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Security Solutions

ADDRESSING THE NEEDS AND SECURING THE FUTURE.

Helping secure your world

Welcome to the seventh issue of **SECURITY SOLUTIONS**. As always our aim is on alerting you to security issues that can have a harmful impact, as well as providing you with practical implementable solutions for security issues in both your corporate and personal life.

Christmas is upon us and just as you look forward to having a good time at Christmas, so does every bandit. The only problem is that the bandits are looking to have a good time with your money, your gifts, your food and your alcohol. Accordingly we have provided some [Safety Tips for the Christmas Season](#) holiday season. We would also like to wish all our readers a safe, holy and family filled Christmas.

Many people think protection in today's world is about guards, guns and electronic protection but sometimes asking the right question at the right time can

protect you from harm. The article [Asking a Good Question](#) provides a pointer on how to ask that question.

Access Control systems are not only for large businesses and so we have included the article, [Unbreachable Access Control for Small Businesses](#).

If a company's computer servers fail, many companies come to a standstill. However at times the protection measures for those servers can be the cause of the failure. The article on [Choosing a Fire Suppression System for Your Server Room](#) looks at the system choices for this area.

This issue also includes personal security advice regarding [testing of home alarms](#) and [securing laptops](#).

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Brian Ramsey
Editor

The Most Powerful Weapon – Asking a Good Question

The most useful, effective, deterring and inexpensive weapon against criminals and terrorists is a good question

Chameleon Associates

For years, security has been investing billions of dollars into hardware, weapons, technology and man power. And training. Armed security officers are required to undergo training in handling a gun and in shooting. Many of those officers go through numerous weeks of training to hone their tactical skills. But how many officers are trained to effectively use the one weapon readily available and that affords the most powerful impact in terms of protection? ... a good question.

Along the security process, the only time a suspected perpetrator is put on the defensive is when the security or law enforcement officer questions them. If you look at your own security system and evaluate your access control, surveillance equipment, security policies, or information security, you will find that all of these elements represent a defensive approach. We've all heard the expression "the best defense is a good offense" so how do we build offensive measures into our security system?

Many regard guns as an offensive measure in security. They are wrong. Guns are only offensive tools when used by the aggressor, or for example, in a military context. In security, they are used for tactical response (as an emergency response once a target is attacked). This leaves the Security Director with only one reliable and effective tool – his officers' and employees' ability to ask the right questions.

Not all questions are offensive tools. For example, for entry to many defense and government facilities a visitor is asked: Are you a U.S. citizen? This close-ended, yes-no question is not productive in terms of security. It ends the conversation and hands the answer

to the potential perpetrator. The 'correct' answer in this case is obvious. To make this question an offensive tool it should be changed to, for example, "Where were you born?" The answer to that question can provide the basis for subsequent questions that will eventually determine whether or not the person is a U.S. citizen.



Most criminals and terrorists assume different identities and invent cover stories to gain access to their target. The ability to question is the only tool available to ascertain the validity of the declared identity: vis-à-vis occupation, residence, nationality, culture, etc.

The best way to evaluate someone's story is by posing questions that move from the general to the specific. It is impossible for someone assuming a cover to have ready every possible answer about that cover. So our job is to first ask general questions that give us the basis from which we proceed to more specific, and therefore more difficult, questions. So for example, to ascertain if a person really works at the job he claims to, you need to question him in the following sequence:

Q: Where do you work?

A: I work for the Department of Motor Vehicles.

Q: What do you do at the DMV?

A: I am a clerk.

Q: What form do I need to use to change my address on my Drivers License?

At this point in the questioning, you evaluate the information given

to you. Did the person hesitate, try to change the subject, provide a bizarre response, become defensive, or did the person provide you with a reasonable, detailed and simple answer? This example demonstrates the deterrence effect of questioning. A truthful person working for the DMV might not understand the purpose of the question, but he wouldn't mind answering. A perpetrator who is lying about his occupational identity will be put off balance and in most cases, will go on to choose another target.

So why don't we in Security invest more in questioning? There's the risk of appearing invasive. Not trusting personnel to ask these types of questions effectively. Feeling comfortable staying with a traditional, defensive approach. All of these reasons are valid. However, in the context of a security objective that aims to prevent we would do well to recognize the power of questioning.

