CASE STUDY:
University of Southampton - UK
LIFT SHAFT AND CEILING VOID INSTALL

The Building:

The University of Southampton is a campus typical of many universities - with a number of large buildings occupied by both students and staff. Buildings include libraries, lecture theatres, classrooms, offices, sports halls and accommodation. The diversity of these buildings can make compliant testing of all detectors a challenge.

The Challenge:

We joined Detect Fire and Security engineers to have a look at a few of their buildings. The first was the Estates Department which housed a lift shaft with a point detector installed. Testing of this detector not only required the presence of a fire engineer but also a lift engineer and facilities staff from the university. As well as adding additional cost to the testing – this also took a significant amount of time and effort to arrange. On the day of the testing, the lift had to be put out of action, causing disruption to the running of department. In addition to normal safety practice, a member of staff was required to label each lift button over the five floors of the building to promote the lift being out of use.

The second building, a Chemistry Department, housed a number of lecture theatres and high hallways. These contained a concealed ASD system which spanned across a secure area. The pipes path, linking the ASD panel to the fire panel, had a security door in-between – meaning it required significant time and effort to access the area and carry out testing.

The Solution:

As the contracted fire and safety maintainer, Detect Fire and Security, typically tested the university's detectors using Testifire. However, those in hard-to-access locations, such as those identified above required a different approach and it was here that they considered Scorpion.

The justification for installing Scorpion saw the installers and building manager analyse the cost of installation against the cost of accessing the detector by other means. They considered cost areas such as access equipment and additional personnel and also looked at the amount of time it would take to organise. In many cases it was very easy to justify installing Scorpion. In the case of the lift shaft, the lifecycle of Scorpion means that once installed in will be capable of 240 tests of 15 seconds. Which should be long enough to outlast the life of the detector itself.

With everyone on site, the installation of Scorpion in the lift shaft and the ceiling void was quick and simple. Rob, one of Detects' engineers, was surprised at how easy the installation was, going on to say ***"That was much simpler than I thought to install; the wiring and connections were so simple"***. Future tests of these detectors can now be easily achieved from ground level – crucially at the same time as all the other detectors and without the need for additional personnel and planning time.

During the installation, other locations within the university campus were identified as being ideal for Scorpion – including high atria, vent shafts and ceiling voids. The engineers described Scorpion as ***"a great solution for us and our client, it will save time and money and also eliminate the disruption normally caused by testing these detectors"***.

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