

Motorola Solutions Acquires Airwave For £817m

British emergency services communication specialist [Airwave Solutions](#) is to be acquired by Motorola Solutions, ending month's of uncertainty about the company's future.

The American firm agreed to pay \$1.2bn (£817.5m) for Airwave, £700m of which will be paid in cash.

Emergency Comms

Airwave is based in Berkshire, England, and employs roughly 600 staff, and there is no immediate word on what will happen to the workforce.

The firm is perhaps best known as the provider of [voice and data communications](#) to more than 300 emergency and public service agencies in the UK. Indeed, it touts itself as the largest private operator of a public safety network in the world.



Its network uses Terrestrial Trunked Radio (TETRA) technology provided by Motorola Solutions, and its network apparently covers 99 percent of the UK's landmass. This allows more than 300,000 police, fire, ambulance and other emergency personnel in the UK to securely communicate with each other.

Motorola Solutions said the deal will allow it to grow its "revenue and geographic diversification of its global Managed & Support Services business."

Indeed, it was only in August when the company revealed that venture capitalist firm Silver Lake was [investing \\$1bn \(£640m\)](#) to help Motorola Solutions continue the development of smart public safety technology.

"The Airwave acquisition demonstrates our commitment to public safety in Great Britain and to growing our Managed & Support Services business," said Greg Brown, chairman and CEO of Motorola Solutions. "The combination of our years of experience as a trusted global leader in mission-critical communications and Airwave's proven service delivery platform will provide Great Britain with innovative emergency services technology that enhances public safety today and into the future."

"Airwave has proven expertise in delivering mission-critical voice and data communications services, and over the past 15 years we've invested significantly in the development of a secure, resilient and interoperable network," said Richard Bobbett, CEO of Airwave. "We are delighted that through this new relationship with global leader Motorola Solutions, we are able to enhance our offering and ensure our customers continue to benefit from the high-quality service they have come to expect."

On the surface, the acquisition seems to be a good fit, as Motorola Solutions already operates large-scale public safety networks in countries such as Norway, Denmark, Austria, Australia and the United States.

But in reality, suppliers to the emergencies services have been hurt by restricted budgets as governments around the world tightly control their public spending.

Union Support

Indeed, the acquisition of Airwave has been welcomed by Prospect, the union for managers and professionals in the communications, media and digital sectors.

It pointed out that the acquisition actually ends months of uncertainty and speculation about Airwave's future. This is because Airwave is currently challenging a decision by the Home Office to award the next emergency services contract to a rival operator.

"After months of uncertainty and speculation about Airwave's future, Prospect members will welcome this announcement and the stability we hope it will bring to the company," said Parmjit Dhanda, Prospect negotiator.

"It creates an opportunity for Airwave to grow in European and US markets, as a wholly owned subsidiary of Motorola," said Dhanda. "We look forward to working with Airwave's senior management, and with Motorola, to ensure that our highly-skilled members' terms and conditions are respected."

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