FIRE ALARMS

UPGRADE, REPLACEMENT OR BOTH?

By appointment to H.M. Queen Elizabeth II
Purveyors of Fire Protection Systems

FACT FILES

Many Fire protection providers have only the one system offering, limiting their technical solution options to you.

BBC Fire Protection however, is a 'true' systems house. This enables us to match and offer a system solution from a selection of the leading manufacturers that best meet your own particular needs.

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Solution Partner

Building Technologies

SIEMENS

GOLD Partner

COOPER Safety
Fire Systems

BALDWIN BOXALL
COMMUNICATIONS

fike®

System Lifetime and Performance

Modern Fire Alarm Systems are comprised of complex, intelligent components with powerful microprocessors and software at their heart.

With the controls akin to a personal computer, the development, improvements and changes to the processors and software has been exponential delivering radical improvements to:-

» False Alarm reduction

» User Friendly Controls

» Parameter Sets for Faster detection

» Power Consumption and Outputs

» Interface to Plant and Controls

» Integration of new detection Technologies

Today, many operators with systems over 10 years old are finding their system is no longer manufactured, with the inherent problem of the lack of available new or service replacement spares.

Worse still, some systems are no longer supported in terms of software and software upgrades. These systems use old versions of Windows or even DOS based programmes for their cause and effect programming functionality. Should this come as a surprise? "No", according to Peter Willetts, Engineering Manager of BBC Fire, who with 30 years experience in Programming, Commissioning and Maintaining Fire Alarm Systems says " fire alarm systems are like a computer network, the components, processing and communicating technologies are very similar. Take the iPAD, it's been around for 4 years and we've already had 2 major upgrades. So today you buy an iPAD3, and if you're reading this before the end of Q4-2012, it's probably moved to an iPAD4!. So keeping a Fire System supported for 10 years, given the industry dependence on a supply chain for components using microprocessors and software is not unrealistic."

Simon Cavill, Sales Manager, BBC Fire Protection states that; *"One of our strengths is we can provide systems and solutions that can retain the existing wiring infrastructure and have the minimal impact on our Customers operations."* He goes on to say **"by correctly selecting the right system it has allowed us to graduate the change of system and components. We have systems with Addressable Sensors connected and controlled by old Conventional 24V Fire Systems and some with Digital Sensors connected to old Analogue Controls and Circuits helping us to quickly and cost effectively upgrade the Clients Systems. It truly is incredible!"**

Exploded view of a Notifier Opal Smoke Sensor—capable of communicating an Analogue or a Digital signal

DOES IT MATTER WHO MY EXISTING SYSTEM IS MANUFACTURED BY?

In general the answer is NO. No matter who your incumbent fire alarm provider is, or who the manufacturer of the system or components parts is, BBC Fire will have both a technical and a commercially viable solution we can offer.

BBC Fire has replaced and/or upgraded Fire Alarm Systems where the existing controls and detection were manufactured by Leading providers including:-

» ADT
» Chubb
» Wormald
» Gent
» Siemens
» Edwards EST

You don't have to 'settle' for the same, instead contact BBC Fire for:-

» Un-biased advice
» Free site surveys
» Free cost proposals
» Free demonstrations
» Free trials

Nick Copeman, Operations Director, at BBC Fire says "we do not want to just sell our Customers a system. We want to provide them with a solution and a service!"

He goes on to say "Others have to sell you the system they have, not because it's best for you, but because it's the only one they have!"

WHAT IF I RENT MY FIRE ALARM SYSTEM?

No problem. If you rent your Fire Alarm System, it is very likely WE CAN SAVE YOU MONEY by providing you with a new system that you outright purchase.

The case in point is British Sugar. Two of their sites, Bury St Edmunds and Newark had Fire Alarm Systems which they had historically rented.

At over 25 years in age, the systems were low technology, and had become un-reliable to the extent they were unsure if they would even operate in a true fire condition!.

The rental Company was disinclined to upgrade the systems as part of their on-going rental agreement—it seems revenue was of primary importance to them

and customer service was secondary.

British Sugar, unhappy to continue with paying for an un-reliable 25 year old system decided to 'give notice' to the rental Company and replace their systems with new

technology systems linked to a Computer Graphics Alarm Monitoring Station.

BBC Fire were invited to submit proposals as part of a tender process.

