
SERVICES



To find out more please call 0845 0360 999

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CERTIFICATE NO. ARC/G/3321



As Skyguard's IMC is certified to the highest Lone Worker Safety standards; BS 8484 and BS 5979 (Category 2), operatives can call the local police control room quoting dedicated Unique Reference Numbers, thus bypassing the 999 system and saving valuable time in despatching a police response.

The company has experienced excellent results from the outset and has recently upgraded to Skyguard's new GEMShield devices which include single-button alarm activation, two-way audio, GPS positioning, man-down alarm and enhanced performance in poor signal areas all in a neat, compact design.

"After taking all factors into consideration, we concluded that the Skyguard Service offered excellent value for money in relation to the level of extra protection it would provide for our officers" said Ian Lockett, Supervisor for the Northern Sector of Cheshire East Council Parking Services, "In service, the devices have proved their value time and time again, not least by providing the officers with constant reassurance that, if necessary, they can summon help quickly. That has made their lives much more comfortable and made it a lot easier for them to do their jobs."

A typical incident where the reassurance provided by the Skyguard devices proved invaluable occurred recently in Wilmslow, where an enforcement officer noted that a car was illegally occupying a disabled parking place. While issuing a parking ticket for this offence, the council's officer was verbally abused and threatened by the driver of the car.

What made this incident rather less than routine, however, was that the officer had noticed a crowbar on the car's passenger seat. He therefore used his Skyguard device to raise the alarm and the situation was closely monitored. Fortunately the driver ultimately came to his senses, accepted the ticket and drove off. Nevertheless, the knowledge that Skyguard was listening and recording the proceedings was enormously reassuring for the officer involved.

"Fortunately, in the two years we've been working with Skyguard, we have never had an incident where it has been necessary for the police to be called," said Ian Lockett, "but we have total confidence that if it ever does prove necessary, Skyguard will ensure that the response is fast and commensurate with the situation. Our officers regard their Skyguard devices very highly for the reassurance and security they provide. In fact, they have come to see them as essential tools for their work."

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