

Icom Press Release

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Innovative Radio System used at the College of St Mark & St John

An innovative and cost effective radio system called Safety Call, installed by Radio Communication Company, Ansur Communications is assisting the College of St Mark and St John, based in Plymouth, to comply with new Disability Discrimination Act legislation. Utilising Icom radios and software, Safety Call is a rapid response alarm system that directly links a distressed person to mobile assistance. When a distress alarm is initiated, a computer sends a pre-defined text message to the 'on call' response officer giving the incident location and nature. This ensures aid is directed effectively to persons in distress. All radio/alarm traffic is automatically logged for later management analysis.



When a distress alarm is initiated, a pre-defined text message is sent to all radios and to the base computer.

Chris Rodham, Health, Safety & Security Officer for the College of St Mark and St John said, 'The system remotely monitors fire alarms, toilet alarms, and accommodation that are spread across the whole campus. We used to have a problem in the college with these alarms being activated and we didn't know they were activated unless reported by telephone. We investigated alternative systems but this would have involved a lot of engineering that would have been extremely expensive. The idea of using radio links, suggested by Ansur Communication, has allowed us to bring all our alarms onto one system and allow us to get a message quickly and efficiently to our duty staff via radio.'

He added, 'If you have a student who requires additional support in an emergency or if they have a problem through the night, the college has a responsibility to be able to respond to that person. At the moment two accommodation houses are fitted with alarms as part of the network. Each room has four red emergency cords. If a student is in trouble, the student pulls the cord, this is electronically linked to a radio, that radio then sends a panic alarm, which will be received



Each alarm is electronically linked to a radio that sends an alarm to the Safety Call Computer

by the Safety Call computer. That computer will redistribute as a pre-stored/pre defined text message to the security staff and they will know exactly where and who the problem is.'

The Safety Call system at the college features a repeater and a series of IC-F34 handportables that provide voice and text messaging. These are supplemented by IC-F15 handportables for voice comms only.



Alarms are also placed in the Colleges disabled toilets

There are 25 alarms on the Safety Call system at the college. Text message radios are carried by security staff during their shift. During the day there is also a local alarm monitored in the Reception Area. All radios on the system share the same channels so if there is an issue this can be communicated via voice immediately. In the event of a mains failure, the computer (the heart of the system) is battery backed up. Each alarm module is battery backed and mains fed, so if the mains goes dead it reverts to battery which has a duration of four hours which is sufficient to evacuate any building and restore power in power loss situation.

Chris said, 'The system has been very useful. In the past if a fire alarm went off, there would be a delay in us knowing that the alarm had gone off because it wasn't linked back to our main reception area or to our security staff. Now when fire alarms go off we are fully aware and we can get a security officer there in 2-3 minutes.'

Asked about the relevance to other education establishments, Chris said, 'the potential of the 'Safety Call' system is enormous. I should imagine every College up and down the UK has similar issues regarding the care of all their residents. Although there is an initial outlay in cost with Safety Call, this could be balanced against the number of staff required to work 'out of hours' in order to maintain satisfactory cover. So it is a cost effective solution, especially as there are no real changes that need to be made to infrastructure.'

Commenting on the scheme's performance, Chris said, 'to date, the system has satisfied our requirements. It is effective, quick and really simple to use. The service from Ansur Communications has been really good, they have provided us with some innovative ideas.'

And as to the future, Chris said, 'We are looking for other areas to be integrated into Safety Call. The sports centre is still a satellite site and we want to incorporate this unit on this system.'

Steve Blackburn, Director at Ansur Communication said, 'Safety Call system can be tailored to meet the needs of any client and offers essential safety features such as alarm monitoring, mandown alerts, panic buttons, direct voice communication, and text messaging.'

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About St Mark & St John's

The College of St Mark & St John is a Church of England voluntary college, with a history of over 150 years. Its constituent colleges, St John's, Battersea and St Mark's, Chelsea, date back to the 1840s. The College of St Mark & St John moved from London to Plymouth in 1973. Since 1991, the College has been affiliated to the University of Exeter, which accredits it to run undergraduate and postgraduate programmes leading to degree awards of the University.

Today the College has an academic community of approximately 5000 people. Its educational activities have continued to evolve in response to local, regional, national and international needs. Proud of its historical roots, the College continues to develop its educational courses to reflect the needs of the twenty-first century. Situated a short distance from Plymouth, the College attracts students from all over the UK and overseas.



Corporate background

Icom (UK) Ltd was established in 1974 and is the sole UK and Republic of Ireland importer and distributor for Icom Inc., of Osaka, Japan. Based in Herne Bay, Kent, the company is privately owned with 42 staff.

A comprehensive portfolio of radio transceiver, receiver, navigation and computer products is maintained to suit the consumer, commercial, radio-amateur, marine and aviation markets. Equipment is available in fixed-base, vehicle-mobile and handheld formats to suit a wide range of specifications and applications.

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About Ansur Communications

Ansur Communications has over 20 years experience in radio communications and technology, and hold many contracts with Blue-chip organisations. The company specialises in unique design solutions and shapes its services around the needs of individual customers.

For a demonstration of the system and its capabilities, please contact:

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