BBC Fire secured both contracts because a solution was offered that demonstrated to British Sugar we would provide

» False Alarm reductions
» 'Open Protocol' Products
» No interruption to their operations
» Lifetime System Support

SYTEM WIRING
DO WE NEED TO RE-WIRE?

The major cost of any fire alarm system is the installation of the cabling, its containment and the associated labour, so if the circumstances allow we will always consider re-using existing wiring.

Of course this is not always a practical or suitable solution.

Things we consider and discuss with our Clients when considering the use of existing cabling and infrastructure include:-

» Does the existing cable comply with the latest standards?

» Is the existing configuration acceptable?

» Is it in good condition?

» Is the lack of cover and system downtime whilst de-populating and re-populating existing circuits acceptable to the Client, the Authorities and their Insurers, etc.?

The HSBC Tower at Canary Wharf is a prime example of upgrading old/ unsupported system equipment whilst re-using existing cables, but maintaining adequate levels of cover during the change process.

See below for further information.

HSBC BANK—CANARY WHARF

HSBC Bank established they were at serious risk of being in a position where they might have limited or no means of alarming personnel of a 'FIRE ALARM' at their 48 storey landmark HQ in Canary Wharf.

After extensive surveys were conducted, it was agreed that the cabling infrastructure was in very good condition and it could be re-used, whilst managing the risk of de-populating and re-populating the circuits with a network of voice alarm amplifier and controls.

BBC Fire, as part of the tender process prepared detailed Tender Stage Method Statements and Risk assessments. The thought and processes we had employed impressed the HSBC management team and BBC Fire were employed and executed the system change out using the existing wiring infrastructure to their entire satisfaction.

METHODOLGY

As we found with the HSBC Bank project at Canary Wharf, the proposed Methodology and its adoption is key to a successful change/upgrade of system, especially when using some or all parts of the existing wiring infrastructure.

As an offset of the risk consideration should be given to:-

» Carrying out works outside Clients normal working hours

» Providing temporary systems, such as wireless during the course of the works

» Employment of Fire Wardens during the course of the works

» Programming the works to minimise impact

» Resourcing the works to minimise impact

Dave Moore, Contracts Manager at BBC Fire says " it's critical that the methodology is established first, the system price is secondary. The consequential costs and risks are far more important".

His motto is "it's not about Price!", but of course, we also know it is an important factor.

IMAGINE, COULD THIS BE YOU?

You have a warehouse holding over £20 million of stocks to support a retail operating consisting of over 100 outlets.

You're told your fire alarm system is no longer supported and spares are no longer available.

You now live in fear of a critical component failure, a lightning strike or flood/water damage to the system.

You're told by the incumbent supplier and manufacturer you have to replace the system with their new system.

FEELING VULNERABLE? Sure you are, over a barrel? - well no.

This is what the well known retailer Argos experienced, then they contacted BBC Fire.

We listened to their concerns, worked out a methodology that met with their risk requirement, and then provided costs which met within their budget constraints.

BBC Fire recommended and installed a Notifier ID3000 System with the uniquely versatile, Opal Sensors

which are backwards compatible with all previous Notifier systems. The client liked the idea that even with all the advances in technology, Opal devices can also be used in downgrade mode enabling them to work on outdated Controls.

The Opal Sensor on today's systems is used as a digital device, but can also be used as an analogue device on systems with Analogue, rather than Digital Controls.

How good is that in protecting the Client not only from Fire but also his budget!

DID YOU KNOW?

BBC Fire Protection are a Privately owned, independent Company who have been trading for over 32 years! and work throughout the UK & Eire supplying, installing and maintaining Fire Safety Systems, including Fire Alarms, Fire Phones, Gaseous Fire Suppression Systems, Portable Fire Appliances and Emergency Lights.

BBC Fire Protection are in the business of providing Life Safety Systems where quality and reliability are paramount. In recognition of this, BBC has attained ISO9001 status and are also accredited by the Loss Prevention Certification Board, British Approvals for Fire Equipment and the National Inspection Council for Electrical Installation Contracting. In addition BBC are approved members of Constructionline, CHAS, Altius and SafeContractor schemes.

If you would like to hear more, or if you have a requirement for a new Fire Alarm, or servicing of a current system click here for our website enquiry page.