After all, some organizations around the world use questioning as an integral if not the basis of their entire security system. These agencies and companies are world renown for their effectiveness.

---To learn more about Security Questioning and how it can be used to protect any organization, join Chameleon Associates at their [upcoming seminar on Predictive Profiling and Terrorist Threat Mitigation](#) in Las Vegas December 6 -7.

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Bringing Unbreachable Access Control to the Small Business World

By Peter Dickson

Access control and security are pressing concerns for virtually all small and medium enterprises in the UK. No matter the industry in which a company is involved, the same security issues arise and, for most organizations, the same problems of finding robust solutions that protect premises from unwanted trespassers exist.

Currently external and internal access control to most buildings is by use of keys, keypads and swipe cards. All of these methods have obvious drawbacks as keys and swipe cards can be stolen or copied in order to gain illicit access to a premise whilst keypads rely on a user's memory and integrity to maintain a trouble-free access control system for any organization.



By contrast a biometric access control system only allows authorized individuals entry to an area by inspecting an array of human physical characteristics that are unique to each and every individual on the planet.

Systems developed in the last five years can authenticate a person's identity with total accuracy by comparing fingerprint patterns, iris structures and even facial features against a database that contains those same details and measurements of individuals allowed access to a particular building.

The obvious advantages of biometric access control systems

based on unique human physical attributes are that it is impossible for an unwanted intruder to gain access by theft - there is nothing that can be stolen or replicated - and neither does a biometric system rely on the honesty and memory of an employee in the way that a keypad system does.

In simple terms a biometric access control system is extremely secure because it relies on unique human physical attributes that cannot be stolen or replicated. The system is unbreakable by any unauthorized personnel or unwanted visitors. It is an ultimate and incorruptible key.

Many people are aware of biometrics because we see the media stories about the technology now being integrated into passports so that more accurate citizen identifications can be made at airports by passport control officials. News stories such as these give a misleading impression that biometric access control is very expensive to install and is the preserve of governments, multinational corporations and extremely well-heeled celebrities.

In actual fact, top quality biometric systems are now being designed and sold with the needs and resources of small and medium sized businesses specifically in mind. Normally utilizing fingerprint pads located outside entrances, the retail systems now available have impeccable pedigree as they use the same technology that has been rigorously and repeatedly security tested by governments and multinational corporations keen to protect their own interests at almost any costs. Such systems can now be commonly installed and operated by smaller businesses with no upfront costs and a low monthly service charge.

At first glance the types of businesses that can benefit from the added security of biometric access control are self-evident: leisure centres; retail outlets; industrial unit tenants; serviced office blocks and so on. Almost all companies operating in sectors such as these can improve their

security and access control arrangements by installing biometric fingerprint pads at both external entrance points and at restricted areas within buildings.

But biometric access control systems should not just be thought of in the context of upgraded preventative security measures. For many companies, the installation of an unbreachable access control system is a real business positive! As well as entitling many organizations to lower commercial insurance rates, the presence of a biometric system can actively bring in valuable extra customer business.

Owners of businesses that protect and store securely the property of others can use biometric access control as a value-added selling point. Bonded warehouse, self-storage operators and private safe deposit box companies are all examples of enterprises that can gain extra income from the installation of biometric access control.

More important than the protection of goods to many businesses is the protection of people. Nurseries, retirement homes and hospices are all businesses that can offer added peace of mind to existing and potential customers by installing biometric access control systems.

At the moment the potential for the use of biometric access control within small and medium sized enterprises has scarcely been touched by those who sell systems. This will change dramatically as business proprietors become aware of the advantages of biometric systems over conventional access and security measures employed currently.

And given that robust proven systems are already available at low cost outlay, it is actually very probable that the inevitable move towards biometrics is more likely to become a stampede among small and medium sized business proprietors over the next couple of years.

