

Newsletter



Security



Access



Fire



Electrical

Winter 2007

In this issue

- 01 FREE Fire & Security Audit
- 02 Your Body, Your ID
- 02 Securing the Future
- 03 Fire Safety Law Changes
- 03 Keeping Safety on the Rails
- 03 Direct Debit FREE Prize Draw
- 04 First for Growth
- 04 Making a Difference
- 04 First for Standards and Service
- 04 Festive Surprises



Hello

Welcome to our very first customer newsletter. In it, we have tried to include articles and information which we hope you'll find interesting and useful.

Moving forward, we'll be using each quarterly issue to tackle some of the questions we're regularly asked by customers. So, if you've got any specific questions you'd like to ask our experts in the future, or any other comments about our newsletter, please email us at firstchoicenews@firstchoicefacilities.co.uk.

James Doran, Managing Director.

Great service key to growth

When we started out over six years ago, we were mainly supplying and maintaining fire extinguishers for local businesses. Shortly afterwards, in 2000, we secured our first national account with HMV, supporting 300 sites nationwide. From there, other national accounts quickly followed.

We take pride in the high standards of service we offer in an industry which has often suffered from poor service levels. As a result of their experiences working with us, clients began to ask us to tender for other products so we expanded our portfolio as well as our geographic coverage.

We're now in a unique position within the UK, being able to offer fire, security and electrical solutions including: CCTV, intruder alarms, access control, fire alarms, fire extinguishers, sprinkler systems, portable appliance testing, hard wire testing, emergency lighting and key holding.

In just a few years we've grown to service over 20% of the high street as well as a large portfolio of blue chip clients and commercial premises plus over 12000 small businesses.

We're continuing to strive to improve the service we offer customers and to set the benchmark for others to try to follow. Our bespoke operating system is specifically designed to allow our customers to manage their accounts remotely, offering total transparency of our working practices.

Alongside this investment, we've equipped our engineers with the very latest in mobile PDA technology linked to our operating system. This enables them to communicate 'live' information so the system is always up to date. It also allows for the completion and printing of paperwork on site, speeding up processes and allowing our customers to get on with their businesses without unnecessary delays.



But our key investment, as always, is in our people. "This year has seen us raise our standards and hire some of the best people in the industry," says Sosi Kaskanian, Operations Director. "None more so than our most recent recruit Paul Collis, our new Sales Director. We've also increased the number of National Account Managers and Super Administrators to support our growth strategy and introduced a new six-week induction programme for all our new starters. As we continue to innovate and raise our standards, we'll share developments with you through the pages of this newsletter."

Start 2007 with a **FREE** Fire & Security Audit. Call **0870 241 3249** or alternatively email us your interest at audit@firstchoicefacilities.co.uk

Securing the future **Your body,** your ID



In the digital age, the options for securing property and personnel have never been greater.

Most CCTV systems are set up to detect unwanted entry to a site. Using a combination of detectors and beams, the system is alerted when anyone or anything comes into the detection field. This triggers the system to capture the relevant images on video.

Remote monitoring is different. When it is triggered by an alarm, the CCTV system calls the Alarm Receiving Centre (ARC) at the same time. The transmission equipment captures the relevant image from the CCTV camera and sends it over a broadband connection to the ARC.

IP (internet protocol) connectivity provides cost-effective options for security systems

freed from the limitations and costs of cable runs. Increased bandwidth and improved image compression means remote video monitoring is a real and practical alternative.

When installing a CCTV system – using remote monitoring or otherwise – you need to think about a number of issues. Where will you position the cameras? How are the images to be used? How will the system be properly maintained? How long should you keep the images for?

Work with your installer to develop a written strategy for how you will use your CCTV. Don't assume that putting up a camera is enough in itself – it almost never is.

Fact: Did you know?

Remote monitored CCTV can be used as evidence in court

Biometrics is the use of biological data for identification, including fingerprinting and iris scanning. While the technology isn't yet foolproof, it does offer alternatives to swipe cards or combination lock and pin.

The UK Government is planning a number of biometric-based initiatives over the next couple of years, including ID cards and biometric passports. Once the technology is tested on a large scale, we're likely to see such systems becoming more and more common for commercial use. At First Choice we'll be keeping a close watch on developments and ensuring that our customers have access to the latest technology just as soon as it's fit for purpose.

Fact: Did you know?

It's illegal to spy on people at work



Delivering Access



Fact: Did you know?

Access Control is the fastest-growing sector of the entire security industry, with installations in almost all new buildings

DHL is the global market leader in international express, overland transport, air freight, ocean freight and contract logistics. To date, we've been installing and maintaining fire extinguishers for the company. But more recently, when DHL needed two large access control systems at its site in Daventry, it asked us to help with supply and installation. "We chose First Choice Fire and Security because they have the same philosophy as us," said Shion Vassell, Category Manager. "They want to work closely with their customers, creating cost-effective solutions that provide tangible benefits."



Fire Safety law changes – a quick reminder!

The new Fire Safety Order under the Regulatory Reform Act 2001 has replaced all Fire Legislation from 1st October 2006. Here's a quick reminder for those of you who still need an update!

