ALL-INCLUSIVE DETECTION

Paul Pope, Group Business Development Director at Global Fire Equipment (GFE) reveals the top considerations to take into account when protecting hotels with fire detection and alarm systems

Fire detection in the hospitality industry is complex and, when designing and installing new systems for hotels, several key factors need to be taken into consideration. Each building will present different challenges and will have varying requirements depending on the building's layout, the number of occupants and the level of system intricacy required to meet the needs of the hotel.

Here, Paul Pope, Group Business Development Director at Global Fire Equipment (GFE), delves deep into the key considerations when designing fire detection and alarm systems for hotels.

Has GFE been involved in the design of many fire detection and alarm systems (FDASs) for hotels?

Yes, over the years we have designed, supplied and commissioned FDASs for a large number of hotels globally, including some of the world's largest hotel chains such as Radisson Blu and Vila Galé.

What makes designing FDASs for hotels particularly complex?

Depending on their size, hotels can be occupied by hundreds if not thousands of people 24 hours a day if you take into account the staff, guests and other visitors. This sheer volume of traffic and occupancy is a challenge on its own, but added to this is the fact that hotels often span vast areas, can include high-rise buildings or incorporate different types of connected buildings such as spas, health clubs, meeting rooms, restaurants, bars and children's

"Communal areas such as restaurants and bars, on the other hand, should have dedicated wide area audible/intelligible alarm and visual alarm devices."

clubs, etc. Add all these factors together and it is easy to see why designing FDASs for hotels presents a number of unique challenges.

What is the most important consideration when designing FDASs for hotels?

I would say that clarity of communication about every fire event across the entire system is perhaps the most important consideration given the sheer scale of the FDASs required for larger hotels. To ensure the safety of a hotel's occupants and staff, the fire detection and alarm control panels must be capable of continually monitoring each individual device on the system and logging every event. In this way, those responsible for monitoring and managing the system can take

immediate action and respond – whether there is a genuine fire event, a false/unwanted alarm or a fault condition. The overarching objective is to provide for timely alarm notifications and the safety of all occupants in accordance with an evacuation strategy which should be designed and tested to avoid panic and confusion in exit routes.

How can the design of the FDAS help to reduce the likelihood of false or unwanted alarms in hotels?

Although it is difficult to completely eradicate false or unwanted alarms, one of the best ways to reduce the problem is by developing a robust emergency and management strategy as this will guarantee minimum inconvenience in the event of an alarm. It may also be necessary to work alongside safety specialists and authorities to develop a Transmission Delay approach in order to execute a well-planned phased evacuation strategy, alongside a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP). Today, thanks to the latest advances in fire detection technology and premises management, we are seeing much lower incidences of false alarms across the board.

Should different alarm devices be used in different areas of a hotel?

Yes, a one size fits all approach simply does not work for hotels as each hotel will present its own issues that need specific management. Take, for example, the accommodation. One of the main objectives of hotel owners is, understandably, to create soundproof accommodation that