

What Alarm Dealers should know about OPEN ACCESS™

OPEN ACCESS™

**...A new
technology for a
new age!**

OPEN ACCESS™ is a faster and more reliable way to electronically deliver fire signals from a central station's automation system directly to the fire department's computer aided dispatch [CAD] system. In effect, *the fire signal generated by the fire panel at the monitored premise arrives at the central station and the fire department's CAD system at virtually the same time.*

OPEN ACCESS™, or OA for short, allows the fire department to reduce its response time, on average, by almost two full minutes, as demonstrated in a recent study [see below]. This reduction in response time enhances life safety and will reduce the potential for property damage, and the associated costs of business interruption, in the event of fire.

How does it work?

OPEN ACCESS™ consists of a software solution which has been integrated into the monitoring station's automation system, and is connected to the network via a gateway at the station. When a fire signal originates at an OA customer premises, it is received by the central station's automation system. "Genuine" fire signals are partitioned off, at which point the signal is forwarded into the queue for processing by an operator, but at the same time it is routed electronically over the OA network, and then re-directed, via the internet, to appropriate fire department's CAD system.

Activating a new customer

There is no installation or technical work required on the part of the dealer to get a client up and running as a new customer. OPEN ACCESS™ is an enhanced service for coded or commercial clients who are *already receiving* fire monitoring services. You will generate some additional revenue per month per account that you "upsell" to subscribe to OA. When your customer agrees to become an OA subscriber, the central station will make a minor modification on its automation system to designate that customer as an OA subscriber. When a fire signal is received from that subscriber's premises, the automation software will, in addition to putting the signal into the queue for operator handling, also route that signal, into the OPEN ACCESS™ gateway, and via the internet, to the appropriate fire department CAD system that corresponds to that customer account. Everything else remains the same.

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Role of the central station does not change

The central station operator will continue to handle the signal in the usual way....that is, notify the fire department by phone, but only to *confirm* that the electronic signal has been received. The back-up call from the central station provides an additional level of security and reinforces the fact that the central station is still very much "in the loop".

Trouble signals or routine maintenance signals will continue to be handled by the central station operator and will not be forwarded to the fire department over the network because they do not require fire department response.

OPEN ACCESS™ is not for all customers -- yet

Currently, OPEN ACCESS™ is designed for those premises which must be monitored for fire as per prevailing fire code requirements, or for commercial customers who desire or are required to have 24-hour supervised fire monitoring. Residential customers are not an intended market for this type of service as of today.

How will the new version of OA benefit you?

Until recently, the communications costs associated with providing this service were an impediment to getting alarm dealers interested in offering OA to their customers. Version 2.0, however, has been designed to operate entirely over an internet platform which will *dramatically reduce* communications costs, and allowing potential customers to participate at a much more attractive price point. Version 2.0 will also make the system more robust and improve the reliability of the data being transmitted to the CAD system. In other words, you can offer your clients a winner concept: faster and more reliable response, with the back-up of existing central station operator handling.

Two-minute cut in response time

Studies in two cities, Ottawa and Mississauga, Ontario, have confirmed that the electronic delivery of the fire signal to the CAD cuts an average of almost *two minutes* from response time. This is because time is saved at both the central station end of the communication, as well the fire dispatch centre itself. The Mississauga study was undertaken by an independent consulting engineering firm and was audited by the Insurers' Advisory Organization, or IAO, which provides municipal fire rating services to its insurance company clients. The actual average time saving in the Mississauga study was 114.7 seconds, just short of two full minutes. Details of the study can be found at www.openaccess.ca.

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Added Incentive for Mississauga Customers

As a result of a new by-law in Mississauga, customers who have an electronic connection to the fire department will now be allowed to have 4 free false alarms per year, an increase from one free false alarm, for nuisance alarms. For those who remain connected with conventional monitoring, only one free false alarm per year will be allowed before being billed \$600 per false dispatch.

What do Fire Chiefs think?

Based on the evidence arising from these studies, the Ontario and the Canadian associations of Fire Chiefs [OAFIC and CAFIC] have passed resolutions calling for code changes to mandate the use of electronic notification of fire signals, where available, for premises required to be monitored under applicable building or fire codes. This is a powerful endorsement of the concept of the electronic delivery of fire signals.

ULC's role

Our company strongly supports the ULC in its role to provide standards and guidelines. Only ULC-listed stations will be able to offer OPEN ACCESS™ to its customers. As an overall safety measure, we also strongly recommend that any fire alarm system which must be monitored for fire as per code be ULC certificated. This is now becoming mandatory on new systems in some jurisdictions. Should ULC decide at some future point to develop a certification program for network media, OPEN ACCESS™ will be submitted for approval, but we are not currently required to have a ULC listing for the product itself.

Where is it Available?

Currently, OPEN ACCESS™ is available in select cities in Ontario including Peel region, Ottawa and Windsor. More cities will become eligible to participate as time goes on.

What is the cost?

The suggested retail price will be in the \$20-25 per month range, with incentives for both dealers and stations. Exact prices will be determined at the time a Business Agreement is signed, and will change in response to business conditions from time to time.

More Info

1-800-684-8970 or email info@openaccess.ca