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## Management Solutions

**FIRE SAFETY AND asset protection are frequently closely aligned with security and in recent years industrial security management teams have two prime issues to consider: conventional precautions and measures in order to protect people from standard risks in hazardous environments and also protection from possible terrorist attacks which might hit their sites at anytime. Lars Waldow, computer software specialist, discusses the benefits of centralised security management systems.**

Regardless of whether a fire or a discharge of hazardous materials is caused by terrorist attacks or any other reason, it is essential that, in an emergency, procedures for a rapid evacuation of the building as well as the initiation of appropriate countermeasures is crucial to save life and assets are in place.

It is for these reasons that, in the industrial sector, the daily work focus of Security Control centres is on visual inspection, control and documentation of fire alarm systems. A comprehensive solution can be provided by a centralised security management platform which interacts with fire alarm systems and other building, security and communication management devices. Essential to such a system is software which can provide a correct connection of all detectors so that a proper integration of all installed monitoring and control systems on site into the overall management platform is ensured. The inclusion of a graphic user interface will offer an intuitive control of the fire alarm system and allows for test routines.

Maintaining an overview of where detectors are installed e.g. on different floors or in rooms within the building is essential and integrated CAD plans make this a comparatively easy task. An intelligent security management software platform may also have the facility for the automatic generation of route cards providing important information for the fire brigade in order to assist with an evacuation in the event of an emergency.

In the case of an incident, a fire alarm within a centralised security management system will react on various levels providing essential information to the team who can react accordingly. Ideally the detector, thus the location of the potential incident, is displayed on a plan within the user interface and the alarm is combined with an automatic initiation of evacuation measures. Of even greater assistance would be a localised camera delivering the image of the area to the user interface.

Control centres should ideally be able to manage events and workflows in a logical sequence when dealing with a fire and a centralised security management platform can rapidly provide this. Based on priorities the system can alert fire brigade and responsible personnel; activate automatic fire suppressions systems; release escape doors and activate other measures which will aid evacuation i.e lighting, announcements, Text-to-Speech or SMS messages to personnel around the site.

In the event of multiple incidents, perhaps a fire alarm and a dramatic temperature deviation plus an intrusion in a secure area, the team must initiate numerous and correct actions for each event. A centralised security management system, through dynamic texts, will support all users and ensure that measures are automatically initiated in the background minimising the response time and ensuring the highest level of fire prevention and security.



Constant communication with personnel, frequently ranged over a wide area, is also essential for the successful management of an incident. Automatic alarm messages via phone, fax, e-mail or other mobile devices can play a vital role in informing those responsible personnel or service departments about ongoing events. To achieve maximum defence against unauthorised use of the system and false alarms a user-specific system access, customised interface views should be exploited thus individual operator profiles can be defined and those specified can only initiate procedures that they are authorised to execute.

In order to review an incident and response to same, all processes, whether executed by the user or automatically controlled by a system, should ideally be stored in a protocol and documented in a locked archive along with the ability to trace every alarm and examine initiated measures. All of these procedures will identify avoidable mistakes, lessons learnt and confirm that systems in place have operated appropriately – all an essential part of the role of a Fire and Security management team. Regular reports evaluating alarms, switch offs, faults and revisions coupled with maintenance records not only update control service providers, but may also furnish evidence of damage.

Maintaining control of industrial plants covering vast areas is a constant challenge. Management teams on sites protected by cross-linked systems such as fire detectors and automatic fire suppressions systems will benefit from a security management platform which shows response, activation and level of suppression along with scalable plans or maps identifying individual detectors. Employee safety and asset protection can be monitored and responded to immediately.

Independent security and building management platforms are the ideal solution not only to ensure the security in an industrial facility, but in addition also offering linkage to building control and communication devices, e.g. heating, ventilation, air conditioning or temperature monitoring. Furthermore, if operators can keep a constant eye on critical places: views of buildings and rooms, live pictures, video recordings, personal data, a comprehensive library of information is always to hand when managing, or reviewing, an incident.

In an emergency, especially involving physical threat, Fire and Security management teams have a clear advantage if they do not need to search for individual instructions on different security systems, the operation of which might also significantly differ, but can rely on one single platform providing pre-set appropriate measures to assist in the swift resolution of the situation. Seconds can be life-saving. A flexible and constantly maintained centralised security platform will fulfil the demands and meet the challenges of the successful management of industrial sites and form an essential part of the daily lives of fire and security professionals in demanding and often hazardous conditions.

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