

Reducing fire risk for Sentry Fire and Security clients

Re-evaluating existing fire detection systems forms a critical part of any risk assessment. According to Weslee Davey, fire detection product specialist at Elvey, ensuring that fire detection technology is suited to the application and exhibits reliability and durability over time, forms the crux of fire damage mitigation or elimination.

Edward Preston of Sentry Fire and Security says: “We have used a number of other fire detection products over the years but they have generally been plagued by false alarms, a lack of user friendliness and faults on the panels. We made a shift to the FireClass range of products in 2017 after conducting a careful review of their specifications and capabilities. Our relationship with Elvey is a long-standing one and they were able to advise on the optimal model for each project on which we have deployed the FireClass fire detection technology.”

After recent successes on tertiary educational facility installations, Preston, in consultation with the technical team at Elvey, selected 118 FireClass fire detection systems in various models for three major projects.

The first project was for the factory of a large international tobacco products manufacturer. In this instance, Sentry Fire and Security was appointed to replace the previous technology supplier and determined that faults on the panels were a major cause of concern.

“Just imagine the catastrophic scenario if the threat of a fire was not timeously detected in a tobacco plant. The building would literally go up in smoke in a very short space of time, resulting in huge financial losses and posing a major threat to human life,” says Preston.

The client had expressed a need to install a panel that would work with their current devices, so a conventional panel was selected. Apart from the obvious need to protect its assets, proactive fire detection meant that the company could drastically reduce the time taken for the evacuation of personnel.

Two separate projects for the same national retailer involved the upgrading of an existing system as well as the installation of new FireClass technology at a further three stores. In the pre-existing installation, the retailer was becoming increasingly frustrated with an extensive number of false alarms and the inability to silence the alarm once it had been activated. Both of these issues resulted in unnecessary callouts, which were both costly and of irritation to all concerned.

In the new installations, not only was the guarantee of minimal false alarms a major factor, but the client required a system that was extremely user friendly, to ensure that operational staff could respond quickly to issues. Accuracy of identification of actual emergencies is critical and forms the core of the customer's specifications for a satisfactory fire detection panel installation.

Preston says that the company selected a multi-criteria sensor to detect smoke and heat at one of the new stores. This was necessary because the store makes use of a number of air-conditioning units located in the ceiling void as well as backup generators, which produce smoke in advance of producing heat. The remaining stores were supplied with addressable panels while the tobacco factory selected a conventional panel to replace the previous conventional panel. By retaining the existing conventional devices, together with the new conventional panel, the tobacco products manufacturer is able to conserve capital outlay.

All FireClass panels are linked to the Sentry Fire and Security control room and Preston is personally alerted via sms of fault conditions and alarms, whereafter the client is updated. The company performs a two-week soak test then shares certificates with the client subsequent to installations being completed. Thereafter, service maintenance is conducted every six months and the client is issued with a service certificate.

Preston says that all parameters outlined in the company's original brief to Elvey were completely achieved and as a result of the success of the retail projects, further shops will be upgraded to FireClass products. "FireClass products require no maintenance and we have experienced absolutely no false alarms. This, together with the unparalleled round-the-clock technical support we receive from Elvey, means that our relationship with Elvey and choice of FireClass products as our first option is cemented."