- Fire certificates abolished. Existing certificates are no longer valid
- New regime based on risk assessment. Need to take steps to prevent fire and mitigate its effects to ensure safety
- Applies to nearly all non-domestic premises
- An employer is always responsible for safety of employees and if you have any level of control over premises you're likely to have some responsibility for fire safety

- Multiple people can have fire safety responsibilities for premises – employers, owners, landlords, tenants or contractors, for example
- If you have some responsibility you must carry out a fire safety risk assessment and take appropriate action. This includes reviewing regularly and updating if required
- Premises covered by the new fire safety regime may be inspected or audited by an enforcement officer (usually the local Fire and Rescue Service)

For further information go to:

www.firesafetylaw.communities.gov.uk or email Fire.safetyreform@communities.gov.uk

Why not bring in the experts?

If you would like further information on our

Basic Fire Safety Course or our Fire Risk Assessment **CDROM**

Please email us at

firesafety@firstchoicefacilities.co.uk

Top safety accreditation for First Choice

First Choice has joined the SAFE contractor scheme which recognises high standards of health and safety practice among UK contractors. To join the scheme, businesses are assessed on their health and safety procedures and track record.

James Ostler of National Britannia explained: "Major organisations can no longer run the risk of employing contractors who are not able to prove they have sound health and safety policies.

"More companies need to understand the importance of adopting good risk management in the way that First Choice has done. The firm's high standards has set an example which hopefully will be followed by other companies within the sector."



Keeping safety on the rails



Select Service Partners (SSP) UK Rail division manages over 400 bar, catering and convenience outlets in railway stations across the country. When we were asked to carry out electrical testing at all its sites, the challenge was to work without disrupting business and without compromising the high standards of health and safety required at each railway station.

Cortney Richmond of SSP UK Rail said: "First Choice have been able to deal with all the challenges that SSP and the railway stations have given them. We find the ability to access the test date through First Choice's website gives us added benefits as we can access certificates without even having to pick up the phone."

FREE PRIZE DRAW

Sign up to Direct Debit and we'll freeze your prices for 3 years. Plus – a chance to win £100 of Marks & Spencer vouchers in our FREE prize draw

For information and full terms & conditions, email freeze@firstchoicefacilities.co.uk

Making a difference



James and his team enjoying the fruits of their labour.

Kids Company is a charity which offers holistic and multi-disciplinary services to over 7000 vulnerable children. It involved First Choice in its 'Colour a child's life' project where we were able to make a real difference to a family home.

Seven volunteers including MD James Doran spent a day at the home of a single parent who has two young boys, one of whom is autistic. The aim was to transform their garden from a nettle-ridden space to a safe play area for the boys as well as decorating and tidying one of the children's rooms.

"It was amazing to see the transformation at the end of the day," said James. "I know I speak for all of us when I say we all enjoyed the experience and left feeling a real sense of achievement. It definitely beats spending a Saturday shopping."

First for standards and service



Constantly developing and improving the products and services we offer, our in-house standards team recommended the introduction of a new customer administration programme. This programme provides our customers with their own individual Super Administrator, providing individual account support every step of the way. This was seen as a natural extension to the National Account Management programme we already had in place.

Each SA and their team have now been trained to deal specifically with issuing monthly maintenance schedules to specialist engineers and managing all call-outs for their regions. These currently average 70 call-outs a day per SA. They process over 300 invoices per week, making sure all invoices are correct and in line with the client's expectation. Most importantly, they are at the end of the phone to resolve any issues our clients may have. Since the introduction of this new programme last year, our service levels on call-outs and maintenances now sits at 97% – no wonder 96% of our customers have been with us for four years or more!

Festive surprises



Following the popularity of our 2005 approach to Christmas gifts, we again surprised our clients with unusual gifts supplied by Oxfam Unwrapped. Gifts this year varied from training a Health Visitor for the day, through planting an allotment to supplying ten counselling sessions to care for an orphan or vulnerable child. One lucky client also acquired a donkey and a goat... or at least a needy recipient did on their behalf!

<http://www.oxfam.org.uk>

First for growth

FIRETEK^{UK}

Firegen UK Limited
Incorporated 1990

During 2006 we acquired two local companies – Firetek UK, based in Newcastle, and Kent-based Firegen. Both are experts in the design, supply, installation and maintenance of fire detection and extinguishing systems. Existing clients range from small hotels to hospitals and office blocks.

James Doran commented: "Acquiring these two companies is part of our strategy to employ local experts, which allows us to offer national expertise locally."

Nationwide supply and service of:

CCTV | Intruder Alarms | Access Control | Fire Alarms | Fire Extinguishers
Sprinkler Systems | Portable Appliance Testing | Hard Wire Testing | Emergency Lighting

First Choice Facilities plc, Power House, 1 Linkfield Road, Isleworth, Middlesex, TW7 6QG.

† 020 8568 6622 f 020 8568 6611 **customer service** 0870 241 3249 www.firstchoicefacilities.co.uk

