

## Gamewell-FCI E3 Series® Fire System Delivers for U.S. Postal Service

The USPS (United States Postal Service) Processing and Distribution Center in Dallas, Texas is part of a national network of mechanized bulk mail centers that process first class letters and parcels. This 439,959 square foot facility sorts and routes an average of 4.3 million pieces of mail each day from Dallas out to the entire world.

### Grounds for Better Protection

Approximately 2,000 individuals are employed at this facility, which operates three shifts per day around the clock, seven days a week. Likewise, an additional 200 workers are hired during the busy November/December holiday season. Given the importance of its federally protected contents and large number of occupants, the USPS decided it was necessary to upgrade this center's fire alarm system.

Built on 37 acres and considered one of the USPS' largest processing and distribution centers in terms of volume, this facility accommodates more than just letters and packages. The Center also houses an automotive repair shop for postal vehicle maintenance, in addition to a fuel and oil dispensing area. The presence of such highly combustible materials greatly reduced the choices of competent fire alarm systems.

### Exceeding Strict Expectations

The USPS upholds stringent specifications when it comes to fire system installations. One example: 100% of the system's wire must be enclosed within conduit throughout a facility. On top of national USPS requirements, this particular facility had some system demands of its own. With that, one of the area's most reputable integrators, APi Systems Group Inc. of Garland, Texas, was chosen to retrofit the entire facility with a new Gamewell-FCI E3 Series® emergency evacuation system.

One E3 Series FACP (fire alarm control panel) with four loops containing 40 duct detectors, 54 pull stations and 450 horn/strobes provided

the Center with the enhanced level of protection it required. Style 6 (class A) wiring was used.

### Control at Your Fingertips

With so many employees located throughout the building at one time, facility management needed a way to perform ongoing fire alarm tests with little-to-no disruption to production. "We employed pushbutton controls that would enable and disable all A/V (audio visual) circuits. This convenience allowed the customer to minimize any disruptions during testing," said Roddy Bieber, Branch Manager for APi. "We also provided them a graphic map indicating the different groups of A/Vs so they could concentrate testing to one particular area at a time." The USPS reportedly tests this system on a monthly basis.

Per the USPS, pushbutton controls were also utilized for manual shutdown of all air handling units. Automatic fan shutdown is provided via the system's duct detectors.

### Simple System Interface

Mounted to the front of the Gamewell-FCI E3 Series FACP is an LCD keypad controller used as a system interface for operations personnel. Equipped with a 2-line, 80 character LCD display, a full keypad



(continued on back page)



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and LED indicators, the controller's best quality is the immediate alarm information it displays for first responders and building managers.

The same style LCD keypad controller is also installed in a remote cabinet offering an even tighter level of monitoring and control. USPS facility management and first responders can now review system status, address fire alarm issues, enter specific text messages and more, via either LCD keypad controller location. A networked printer has also been included to provide hardcopy details of various incidents, of which the system's history log can store up to 4,100 events.

## One Complete Solution

Overall, the E3 Series provided an ideal solution to the Center's fire system upgrade. USPS Building Engineer, Chuck Harper, agrees, "It's been great. The system was setup just the way we wanted it. And with our regular fire alarm testing procedures, the panel's ability to temporarily shutoff certain A/Vs prevents disruptions to postal operations."

The modular design of the E3 Series allows for easy expansion, making it possible to support up to 64 nodes and more than 25,000 devices. Given the USPS' conduit requirements, the networking capabilities of the E3 Series are ideal. Only two twisted-pair copper cable or fiber-optic cable are needed to network these FACPs. Less wire translates to less material and labor costs for the facility owner.

"It was easy to accomplish all that was required of this fire alarm's upgrade with the E3 Series," commented Bieber. "In fact, since the project was completed, APi has been awarded a fire system upgrade for another postal center nearby. I think the ease of the Dallas USPS installation and the E3's flexibility proves just how capable this whole system is."



E3 Series® Fire Alarm System

Part No. 9020-60314 1007 2K