

Plan the work; work the plan



It's the mantra that's got Fire Defence sizzling with exciting new contracts – from an innovative office development in the heart of London to a brand new role for the Exeter Chiefs' old county ground.

Inside

■ Protecting the biggest names on the high street

■ Life-saving new care home legislation investigated

■ Behind every great man... meet the FD Admin Team

What's hot? Good News!

After several years of hard work, our team's efforts are beginning to pay off. We have reported a huge 35% increase in sales which, in these austere times, is surely as good as it gets.

I know the outlook is unpredictable, with global crisis seeming to hit the world from every angle. And I know that all the contracts are cost-driven – and finances are still a fine balancing act with more insolvencies than ever predicted for 2011.

However... Fire Defence has already secured orders for 2011/12 that will exceed 10/11 by 20%. And with the 'sweat' period for procurement – those shortening times between budget allocation, holidays that seem to interrupt all decisions, and over-budget restrictions – we are actually expecting to increase sales by 50% in the coming year.

Of course, sales are only one part of the business cycle, and stress-testing our model indicates that working

capital, material costs and labour can all contribute to the trips, slips and falls on our journey.

But we've secured working capital for our rapid expansion and hedged the bulk of our material needs.

And, most importantly, we've developed strong working relationships with our approved sub-contractors. Together, we understand that it's not about the headline daily rate – it's about signing-up to planning and reporting routines that will ensure the best possible potential for the coming year.

So 'Plan the work; work the plan' is our 2011 mantra, and so far it's having the desired effect. Good news indeed. And, let's face it, we all need some!



By Bill Johns, Chairman Fire Defence

Absolutely Fab-ulous

Fire Defence now has its own prefabrication facility based in Darton, Barnsley.



Strategically placed close to the M1, the 5,000 sq ft operation allows the business to supply all of its design centres with quality pipe products at a cost that's beneficial to the installation side of the company.

Under the day-to-day management of Steve Spanton, the 'Fab Shop' can offer quick turn around on all projects, and is equally at home manufacturing small bore screwed ranges, larger welded mains pipework and valve manifolds and pump houses.

The manufacturing side of the business is constantly striving to reduce costs while continuing to deliver high quality installation pipework to all of our sites.

Steve controls a small team of enthusiastic, qualified staff who work together to ensure orders leave the factory complete, correct and on time.

The Fab team of Graham Crick, Jason Hamby, Mark Holt, David Shaw, Steve Spanton and Stuart Ward, can be contacted on fab@fire-defence.com

Fire Defence News

Filling the GAP

Fire Defence recently completed a fast-track project to install sprinklers in a new GAP store in St David's shopping centre in Cardiff. And it was seriously fast-track, with engineers on site just four days after the initial enquiry!

Pay less with Morrisons

Morrisons made the sound business decision to replace their regular sprinkler suppliers with Fire Defence for work on a new store in Minehead – and it saved them a massive 30% on their bill at checkout.

Fire Defence were also the only contractors on site to finish on time and snag free, leading to a partnership with the supermarket that will ensure more new store installations later this year.

Best foot forward

Fire Defence has been visiting Clarks stores around the country with impressive frequency this season – with six retro-fit installations in the past six months.



Clarks



Did you know...

This issue of Red, along with all the past issues, can be found on the Fire Defence website at <http://www.fire-defence.com/news/newsletters.asp>. Simply click on the issue you want to browse and it will download to your screen. You can even print it out and pass it around to anyone who missed it the first time round!

The website is packed full of useful information – both about the company and the products we use and also news and general updates from across the fire sprinkler industry. And take a look at our careers page if you're interested in joining us.



<http://www.fire-defence.com/news/newsletters.asp>

FIRAS third-party certification

FIRAS is an independent third-party scheme for the certification of installers of fire protection products and systems. It's operated by Warrington Certification Limited and fully accredited by UKAS (United Kingdom Accreditation Service).

The FIRAS scheme was established 16 years ago, and with the assistance of industry trade bodies it has worked to develop and operate third-party certification schemes for all aspects of passive fire protection installation.

In 2003, FIRAS developed the first scheme for third-party certification of contractors who are designing, installing and maintaining fire sprinkler systems for residential and domestic properties to DD251. It has subsequently been replaced by BS 9251:2005.

In co-operation with BAFSA, the FIRAS third-party certification scheme for design, installation and maintenance of commercial and industrial systems was launched in 2004.

So whether you are a contractor seeking certification or a specifier, regulator or end user seeking assurance, and you wish to know more about the FIRAS schemes please visit www.warringtonfire.net and follow the FIRAS link.

