



Centra-Larm Monitoring, Inc.

This successful New England central station provider chooses Tyco Security Products' SurGard SG-System IV monitoring station receivers to monitor its 90,000 residential and commercial accounts.

For the last 27 years, Centra-Larm Monitoring, Inc. has provided its customers with central monitoring of fire, video and intrusion alarm systems. Founded in 1988 by Stewart Helmig, the company's original focus was on fire alarms and fire prevention. Over the ensuing years, the company's business expanded, first to include distribution of alarm devices, and then to provide alarm monitoring services and call answering.

CASE SUMMARY

Location:
Manchester, N.H.

System Installed:
Sur-Gard SG-System IV

Today, Centra-Larm's primary focus is third-party alarm monitoring. This family-owned business maintains two central stations in New Hampshire and one central station in California, partnering with more than 500 alarm dealers throughout the country who serve more than 90,000 residential and commercial customers. Centra-Larm is a UL listed, CSAA 5 Diamond Certified Central Station, indicating that its facilities and operations meet the industry's strictest standards.

Introduction

Centra-Larm employs more than 70 people who primarily answer and manage alarms as they are received at each of the company's three central stations. The company's customer base is broad and varied and its central stations monitor everything from fire alarms to elevators. Centra-Larm also offers video monitoring, GPS monitoring, two-way voice and answering services.

Due to the many types of systems it monitors, located in both residential and commercial facilities, and the large volume of monitored accounts, Centra-Larm was searching for an alarm solution that can handle a large volume efficiently and effectively and that can be flexible enough to meet customers' specific needs. Already considered one of the fastest responding and most accurate dispatching alarm monitoring stations in the industry, the company sought a solution that can further increase alarm transmission rates. Centra-Larm also wanted a solution that can process many types of alarms and that perform advanced functions, beyond basic fire and security alarm transmissions.

The Challenges

With Centra-Larm's account base growing quickly and the number and kinds of alarm signals increasing, the company needed a powerful, nimble and multifunctional receiver at the center of its three central stations. The company specifically sought a solution that employs automatic hand-shaking for faster communications.

Handshaking is communication between the receiver and alarm and when it is automated, the two different systems can transmit information over a communication channel without requiring an operator to intervene.



"Today's central station has to accept many different kinds of alarm signaling technologies. The advanced signal frequency and level of detail being sent from newer alarm panels has increased the workload placed on alarm receiving equipment within the central station," said Helmig. "We needed a solution that has advanced functionality for available forms of signal reception, speed of alarm signal communication and simultaneous signal handling from multiple inbound transmissions."

Centra-Larm also wanted a single platform to manage its accounts' signals, rather than operating several different systems and/or receivers for different types of alarms or accounts. With a singular platform, the company anticipated that there would be not only space and cost savings, but also a reduction in electricity usage.

The Solution

Centra-Larm turned to Tyco Security Products' Sur-Gard SG-System IV for a solution with increased functionality and high-speed transmissions. In addition, Centra-Larm wanted to ensure that its receivers could process many different types of alarms including fire, carbon monoxide, openings and closings, water pressure change, burglary, medical alert, temperature changes and gas leak alarms, depending on individual customer needs.

Centra-Larm ultimately chose Sur-Gard SG-System IV for its central station receivers because it meets all of the company's requirements for speed, versatility and automation. Sur-Gard SG-System IV supports more than 120 communication formats, can monitor IP transmitters, and supports up to 24 line cards, giving Centra-Larm the size, power and flexibility required to service its many and varied customers.



Sur-Gard SG-System IV also supports an automatic handshake table of 250,000 entries, expandable to up to 500,000 entries with a separate license key. This large number of entries increases speeds of communications between the central station receivers and devices sounding alarms, giving Centra-Larm the ability to automate communications as much as possible. Also, accounts may be blocked or canceled at the receiver level and without intervention by a human operator, thus automating another aspect of the central station's functions. Two linked and identically configured receivers provide reliable back up in the event of device failure.

The solution's ability to process many different types of alarms without additional hardware or software provides the singular platform that the company sought from the beginning in its search for a new alarm response system. In addition, Sur-Gard SG-System IV is relatively small in size, meeting Centra-Larm's request for smaller and more efficient receivers.

Sur-Gard SG-System IV receivers also offer the ability to integrate many different types of alarms of varying levels of specificity. With their built in redundancy back

up and processing of high volume traffic, they met Centra-Larm's need for variability, advanced features and high traffic management.

"The receiver's robust feature set, in combination with its ability to handle multiple forms of simultaneous alarm signal communication, makes it the best alarm receiver solution available today," said Helmig. "As alarm system technology continues to advance, the central station must continually evolve in order to meet changing alarm signal reception demands. I am confident that Centra-Larm's continued use of Sur-Gard SG-System IV alarm receivers will keep us in sync with whatever the future holds for alarm panel technology."

Future

Sur-Gard SG-System IV has met all of Centra-Larm's established requirements, including further automation of alarm processing and expansion of services to include the monitoring of supervisory codes, temperature alerts and other advanced alarms. Its small footprint, automation and multi-functionality also provide a high ROI for the company, saving costs on additional staffing and physical space, and by reducing energy usage.

As it prepares for future technological advances and anticipates continued growth, Centra-Larm considers itself well equipped to handle the changing role and responsibilities of the central station.

The Solutions Provider - Tyco Security Products

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