Peter Dickson is a marketing specialist currently employed by Easydentic, a pan-European biometric security company. They can be found online at <http://www.easydentic.com>

Article Source:
www.ezinearticles.com

How To Choose A Fire Suppression System For Your Server Room, Data Center Or NOC

By Ron Carboy



Looking to install a new fire suppression system? Replacing an old Halon system? Or, perhaps upgrading your old system? This can be a daunting task. Today, fire suppression systems come in a variety of chemical compounds, an array of both basic and sophisticated notification devices, and a variety of sizes. I will introduce you to the many dramatic changes passed by the National Fire Protection Association, due in large part to innovative firms searching for better and inexpensive ways to protect computers and other electronic equipment.

Innovation is usually the result of changes in the way business is conducted. Reasons why new and innovative fire suppression systems are being developed include the following:

Water sprinkler systems can cause catastrophic damage in a computer environment. Older fire suppression systems may not be environmentally friendly.

Today's computer server environment is much more compact. A significant increase in storage capacity alone has allowed a significant decrease in the amount of space required to house computer equipment, telecommunications, and server equipment.

Older systems and subsequent technologies may be too expensive to purchase and install.

The number of smaller companies has increased throughout the world, dictating a change in the way we protect our essential data and equipment. A significant number of firms lease space in office complexes. Over ninety percent of firms that lease space find it too expensive to purchase and install most systems. And, most firms do not want to install a system that becomes a permanent fixture which cannot be removed when a lease expires, additional space is required, or a firm needs to expand or downsize.

Now there is a way to replace older fire suppression systems, update existing equipment, replace sprinkler heads, and purchase the protection you need for your critical data and computer systems. Now you can increase or decrease a fire suppression system without a major expense. New systems can be uninstalled and reinstalled because they are not permanent fixtures. Your investment can travel with you just like your data center or server room equipment.

The evolution of fire detection and suppression systems has been dramatic. There are fire suppression agents that are toxic when inhaled and those that are certified "green." You can choose from a clean agent gas, water or aerosol. Some systems require a floating floor and significant space to reside, while others mount on available wall space.

There are systems that require little cleanup (the clean agent gasses), and those that need a whole cleaning crew and a few days worth of elbow grease. That leads to – you guessed it – server down time. From minimal to extensive, in the case of even the smallest fire, some systems can leave you twiddling your thumbs until you are back in

business. Next step – recharging your fire suppression system, and the time and costs associated with that process.

I hope to simplify things here. I have been advising companies on computer room fire suppression for many years. This first hand experience of selling fire suppression system solutions for most size rooms and enclosures has shown many firms the benefits of utilizing newer technology when protecting valuable assets.

Let's start by summarizing the features of each type of automatic fire suppression system used in most data centers, NOCs and server rooms today. Then, I'll get into specifics that you will want to consider before choosing fire suppression equipment and a fire suppression company.

First, Understand the Types of Fires You Could Encounter

The National Fire Protection Association has classified fires into four types, determined by the materials or fuel being burned:

Type A: Fires with combustible materials as its source, such as wood, cloth, paper, rubber, and many plastics

Type B: Fires in flammable liquids, oils, greases, tars, oil-base paints, lacquers, and flammable gases

Type C: Fires that involve electrical equipment

Type D: Fires with ignitable metals as its fuel source

In a typical server room fire, a combination of Types A, B and C can be found. An effective fire suppression system will be rated for all three types.

Often the source of a fire in a server room is not detected until after the fire has been extinguished. Therefore, installing a system that can handle A, B & C Types is a safeguard against an unexpected disaster.

Substances Used in Fire Suppression: Gas, Water and Aerosol

1. Gaseous or Clean Agent Fire Suppression

Gasses used in fire suppression systems are typically Halon, CO2 or environmentally-friendly clean agents such as Inergen. These gases do not extinguish a fire by smothering it, but rather by displacing oxygen or inhibiting a chemical reaction that is essential to the fire's survival.

The popular fire suppressant Halon is so detrimental to the environment that both Europe and the United States banned manufacturing of the gas in 1995. It is mentioned here only because many Halon systems installed before the ban was enacted are still in operation.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) encourages the use of non-ozone depleting fire suppression agent alternatives, and in 1990, the US EPA established its Significant New Alternatives Policy (SNAP) to evaluate new chemicals and technologies for the replacement of ozone depleting substances. As a result, many companies are installing alternative clean agents that are environmentally friendly.

Clean agents derive their name from the simple idea that they do not leave any residue after discharge. This feature makes them ideal for electronics and eliminates cleanup worries.

