Paging

PageOne announces 2-way pagers to be MTPAS enabled for Category 1 and 2 Responders

PageOne, working in conjunction with the Cabinet Office, has announced from October 2009, its exclusive 2-way pagers will be MTPAS enabled for all Category 1 and 2 Responders, providing extra resilience for your communications in times of public emergency.

How it works

PageOne's unique 2-way pagers provide vital feedback with message 'delivery' status, message 'read' status, plus a user response and location information, over either the GPRS or SMS back-channel using the O2 GSM network. As an MTPAS Service Provider under the scheme, PageOne will install a privileged access SIM (Subscriber Identity Module) card in the 2-way pager device for any Category 1 or 2 organizations, so that in the event that the O2 GSM network experiences traffic over-load it is possible for the local cell site, geographical area or the whole of the UK to be switched to allow privileged access to the mobile network, thereby maintaining this vital communications link. These privileged access SIMs will be automatically included in PageOne 2-way pagers for all users within the responder community, but are not available to members of the public.

What this will mean for the responder community

This means that in the event of a major incident, where (MTPAS) privileged access is activated the PageOne 2-way devices reply path will no longer be blocked out by public use of the nearest cell sites thereby dramatically improving the likelihood that the status and reply messages will be relayed back to the Command and Control Centre. The Cabinet Office has also given special dispensation for some organizations that are presently excluded from the Category 2 list but respond to major incidents. Please contact PageOne for more information to see if your organization may be able to receive this special dispensation.

How MTPAS enabled 2-way pagers differ from MTPAS enabled cellular handsets

To enhance the resilience of voice telecommunications available to the responder community and to improve the effectiveness of the Scheme, the number of MTPAS mobiles is limited to only those Category 1 and 2 users who need them for responding to major incidents. MTPAS voice enabled mobiles are limited in each Category 1 and 2 organization to prevent cell overload (which is the very thing that MTPAS is attempting to avoid) if too many MTPAS SIMs make voice calls at once. However, due to the fact that the out-going message is delivered over PageOne's wide area paging network, and that the status and reply messages use very little data (either SMS or GPRS) back over the GSM network, it is very unlikely that these messages will block voice usage on the nearest cell sites. This is why the Cabinet Office has agreed that all PageOne 2-way pagers for Category 1 and 2 responders will automatically enjoy MTPAS status by carrying an MTPAS SIM.

Activation under the scheme

PageOne shall determine if an organization is either a Category 1 or 2 Responder under the MTPAS scheme and will ensure the 2-way pagers supplied to that organization contain MTPAS privileged access SIM's. Neither the Organization nor end-user needs to handle the SIM. The idea is to minimize the MTPAS administration by the Organization when using 2-way pagers from PageOne. PageOne, as a MTPAS Service Provider, shall report the amount of 2-way pagers active in each Organization on an annual basis to the Cabinet Office.

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About the Mobile Telecommunications Privileged Access Scheme (MTPAS)

The Mobile Telecoms Privileged Access Scheme was launched on the 1st September 2009 as a partnership between the Cabinet Office, Regional Government Offices, Local Resilience Forums' Telecommunications Sub Groups (TSG's) and the responder community. MTPAS supersedes ACCOLC (Access Over Load Control), the old Scheme for managing mobile privileged access.

MTPAS is only available to Category 1 and 2 Responders (as defined in the Civil Contingencies Act 2004) and partner organisations, which directly support them at the scene of an emergency incident. The scheme was launched so that if GSM networks become congested, mobile handsets installed with a privileged access SIM will stand a much higher likelihood of being able to connect to their network and make calls. In October 2009, the decision was made to extend MTPAS to include the PageOne 2-way pagers.

Comments from the Cabinet Office

Tom Swarbrigg, the Privilege Access Scheme Manager from the Cabinet Office said "we have welcomed the PageOne 2-way pager onto the Scheme as it gives the first responder community a new and innovative way to enhance resilient communications for effective emergency response. The fact that the PageOne 2-way pager uses so little GSM air-time means that we have been able to extend the use of privileged access to all in both Category 1 and 2 Responder Organizations, so in times of incident the widest possible benefits can be realized by users under the MTPAS Scheme".

Why 2-way paging?

PageOne's range of 2-way paging products provides reliable 2-way communication with the usual speed, assurance and reach of paging, enhanced with the auto acknowledgement, location, and response messages returned back over GSM. The two way reply feature provides a guarantee that the message has been read. It also includes a GPS receiver, providing recent location information on every reply message. The result is a powerful critical messaging tool capable of reporting the person's location, and delivering fast, reliable and guaranteed end-to-end messaging.

The benefits of paging

Paging in the public sector is still one of the primary methods of communication for staff involved in real time messaging environments. A high degree of coverage, resilience and speed of message delivery combined with Paging's unique broadcast ability, has meant that organisations such as hospitals, councils, local and central government, as well as emergency blue-light organisations, rely on paging to deliver real time information cost effectively to their staff. It is clear that in any crisis rapid communication with those affected can do much to limit damage and increase the speed of response, hence the great demand for paging within the public sector and mission critical services.

About PageOne

PageOne is the UK's largest independent paging provider and has invested several million pounds over the last five years modernising and developing its paging and messaging infrastructure to provide a highly resilient communication solution designed to operate reliably and independently under extreme disaster scenarios. PageOne has continued to look at ways that it can further innovate, and in April 2009 launched the UK's first 2-way paging products.

With a proven track-record of delivering mission-critical messaging, a vast amount of experience, and extensive customer base; PageOne are proud to have been awarded approved contracted supplier status for every national framework contract awarded for messaging within the public sector for the past 15 years. With a client list spanning the National Health Service, Emergency Services, Ministry of Defense, local and central government, as well as public transport, PageOne have further cemented its market position having been awarded approved provider to the UK Government and public sector under the 'Mobile Solutions (II) Framework Agreement, as procured and managed by Buying Solutions (formerly OGC buying. solutions), an executive agency of the UK Government.

For more information:
Contact PageOne directly or visit PageOne's website, www.pageone.co.uk/MTPAS for more information.

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