



Case Study



Fire-Lite Alarms Safeguards Major Transporter's Most Important Assets - People and Stock

One of the Northeast's largest warehouse and distribution centers turned to Fire-Lite Alarms and its largest-capacity fire alarm control panel, the MS-9600UDLS, to manage a new fire protection system for the 450,000-square-foot facility, owned by A. Duie Pyle. The facility typically houses a large stock of commercial goods in between transits to big box stores and other merchants.

In addition to replacing the facility's failing fire alarm system, local integrator Alarm New England of Rocky Hill, CT, had to overcome major hurdles to design a system to provide ample emergency notification.

"We were replacing an old system that

had outlived its useful life," explained David Korash, maintenance supervisor at the Westfield, MA warehouse complex. "We were looking to replace it with a system that would serve us for many years to come and be trouble-free and reliable, and not be tied to one vendor for monitoring."

Being a non-proprietary line of fire alarm equipment, sold over-the-counter by security equipment wholesaler's throughout the United States, Fire-Lite Alarms' systems offered the open protocol A. Duie Pyle was seeking, allowing a choice of vendors for monitoring, testing and service.

From wire to devices and control panels,

all parts of the facility's failing fire alarm system needed to be replaced. And with the existing system's absence of any annunciation devices, apart from an antiquated interface with the building's public address system, Fran Lawlor, Alarm New England's senior security consultant, had to contend with major annunciation issues.

"It's a huge space where there's always noise from trucks and forklifts, and music being piped in through the P.A. system," said Lawlor. "They need to be able to hear and see a horn-strobe nearby, wherever they are in the building, regardless of how much stuff is in the building at the time."

The building presented a fire alarm design challenge with its ceiling ranging from 24 feet to 42 feet in height. Warehouse contents can also change dramatically as goods to be shipped may be stored high on racks one day then, gone the next day. Alarm New England worked closely with the local fire marshal to determine that 130 horn strobes would be needed to accommodate the large expanse of this facility.



450,000-square-foot facility, owned by A. Duie Pyle in Westfield, MA



By placing an MS-9600UDLS addressable fire alarm control panel from Fire-Lite Alarms at the core of the new system, Alarm New England was able to provide the massive space with a cost-effective system that could support the large number of initiation and annunciator devices it needed. The MS-9600UDLS comes equipped with one Signaling Line Circuit (SLC), capable of supporting up to 318 devices, with the option of adding a second loop easily using an SLC-2 loop card to support a total of 636 devices.

"The MS-9600 has the ability for dual SLC Loop set up, allowing you to cover a building of this size," said Lawlor. "The wire runs are a consideration, and the MS-9600 basically had the firepower to handle it."

A variety of high-intensity strobes from System Sensor were installed on all ceilings and several walls. To ensure proper coverage, particularly where ceilings were very high, Alarm New England installed stacks of strobes, placing some 8 to 10 feet off the ground, and then another series of strobes 18 to 20 feet off the ground.

To support the large number of strobes and long wire runs, the integrator installed six Fire-Lite Alarms remote power supplies throughout the complex.

The whole building is fully covered by sprinklers, with its new fire alarm system monitoring water flow at each riser and at an adjacent pump house dedicated to the sprinkler system.

"We monitor a dozen different pump-related fire alarm points, if water starts moving, we know there's an issue," said Lawlor. "When the pump goes on, we know. If the pump were to fail, we know it."

They also installed 25 pull stations throughout the complex, Lawlor added. The entire system is addressable, a key feature in a building as large as the warehouse.

"We know exactly what device goes into alarm, trouble or supervisory, and where," said Lawlor.

Alarm New England monitors all fire alarm signals through its central station in Connecticut. The warehouse system is also tied via radio directly to the Westfield, MA Fire Department – a redundant notification that provides additional coverage and protection to the massive complex.

Korash notes the system has been a big upgrade from the old one.

"It's been working very well for us," said Korash.

That was certainly the expectation for Alarm New England, said Lawlor.

"We've been using Fire-Lite since our company's inception, in the early 1970s," said Lawlor. "We wouldn't have been using it as long as we have without knowing it's just rock solid."

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