Another gas used in fire suppression, CO2, is harmful when inhaled at high concentrations (greater than 5% by volume, or 50,000 ppm). The current threshold limit value (TLV) or maximum level that is considered safe for healthy adults for an eight-hour work day is 0.5% (5,000 ppm). For this reason, your facility must be vacated before the system discharges.

Unlike CO2, Inergen is non-toxic. However, a discharge of Inergen results in an approximate 3% concentration of carbon dioxide. While initially breathable, it is recommended that the environment be evacuated. Since it is not a liquid under pressure, Inergen requires significant storage space. After a discharge, the environment becomes highly pressurized which could cause damage if not released in a timely manner.

Gas fire suppression systems typically consist of the agent (gas), agent storage containers, agent release valves, fire detectors and warning mechanisms, agent piping, and agent dispersion nozzles. With most gas agents, the environment must be pressurized in order to contain the agent. Installation is complex and costly, and the reward is realized only after discharge, as clean up is as simple as venting the room.



2. Water-Based Fire Suppression

Water Mist Fire Suppression Systems resulted from the evolution from standard sprinklers designed for flooding fires. Much lighter than their older counterpart, water mist systems are effective on Type A and B fires and result in less damage than traditional water-based systems. Still, water mist systems are not ideal for server rooms due to the Type C electrical fires common to this environment. Clean up and safety issues are also a concern when faced with wet or damp electronics. Although effective in the right situations, water mist systems must often be augmented with other fire suppression systems in order to ensure complete coverage in the event of a fire. After discharge, expect down time of a few weeks for a sprinkler system and less with water mist. Often with a sprinkler system, you are unable to take it with you if you are in a lease or are planning to move to new facilities. This could make a big difference in your consideration of a water-based system.

3. Aerosol Fire Suppression

The newest technology in fire suppression, Aerosol Extinguishing Technology, was officially approved and effective in 2005 by the National Fire Protection Association. A clean agent with no post combustion

byproducts, aerosols such as the brand Aero-K do not replace the oxygen as CO2 does, do not produce Hydrofluoric Acid (HF) after the fire, and have no environmental impact.

The aerosol consists of ultra-fine particles that are expelled via generators. Upon discharge, the substance creates a fog of suspended particles. Non-toxic and non-corrosive, the agent remains suspended in the environment for up to 60 minutes, virtually eliminating any possibility of reignition. After discharge and a 10-minute hold time, clean up includes venting the room and a light dusting of the surfaces.

Unlike gaseous systems, which operate at pressure and often require extensive piping, aerosol generators are very cost effective to install and maintain and have minimal space and weight requirements. The generators that dispense the aerosol are available in a variety of sizes to accommodate any size environment.

Select A Fire Suppression System with Dependable Safety Features

Safety features can save time, money, equipment, and most importantly, lives. Here are some features that your fire suppression system must have in order to prevent either premature discharge or the opposite – activation delay – when a new fire is either noticed or accidentally started by human error.

Lock Out/Abort Switch – This feature is essential for instances when a service person is in the protected environment and creates smoke, for example from soldering. A lock out/abort switch lets you disable the system with a key to avoid an accidental discharge. Should a threatening fire start while the system is disabled, a worker can use a fire extinguisher for a localized fire or arm the system and use the manual pull station.



Manual Pull Station –If a fire is inadvertently started, or is noticed by someone in the room, the manual pull station allows for immediate discharge without waiting for the system to detect smoke.

Choose a Fire Suppression Company That Will Customize a System to your Unique Needs

Aside from superior customer service, look for a fire suppression company that will make your needs their top priority. The company that bids your fire detection and suppression installation will want to know the size of your room and particular characteristics of your room. This will determine the amount of agent, piping, system space and weight requirements.

A good fire suppression company will consider such factors as the length of time you expect to occupy your current space. If you intend to move within a few years, you'll want to know if the system can be transferred to your new facility and reinstalled cost-effectively. Don't forget to ask about the costs associated with recharging the system, should the system discharge.

You'll also want to discuss how the system can be expanded if the size of your computer room increases due to growth. And, in the opposite scenario, will you be able to reduce the scale of the system if you downsize?

