



Case Study



School District Standardizes on Fire-Lite Alarms For Affordable, Non-Proprietary Fire Protection

Fire-Lite Alarms systems transformed the fire protection throughout a dozen elementary, middle and high school facilities in the Cheatham County School District, Ashland City, Tenn. On top of replacing a patchwork of antiquated systems with non-proprietary technology able to be purchased and serviced by any licensed fire alarm dealer, Fire-Lite Alarms' innovative retrofit capabilities allowed the district's budget to cover a more extensive fire alarm renovation.

The district had reached a point where replacement parts for its assortment of older conventional and addressable fire alarm systems were hard to come by, and servicing was shoddy, at best.

"There was so much frustration," confirms Joey Dority, maintenance director, Cheatham County Schools. "It was a very bad situation before Fire-Lite came in."

While searching to replace only its facility's fire alarm control panels, the district's biggest priority was finding a non-proprietary system as they had no interest in being tied to one contractor.

"We wanted something that no matter who, what, when, or where, they could work on the system at the drop of a hat. That was the biggest selling point with the new systems," relates Dority.

Beyond Fire-Lite's non-proprietary nature, the district was thrilled to learn the existing wiring could be re-used, making it affordable for Cheatham

to fully replace all devices (i.e. smoke detectors, pull stations, horns, strobes, etc.) in each school as well.

"By re-using the wire in all 12 schools, we probably saved between \$120,000 and \$150,000 dollars," explains Mike White, account executive for Interactive Systems of Nashville, Tenn., the systems installer.

"In fact," adds Dority, "the savings we incurred was probably the number one thing that allowed us to do this project as a whole from top to bottom."

Utilizing a mix of addressable fire alarm control panels from Fire-Lite, Interactive Systems was able to scale the systems to the size and needs of each facility. Altogether, nine MS-9200UDLS, two MS-9600UDLS and one MS-9050UD panels were installed.

As for the new devices, a mix of pull stations, smoke detectors and heat detectors were utilized, with 75 of these initiating devices needed for each elementary school and nearly 200 for the middle and high school facilities.

The 12 schools are also covered by a full scope of new notification appliances, including strobes, horn/strobes and speaker/strobes.



*Cheatham County School
Ashland, TN*



"It was a pretty straightforward swap out, part for part," relates White. "It was simple to program and very understandable, not to mention the fact that it's a very rugged and reliable system."

Cheatham was also pleased with the speed of the installation.

"We did all 12 schools in just 10 weeks," reports Dority. "We were literally done in next to no time and each building was only down for four days at the most."

So far, the schools have found the new system incredibly simple to use. Service calls have decreased from two or three a week, to possibly one per month for mostly non-system related issues, such as a student hitting a horn/strobe with a ball.

"If a principal calls and tells me there is an issue, they already have an idea of what's going on before I get on site. Sometimes we can even resolve the issue over the phone," says Dority.

Likewise, the maintenance staff can easily reset the pull stations with a key, as opposed to tracking down a specialized allen wrench or other tool.

In the near future, Cheatham County plans to either expand a current facility or build a new high school and Fire-Lite systems appear to be their undisputed choice for fire protection.

"We will be sticking with the Fire-Lite panels not only for the sake of standardization, but it's been such a good deal so far," relates Dority. "I can't see any reason whatsoever to move away from it in the future."

According to White, it is not just disgruntled school districts like Cheatham who are opting for Fire-Lite systems.

"There's a growing interest in non-proprietary systems and Fire-Lite is one of the only non-proprietary technologies that meet the needs of facilities who are used to having a proprietary engineered system," he explains.

Consequently, White is witnessing an uptick in non-proprietary fire alarm installations in all markets, including commercial, medical, retail and industrial.

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