



## Case Study



### More Effective Fire Protection with Voice Evacuation for National Federation for the Blind Headquarters

The National Federation for the Blind (NFB) Headquarters in Baltimore, Md., has chosen to upgrade its two facilities' separate fire alarm systems using an intelligent MS-9600UDLS addressable fire alarm and a voice evacuation system from Fire-Lite Alarms, installed by local integrator Dantech Security.

Many of the people who work for the organization are blind or have some visual impairment, making it a critical necessity that the system alert occupants through more than the common fire alarm horns or bells.

"They needed not just visual notification, but also voice evacuation," said Dan Uddeme, owner of Dantech Security of

Owings Mills, Md., the fire and security integrator that installed the new fire alarm system at NFB headquarters.

The voice evacuation system plays pre-recorded messages in response to various types of alerts customized for the facility and programmed into the system. Alternatively, authorized personnel can speak into a microphone located at the main voice evacuation control panel in the lobby to provide specific instructions to occupants in real-time.

"These emergency communication systems allow you to offer information and instructions that are so much more detailed than a general evacuation," explains Richard Conner, Fire-Lite Alarms

marketing director. "And for a facility which might be occupied by anyone with a physical impairment, a system like this is critical to ensuring you reach everyone with a message that's clear and understandable."

The headquarters facility consists of two large buildings comprising nearly 500,000 sq.ft. in total. Previously, the NFB buildings were covered by two separate fire alarm systems, one addressable and one conventional, which complicated emergency response and maintenance issues.

"We wanted one single system," said Paul Ficarro, director of facilities for NFB headquarters.

Whether sending a maintenance alert or genuine fire alarm, the older system caused facilities personnel and first responders to search the building for the specific detector, or other initiating device, creating the alarm. The headquarters facilities' new Fire-Lite Alarms addressable system pin-points the exact location of alarms, making the response to alerts and alarms a quicker, easier process.



*The National Federation for the Blind (NFB) Headquarters in Baltimore, MD*



“An intelligent addressable system makes everything a lot simpler,” said Ficarro. “It’s great to have the ability to look at the panel and know where you have an alarm or trouble.”

Connected to the NFB headquarters’ MS-9600UDLS fire alarm control panel are 200 combined speaker/strobe devices, along with 60 pull stations, 40 duct detectors, and 30 smoke detectors.

The installation also had to comply closely with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements. The Dantech Security team had to ensure this system design addressed the needs of people in wheelchairs by placing fire alarm pull stations, strobe lights, and other devices at appropriate heights that can be easily reached and seen by everyone.

Dantech Security spent two months at NFB headquarters to complete this fire

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*- Paul Ficarro*

*Director of Facilities*

*National Federation for the Blind Headquarters*

alarm installation and the NFB facilities remained functional throughout the entire installation.

Uddeme’s advice to other security integrators pursuing similar projects is to “spend a lot of time on-site; survey and measure everything prior to execution.”



*Dan Uddeme, owner of Dantech Security of Owings Mills, MD, oversaw the installation of the new fire alarm system at NFB headquarters.*



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