Each state, city, or municipality has a fire code that must be considered when evaluating the options. Some agencies require sprinklers and others will allow

a clean agent system in lieu of sprinklers. Factors such as the type of building construction often impact the codes and requirements. Select a fire suppression installation company that asks all of the right questions about your fire code and other unique requirements such as UL certification for fire suppression equipment.

Fire Suppression Costs

Costs are typically estimated based on the size of the room. This determines the amount of agent needed to put out a fire as well as the equipment and delivery mechanisms required. The agent concentration levels differ depending on the class of fire expected. Make sure you ask about the costs of maintaining the system on a yearly basis and also the life expectancy of the agent/systems so that you are prepared should you need to update periodically for optimal effectiveness.

An Automatic Fire Suppression System Can Lower Your Insurance Premium

If you don't currently have a fire suppression system, consider the insurance cost savings. Insurance companies sometimes offer a Loss Control Survey that, when completed, may offer rate reductions for installing a waterless or dry chemical fire suppression system. A call to your agent and some comparative shopping will give you an idea of what you'll save – typically in the range of 10%-15%. Don't forget to take the tax deduction. With a 10-year shelf life, a product such as Aero-K can be depreciated over its full useful life.

Ron Carboy founded Peripheral Manufacturing, Inc. 28 years ago after a successful career with Memorex Corporation. Ron was one of the original sales engineers marketing magnetic computer, video, and broadcast tape. Peripherals has evolved into an internet-based firm selling niche computer products to the IT Industry, Federal Government, Telecommunications, Recycling, and Security Departments. New product introductions include Aero-K, a potassium-based, environmentally-friendly, fire suppression system for the computer, industrial, and automotive

industry. Peripheral Manufacturing can be found at <http://www.periphman.com> and <http://www.server-room-furniture.com>

Article Source: www.ezinearticles.com

Laptop Safes and Car Safes

By Jill Hunt

Laptop safes and car safes are fast becoming a necessity in the fight to protect against identity theft. Recent studies show that even though consumers are becoming more aware of how to protect themselves from online identity theft and fraud, offline theft is still the biggest source of data and personal information loss in America. Anywhere from 600,000 to 1.5 million laptops are stolen or lost each year in the United States, according to law-enforcement and private estimates. The FBI reports that 97% of these stolen laptops are never recovered. Improvements in technology make it easier for people to carry large amounts of key data on not only their laptops but other mobile devices such as thumb drives, PDA's and portable hard drives. Some of this information can include Social Security numbers, confidential business information or even bank account information. With this laptop and identity theft epidemic, keeping that information safe should be recognized as top priority for everyone that owns a laptop computer.



Car safes and laptop safes can offer invaluable security to help prevent the theft of this personal information. These safes are available in a range of sizes to suit your needs and most are constructed of heavy gauge steel. Some can be bolted to floors and come with additional options of steel cable which

can be attached to spare wheel brackets, seat brackets or if used in a room such as a dorm room, attached structural components. Utilizing these cable attachments can make it very easy to transfer the car safe from one vehicle to another, or from home to the office, without having to remove bolts. Electronic combination locks can eliminate the need to have to carry around additional keys.

Thieves only need a few minutes to enter into a vehicle in what is known by law enforcement as "Smash and Grab". Placing your valuables in the trunk of your car out of sight does little to deter determined thieves who will often target employment vehicles. In some cases they will pierce the door skin to enable them to unlock a vehicle without setting off the alarm. Once they have gained access, it is easy for them to open trunks through the back seats. Damage to the cars can be very extensive in a short period of time. When these thieves are confronted with a securely fitted car safe, most will look elsewhere.

Similarly, the "Smash and Grab" technique is often used in home burglaries as well. Thieves know that they have a window of opportunity to make a fast grab at personal property even if the home is equipped with a burglar alarm. With identity theft growing at alarming rates, locking your laptop in a home safe or laptop safe is one of the best methods to protect your personal information.

All types of safes for the home, office and vehicle at can be found at <http://www.safeandvaultstore.com>>find-your-car-and-laptop-safes-here

I live in a small town in Idaho and love to spend my spare time on what I refer to as the three R's. Reading, Writing and Research.

