

Helping save lives on the roads of British Columbia.

Axis network cameras help police secure evidence by video recording impaired driving investigations and enabling the safe monitoring of events.



Organization:
BC RCMP Traffic Services
(Alexa's Bus)

Location:
British Columbia, Canada

Industry segment:
Government

Application:
Remote monitoring,
mobile in-vehicle
surveillance

Axis partner:
ITB (Intercontinental
Truck Body)

Mission

As part of a campaign to get tough on impaired driving, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) in British Columbia developed a state-of-the-art Mobile Road Safety Unit (MRSU), fondly known as "Alexa's Bus". The vehicle contains advanced breath testing equipment and mobile workstations, so officers can process criminal charges on the roadside. In order to ensure the safety of officers and detainees along with the integrity of the interview process, the BC RCMP needed a high quality video surveillance system with resolution that met legal requirements for evidence.

Solution

BC RCMP asked Intercontinental Truck Body (ITB) to design and install a system. ITB identified Axis Communications as the partner and systems integrator for the video surveillance system that would ensure the events on the bus were reliably recorded.

Result

Video from the Axis network cameras provides high resolution images of detained impaired drivers that can be used as evidence in court. Investigating, testing and processing impaired drivers on the roadside increases the officer's efficiency and effectiveness. The system also allows the video to be viewed live on-screen and remotely, which improves both the safety and security of the MRSU when parked. When incidents do occur, police can review video footage to identify the cause and determine what course of action to take.

“The fixed Axis network camera equipment on the Mobile Road Safety Unit (Alexa’s Bus) provides a high resolution image and good clarity in low light. It exceeds the Provincial legislative specifications required for digital video recording of detained persons.”

Todd Balaban, A/Staff Sergeant of BC RCMP Traffic Services.

In 2008, four-year-old Alexa Middelaer was tragically struck and killed by an impaired driver in rural British Columbia. Following the incident, the province enacted tougher new legislation against impaired driving called the Immediate Roadside Prohibition (IRP) program. Drivers caught operating under the influence with a blood alcohol concentration above 50 mg per 100 ml of blood are subject to immediate prohibitions on driving and fines. Drivers with a blood alcohol level of over 80 mg per 100 ml of blood could also face criminal charges.

The RCMP developed Alexa’s Bus—a 33-foot-long, specially equipped Winnebago—to serve as a mobile police station for processing impaired drivers on the roadside. The breath testing equipment on Alexa’s Bus allows all officers to conduct the analysis on the MRSU without having to leave their post, saving officers time. In order to monitor all events that are occurring on board and to secure evidentiary video recordings of the investigation on Alexa’s Bus, the MRSU required reliable, high definition video surveillance installed throughout.

Monitoring safety in a mobile environment

ITB was the successful bidder for the RCMP in the building and the configuration of Alexa’s Bus. ITB selected Axis to provide video surveillance equipment meeting legislative requirements for detained persons, taking into consideration the mobile unit’s requirements. Axis network cameras provided high resolution video with rugged and vandal-resistant designs to help keep the cameras functioning in a mobile environment and ensure effective recording as required.

Axis identified AXIS P3904-R Network Cameras as the best solution to record video in the bus’s two main rooms where suspects are processed. These HDTV-quality 720p cameras use Lightfinder technology to provide color detail even in very poor lighting conditions. The cameras also feature P-Iris control, which allows them to precisely control the position of the iris opening to improve image quality and sharpness.

The resolution exceeds statutory requirements for video used as evidence in court.

Two ruggedized AXIS M3113-R Network Cameras provide wide-angle surveillance of the “quiet rooms” where detainees can wait for and receive legal counsel via phone. To ensure privacy and confidentiality, these cameras do not record audio. Designed for mobile surveillance on buses, trains, subways and emergency vehicles, AXIS M3113-R are dust and water-resistant, and can withstand tough road conditions, such as vibrations, shocks, bumps and temperature changes. Most importantly, AXIS M3113-R features an active tampering alarm that automatically alerts officers to any attempts to damage the cameras or interfere with recording.

Building a legacy of road safety

Alexa’s Bus was officially launched in the fall of 2014, and the RCMP announced plans to have the bus tour public events to raise awareness and begin patrolling the roads to prevent and reduce impaired driving. Since 2010, the IRP regulations have contributed to an estimated 227 saved lives and a 54 percent reduction in alcohol-related fatalities, according to the Province of British Columbia. BC RCMP hopes Alexa’s Bus will continue to expand the program’s success, and ITB believes the video surveillance system will effectively support the MRSU’s mission.

“The cameras fit with the intent of the project,” says John Van Seters, British Columbia sales manager for ITB. “If a suspect is behaving in an illegal manner inside the vehicle, it is being recorded and that becomes further evidence in a trial.”

“Alexa’s Bus was conceived to increase our fight against impaired driving,” added Sgt. Gerry Desaulniers of the RCMP “E” Division Traffic Services Headquarters. “The Axis network cameras assist police in conducting their investigation while improving the safety of everyone involved.”