Or you can contact Ian Woodhouse or Jayne Dennett on 01925 646666.

STOP PRESS...

Fire Defence are pleased to announce the award of New Look's flagship store at Westfield Stratford City, for the fast track design and installation of the sprinkler system to meet the September opening date.

A fitting start

Fire Defence hit the ground running this year with some impressive new installation contracts reaching right across the country.

Back to school in Manchester

Fire Defence is installing sprinklers in an exciting regeneration project in Oldham, Manchester. The Oasis Academy is a new school, being built on the site of the former Brook Mill, Hollins with playing fields being laid on the old Oak Colliery site.

The state-of-the-art school will accommodate 1650 pupils when it opens, and the impressive buildings can be seen from Manchester city centre.

The Fire Defence team will be on site from early this summer, installing a system designed to property protection standards, with the life-safety enhancements calling for duplicate pumps and tanks. The project will be managed from the Bury office, with Mark Kennedy and his team taking the reins.

The project is linked to a smaller residential project for the same client – providing sprinkler protection to the parents' accommodation wing of the Royal Manchester Children's Hospital. The units are known as Ronald McDonald House and are funded by the golden-arched charity of the same name.



Oasis academy
oldham

Stop Press...

Fire Defence is pleased to announce it will be fitting sprinklers in the new Chryston High School and Cultural Centre near Glasgow.

The new school will include 23 classrooms and 27 practical rooms, including training rooms for vocational courses. And the Cultural Centre, featuring a main hall and new public library, will replace the local library and Muirhead Community Hall, as well as offering other community facilities. The project is set for completion in time for the 2012 autumn term.

A home win

There's nothing like winning a project that's close to your heart, and the Exeter Chiefs are certainly that for Keiran Johns, Fire Defence MD. In September last year, the company won the contract to design, supply and install a complete fire sprinkler system in a new development of retirement homes, built on the old grounds of the rugby club, and it was a win worth celebrating.

Six years ago the Chiefs took up residency of their new stadium, and the old country ground was sold for redevelopment – and this summer the 60 self-contained apartments will be ready for their new residents.

The project involved all 60 apartments, over three storeys, with more than 450 concealed sprinkler heads and Blazemaster plastic pipework.

And, like all skilled finishes, the project has taken Fire Defence cleanly out of the scrum and has won them more retirement home contracts around the country.

Fire Defence are sponsoring the Exeter Chiefs this season & will be running some hospitality days on selected home games. If you'd like to join us for a day at the Rugby, contact: sales.marketing@fire-defence.com Hurry, spaces are limited as competition is as fierce to be in the stands as it is on the pitch.



The heat was on...

Glen Dimplex is the world's largest electrical heating business, owning household brands such as Morphy Richards, Belling, Stoves and Roberts Radio. And, in addition to global offices in glamorous locations like Hong Kong, Sydney and Quebec, they also have a 600,000 sq ft distribution centre in Stoke-on-Trent.

The Stoke-on-Trent 'shed' is the company's UK storage and distribution hub, and it's undergone an upgrade recently, with Fire Defence brought in to improve and expand the existing fire sprinkler system in the building. This was in response to a change of storage method, from free standing to beam pallet stacking.

The client, Jungheinrich, installed 13 double-row racks within the storage warehouse, covering 10% of the floor area. Each rack was built first as a single row to allow the installation of the sprinklers, then the second half of the rows were erected once the pipework was complete.

Fire Defence worked in line with the main contractors to agree a safe way of installing the sprinklers – and with just 14 days to complete the programme, it was a super-fast-track operation. The installation incorporated more than four miles of pipework, 3000 sprinkler heads and two new installation control valves.

The work was carried out on time and with no major hurdles or concerns. So things are looking good for more work in the next phase of development.

'The fabrication of the project was in-house at our Fab Shop, which turned around a turnkey package,' explained the FD project engineer. 'Being able to use the group facilities enabled the project to run very successfully.'



Two-for-one at Fetter Lane

This new contract is a good example of how Fire Defence can offer both value engineering savings and joint purchasing savings to its clients – in addition to doing a great job of fitting sprinklers.

The proposal for Fetter Lane, London was submitted as both an individual quote and a joint purchasing quote to clients Mitie Engineering Services Ltd – the second site is in Howick Place. By awarding both projects to Fire Defence, Mitie could take full advantage of a joint purchasing discount, and work starts on both projects this summer.