Article Source: www.ezinearticles.com

How To Test Your Burglar Alarm Battery and Home Burglar Alarm

By Sandra Wilson

Once you have had your burglar alarm system installed it is important that you learn how to check and maintain all the components that make up the system. One such component that you should be especially aware of, which will need to be regularly checked, is the burglar alarm battery.

In this article we will take you through the steps you need to carry out in order to test your alarm system correctly. It is important that you schedule time to carry out a testing of the alarm system every month.

1. First, before you actually test the system, you should read through the manual that comes with it very carefully. By doing this you will actually help to prevent yourself from setting the alarm off accidentally. This is even more important if you have a monitored system. Also you should inform the monitoring center that you are testing the system.
2. When you look in the manual often you will find an index which provides you with some suggestions from the manufacturer that will help you to test the burglar alarm in the proper way. It is best if you read through this part of the manual a number of times so that you know exactly what it is you need to do in order to test the system correctly.
3. It is important that you know exactly how to disarm the alarm so you should preferably keep the disarming codes or the key for the control panel close at hand. But it is best if you don't keep them right beside it. If you can when you are actually going to be testing the alarm arrange to do it on a day when someone else in the household knows the codes off by heart as well can be there with you.
4. Another thing to remember when testing your alarm system at home is to inform other family members that you are doing it before you actually go ahead with a test. Plus prior to you

actually testing the system you need to walk round the house to make sure that all doors and windows are closed. Once this is done you can start the test.



Generally all a person will need to do in order to get the test underway is to key in a special code, which they should find in their owners manual. Once this has been keyed in the test will and at the end it will highlight any problems with the system. If you have a monitored system you may well find that not only will the errors be reported to you but also to the monitoring center as well.

It is during the testing of your alarm system you will see if any problems have occurred in relation to the burglar alarm battery. If there are then you may well need to look at changing the burglar alarm battery for a new one. Again the manual which came with the system should instruct you how to complete this task. But even if there are no problems with the battery you should look at changing it every couple of years anyway.

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Holiday Safety Tips

November 26, 2007

The holiday season is often a joyous time of giving, sharing and spending time with family and friends. Unfortunately, this time of year is also shared with a particularly high crime rate. The Texas Crime Prevention Association offers safety tips for a safe and happy holiday season.

At Home

- Be extra cautious about locking doors and windows when leaving home, even for a few minutes.
- Do not display holiday gifts where they can be seen from a window or doorway.
- Store gifts away before leaving for a holiday trip.
- Make sure burglar alarms are in working order and contact information is up to date. Test smoke detectors.
- Use only fire resistant ornaments on your holiday tree and make sure electric lights are in good working order with no frayed wires.
- Do not leave holiday lighting on overnight and consider using timers.
- Keep all outdoor security lighting on from dusk to dawn everyday.
- Never hang a wreath or decorations on a door that would block the view from the peephole.



The Mail

- Use Go Direct to switch your federal benefit paper checks such as Social Security or Supplemental Security Income to direct deposit to protect against identity theft and fraud; visit <http://www.godirect.org/>.
- When mailing gifts or gift cards to friends or relatives make sure to send them to a secure address and tell someone at the location that they are coming so they can monitor the mail for their arrival.
- Request that all package deliveries require a signature and are not left on your door step.



While Shopping

- Shop before dark when possible.
- Try to coordinate shopping trips with a friend.
- Never park in unlit parking areas, no matter how convenient it is.
- Lock all packages in your vehicle's trunk and hide any belongings that you leave in the vehicle.
- Keep vehicle doors locked and windows closed.
- Avoid carrying large amounts of cash. When possible, pay for purchases with a credit card or debit card. Monitor your credit accounts for unauthorized activity on a regular basis.
- Teach your children who to go to in case you become separated in a store, such as a store clerk or security guard. Children should never go into a parking lot alone.
- Never leave your purse, wallet or cell phone lying in a shopping cart or stroller while shopping.
- Take your keys out and lock your vehicle while fueling up.

Entertaining

- When hosting a holiday party, have non-alcoholic beverages available for your guests.
- Have alternate transportation available for intoxicated persons.
- If you are hosting, you are responsible. Don't let your guests drink and drive.

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