



CASE STUDY Union Emergency Medical Unit

Vector's Suite Helps Union EMU Find 'Everything in One Spot'

Union Emergency Medical Unit (Union EMU) provides EMS for the Township of Union in one of New Jersey's most densely populated counties with over 57,000 residents in a 9.4-mile radius about 12 miles outside Midtown NYC (source). Ensuring proper training, workforce readiness, and operational management of the agency's 45 part-time EMTs, 25 volunteer EMTs, and seven ambulances is critical for meeting the community's needs.



In 2018 and 2019, Union EMU implemented Vector Solutions' Learning Management System (formerly TargetSolutions), Vector LMS, Vector Evaluations+, Vector Scheduling, and Vector Check It for an integrated, full-service suite of web-based solutions to improve the agency's outcomes and simplify personnel and asset management.

CAPCE CEUs and Insurance Premiums Make the Case for Vector Solutions

Captain David Bialas shared that one of the main reasons his agency chose Vector LMS to deliver and manage its training program was due to their insurance company's input. "I was looking for a LMS that fit with our insurance company, not the other way around. The guidance from our insurance company exceeded what I was expecting, and the LMS helped us execute our operations plan. Vector worked for us," he said. Vector LMS helps Union EMU fulfill training obligations that impact their insurance premiums by delivering, tracking, and reporting on key training courses such as: OSHA safety training; NJ Laws Against Discrimination (LAD), including Sexual Harassment and Workplace Harassment; and HIPAA.

Another big push for selecting Vector LMS over competitors was the CAPCE-accredited training courses. "We're able to utilize the CAPCE courses toward EMT recertification at zero out of pocket cost for our members and at a definable amount within budget for our agency," Capt. Bialas recalled, "Being able to provide EMS CEU hours with nationally accredited CAPCE courses was the deciding factor for our Board to approve our contract with Vector LMS."

LMS Custom Credentials and Reports Help Reduce Liability Exposure

In addition to saving on insurance premiums, leveraging Vector LMS tracking and reporting helps Union EMU stay NJ state-compliant, with the data to back it up. EMTs going for their CEUs who get audited by the state can conveniently go into their history or transcript and print off their certificates as needed. And training officers can easily see who, when, and what training has been done and run reports for credential expirations by specific timeframes to help keep EMTs on track. "Everything I was looking for was in one spot. I can combine my agency's priorities and our insurance company's priorities with a single program," shared Capt. Bialas.

Capt. Bialas also utilizes the Activities Builder and Credentials features of the LMS to create custom task books, such as combining manufacturers training, SOGs, in-service training, third-party materials for patient handling, and the built-in CAPCE bariatric patient course to prepare EMTs for new power cots that the agency purchased through the CARES Act for all seven ambulances.

Having the ability to track credentials to meet NJ-specific certification and licensing requirements helps the agency reduce risk and stay compliant. In NJ, EMS agencies are required to have liability insurance for personnel before they're able to step foot on an ambulance. Capt. Bialas created an Initial EMT Training Credential, which includes Bloodborne Pathogens, Developmental Disabilities, Hazardous Materials/ CBRNE Awareness, HIPAA, National Incident Management System (NIMS), Respiratory Protection, and Right To Know, to ensure new members complete all required training for obtaining liability insurance.

Evaluations+ Reduces Paper Waste while Improving Competencies

One of the main drivers for implementing Vector Evaluations+ in 2019 was for recording Direct Observation Reports (DOR) on trainees. Capt. Bialas wanted supervisory staff and FTOs to use the video feature to conduct competencies with EMTs and then utilize the contracted EMS instructor to grade the competencies. He shared that he wanted to take as many variables out as he could for claims of biased evaluations. He also explained how he did not want supervisory staff, who are not EMT instructors, to be the ones passing judgment on competency performance.

Union EMU also uses Evaluations+ for their Annual Qualitative Respiratory Fit Tests. Supervisors utilize the native app during in-person fit tests for N95 masks.

"Cutting out the paper and having live fit test evaluations attached to the Respiratory Protection credential in Vector Solutions is great!"

David Bialas, Captain, Union Emergency Medical Unit

As one of the first responder agencies selected to participate in a new NIOSH study for half-mask respirators, the agency is repurposing the fit test to document results for the study.

Vector Scheduling Simplifies Volunteer and Part-time EMT Scheduling

Union EMU's EMTs are volunteer or part-time with a per diem schedule, based on each EMT's availability. With 70 total EMTs, 25 volunteers, and 45 per diem, aligning all the various shift assignments with personnel availability and required skill sets used to be manual and tedious before Vector Scheduling.

The shift breakdown at Union EMU consists of 3 shifts, ranging from 5.5 to 12 hours, running two ambulances 24/7. With Vector Scheduling, Capt. Bialas can document and track different pay codes for part-time EMTs by pay differentials, such as shift differentials for the overnight shift, holiday hours, and Emergency Callback (recall) differentials. "If there's an open shift, I don't have to spend time at home in the evenings at the dinner table manually paging out each shift over the next four days at fifteen-minute intervals," shared Capt. Bialas. "By using the Callback feature, it does it automatically."

And as an independent, not-for-profit agency, tracking every hour scheduled and every dollar spent is crucial for maintaining appropriate coverage within a budget.

Check It's Inventory Management Saves Agency \$10,000+

Capt. Bialas emphasized his dissatisfaction with their old apparatus check program before switching to the Vector Check It mobile app. "We had an apparatus check that was 280 steps, and no one was doing it because when they recorded problems, they weren't being addressed timely. With Check It, we cut the steps by two-thirds, and we found that a lot of what was reported was asset management rather than inventory management. When there is a problem found, it is automatically forwarded to the proper supervisor and gets addressed. The value of Check It for inventory management was really in the upcoming Expired Inventory Reports," he said.

By accurately documenting inventory, Union EMU has developed a money-saving plan based on data-driven metrics for purchasing. Through Check It's inventory counts, expiration date tracking, and compartments tagging features, Capt. Bialas shared how the agency identified an array of discrepancies, which saved Union EMU at least \$10,000 in supplies in the first year of implementation. And with the launch of the RFID API integration for daily apparatus checks, he anticipates saving more time and money, estimating an additional \$2,500 in medical supply savings.

Vector Solutions' Integrated Technology Creates Better Outcomes

"The ability to pick and choose which products you want a-la-cart allows the service to fit within your organizational goals," Capt. Bialas shared on the benefits his agency has found leveraging Vector Solutions' suite of systems. Instead of purchasing separate modules, each with a unique sign-on, potentially different integration capabilities, and varying system requirements, Union EMU turned to Vector Solutions' web-based single sign-on software to meet training compliance, workforce readiness and staffing, and asset management needs.

Capt. Bialas concluded, "Vector Solutions truly is a one-stop-shop. I don't have to go digging through a bunch of paperwork because the information is always at my fingertips. If first responders had the option to work from home during the pandemic, we would still be able to run our agency from our home offices with Vector Solutions with the amount of integration we've created with these programs."