

# Dronedesk case study

## SEARCH & RESCUE TEAM

How Rob is using Dronedesk to save time so **Buxton Mountain Rescue** can save lives



6 min read

A voluntary organisation like Buxton Mountain Rescue runs on the time people can spare after finishing their day jobs, eating and sleeping. That means there isn't time to waste on inefficient processes, and certainly not when lives are at stake.

Unfortunately, Drone Lead Rob Stordy was facing the same admin nightmare that many drone operators face: numerous spreadsheets, stacks of paperwork, and worries about compliance. That's not what he wanted to spend his time on, and it's not what his pilots wanted to spend their time on either.



*"Our pilots didn't join Mountain Rescue to do paperwork. They want to be doing the job."*

So Rob looked for a solution. And he found Dronedesk.

### What is Buxton Mountain Rescue?

Buxton Mountain Rescue is a voluntary search and rescue team that's been operating in the Peak District since 1964. Its team of 60 volunteers provides specialised expertise and equipment support to the emergency services, handling an average of 100 incidents a year across a 400 square-mile area.



Rob joined that team back in 2010. He spent six years as a team member, before stepping up to a role as deputy team leader for a further six years. He's now leading the drone team at Buxton Mountain Rescue. But when the organisation first started experimenting with drones, Rob didn't think much of them.



*"We had a very new drone capability that we didn't really know anything about. It seemed to throw up a lot of problems. We were constantly being told about issues with legislation, regulation. I thought drones were a terrible idea!"*

Not what you'd expect to hear from someone who is now running the team of pilots! But Rob didn't thoughtlessly write off the capabilities of drones. Instead, he set up a review to look into what the drones were capable of and whether they could provide any real value to the team.



*"And the more I researched it, the more I realised it was worth investing in. Not necessarily for the capability drones had two years ago but for the potential capability in the future. To be on that road early."*

And the possibilities are huge. Buxton Mountain Rescue is already using drones to help with search efforts, primarily where the person lost is incapacitated or otherwise unable to seek help. The drones are also useful for helping rescuers see what they otherwise couldn't, such as someone trapped on a remote cliff.

Rob could see further potential, too. Mobile phone tracking technology. Delivering equipment such as buoyancy aids, defibrillators, shelters, food, and more. And he was so committed to this potential that he decided to head up the team himself.

But there was a problem.

### **Being held back**

One of Rob's main responsibilities is to track all the paperwork needed to comply with regulations. And that's a headache even for full-time employees, let alone a volunteer.



*"There's the pilot certificates and insurance renewals, then there's the maintenance that also needs to be kept track of, as well as keeping an eye on pilots' logbooks. And all of this data was spread across different spreadsheets that weren't always accessible or were in different formats."*

And when Rob did have the paperwork in front of him, he was worried that it wouldn't pass muster. Remember that these operations aren't planned flights; they're often conducted in a hurry, where someone's safety is at risk. Consequently, flight plans weren't always in the best condition.



*"Generally, what we were getting back from the pilots in the field was a dishevelled bit of paper covered in mud, with a faded signature at the bottom. And I thought if we have an incident review, this isn't going to be very*

good."

Rob knew that the pilots were doing everything right. But they were doing it under the pressure of an emergency; the cleanliness of a piece of paper came second to preserving someone's safety. And they needed every spare moment to get the drone in the air.

So when Rob came across Dronedesk, he knew he'd found the answer to all of his problems.

### **Saved time saves lives**

The first thing that Rob noticed was how much time Dronedesk saved. Unlike many commercial drone flights, Rob's team rarely know in advance when they're going to be flying.



[Watch the video](#)



*"The moment we're called, that's when we go. The quicker in the air the better."*

And every moment matters. So flight planning needs to be done quickly to get the drone in the air, and comprehensively to maintain safety. Which is where Dronedesk really shines, because it offers speed without sacrificing compliance.

By bringing together all the information Rob and his pilots need for flight-planning under one roof, Dronedesk makes it easy to dramatically reduce the amount of time needed to plan a single drone flight. Some of our customers have reduced their flight planning time from four hours to around 30 minutes! And Rob found another feature that helped him reduce planning time even further.

Our founder, Dorian, knows that drone pilots will often be called upon to make multiple flights in the same location. So Dorian made sure it was easy to copy and quickly update old flight plans. And Rob's team use that to drastically reduce their emergency response times.

By conducting training in areas where incidents are more likely, Rob is able to build a bank of old flight plans. If a situation arises at one of these locations, a pilot doesn't need to build the flight plan from scratch; instead, they simply need to copy the old one and update it to reflect any changes.



*"Instead of spending 30 minutes on scene before taking off, now it's more like 10 minutes. That makes a huge difference in an emergency response situation."*

## Watertight compliance

Dronedesk has put an end to Rob's paperwork headaches. Everything he needs to keep track of is within Dronedesk, rather than scattered across a dozen spreadsheets.



*"Putting it all together in one spot is absolutely ideal. It will tell me when we're going out of date on certain things, so I won't miss things and I can make sure we stay compliant."*

And there are no more soggy flight plans with faded signatures or smeared with mud; Rob doesn't even need to ask each pilot what they've been doing! Each flight is planned digitally and logged automatically after the event. Everything is crisp and clear and beyond compliant, meaning Rob's paperwork is watertight rather than waterlogged!



*"It just provides reassurance. Reassurance that everything is in order. If we'd had an incident and I had to send off the old paperwork, I would have been concerned. You're talking reputational damage, potential liability issues, and all sorts of stuff if your paperwork isn't up to speed."*

## Time to get on

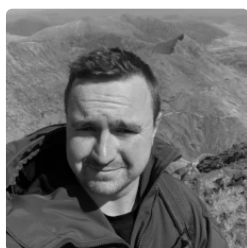
Now that less of Rob's time is spent on paperwork, he has more time for the important work that Buxton Mountain Rescue does. He can commit to more training, spend more time researching with even better weather resistance, and, of course, spend more time at home instead of staying late to get the paperwork in order.



*"Dronedesk provides excellent support for voluntary services. It's a really good bit of kit. It just does everything!"*

If you want to spend less time on paperwork and more time on getting the job done, give Dronedesk a try. We offer a free trial to all new users, so you can see for yourself just how much time you can save today.

☞ All quotes are from Rob Stordy - Drone Lead at Buxton Mountain Rescue



Rob Stordy 

**Try Dronedesk FREE with a 90-day 100% money back guarantee that you'll save time with your flight planning.**