The Fetter Lane project is a new office development in the heart of the City. The 11-storey building will be fitted with a full wet-based sprinkler system and dry risers. There's also a sophisticated multi-stage pump system going in, and Butyl liners to make the purpose-built tanks fully watertight.

Similar technology will also be used in Howick Place's office and residential blocks. Being at the forefront of innovation is an essential part of the Fire Defence offer, even if it is all hidden in the basement!



Fire Defence in the mist

Mist systems are a newly recognised alternative to the standard fire sprinkler, using smaller droplets of water that are better able to absorb the heat produced by a fire, and which can turn into steam to smother the fire. They use a lot less water and much smaller pipes, which makes them ideal for fitting in places too small for sprinklers, such as heritage sites and retrofit properties.



The basic technology is simple: smaller drops of water warm up faster, so they're better at cooling the fire at source. They also vaporise faster, meaning they smother the fire and deny it the oxygen it needs to stay alive.

The hot news is that Fire Defence has recently become a Viking-approved mist suppression installer, one of only three approved installers in the UK. The company has chosen the EconAqua Water Mist Sprinkler System, which is a low-pressure system. This means the customer benefits from the full, legally approved protection

of buildings, materials and of course people, while the amount of water needed is 85% less than conventional sprinklers. So the potential water damage is really minimal, which helps everyone sleep better at night.

We're also the first company to actually implement this new technology. The Excel Hotel in London's Docklands is the first to employ a full mist system, and Fire Defence is installing an entire mist protection system from basement to penthouse suite. That's £250,000-worth of innovation.

Firefighters' Memorial Trust 20th Anniversary

In our last issue we reported on the annual Firefighters' Memorial Service, held each September at the Firefighters' Memorial in London. This March, the Trust celebrated its 20th anniversary – and they did it in style, with a royal reception on HMS Belfast attended by their patron HRH The Princess Royal. A number of other distinguished guests joined the Princess and members of the trust to celebrate the achievements they've made over the past 20 years in honouring all those who have given their life in service.

The Trust works with Fire Authorities, Central Government, CFOA and other fire service bodies to ensure that the work of firefighters in both the UK and around the world is properly remembered. And their work is going from strength to strength. Trustee Terry Glossop spoke at the reception, announcing the formal granting of a Royal Charter for the Trust, which is now being designed and prepared for the official sealing by the Queen. It's hoped that Princess Anne will be able to present it to the Trust later this year.

For more information about the Firefighters' Memorial Trust, or to find details of other activities planned for 2011, visit: www.firefightersmemorial.co.uk



London Fire Brigade have kindly notified us of the following successful sprinkler activations which they have attended so far this year:

02/05/11

At about 14.21 hours on 2nd May 2011, a large clothing store at Romford suffered a fire in a clothing rack. Fortunately the fire was controlled by the action of one sprinkler head and no injuries were reported.

04/05/11

A large supermarket in Hounslow experienced a fire in a clothing rack at about 18.24 hours on 4th May 2011. One sprinkler head controlled the fire. There are no reports of injuries.



Sprinklers bring more care into the community

Most care homes have far fewer staff at night than during the day – when everyone's in bed, there's far less to do. But what do you do when fire breaks out and two or three staff members are left trying to evacuate 30 elderly or disabled residents?



One option is to move residents from one wing or area of the home to another until help arrives. But clearly this isn't risk free, and it's still difficult and time consuming.

Well, thanks to legislation first introduced in 2006, care homes now have a legal alternative to evacuation – and it all comes down to fire sprinklers.

Time on your side

'Subject to a fire risk assessment, care homes fitted with British Standard sprinklers can employ what's known as a delayed evacuation policy.'

This basically means that, because the sprinklers deal with the fire quickly and effectively at source, it's usually safe to leave residents in their beds.

And while there might be some disruption installing sprinklers into existing care homes, this isn't the case for new homes. Building Regs even offer some incentives for certain new-build requirements if a fully operational sprinkler system is in place.

Behind closed doors

For example, in the past it's been a requirement that all bedroom doors must be fitted with closers – devices to keep doors shut at all times. But lots of care home residents have difficulty in opening these doors, and often don't want to be left in their bedrooms with the doors closed. They want to feel part of the home's community, even if they're confined to bed. One way around this is to fit free-swing closers, which are operated electronically and wired in to the fire alarm system. The doors can be left open, but when the alarm is raised they close automatically. But this is an expensive solution. And even closed, fire doors don't allow for delayed evacuation, so the basic problem of staff-to-resident ratios remains.

Changing attitudes

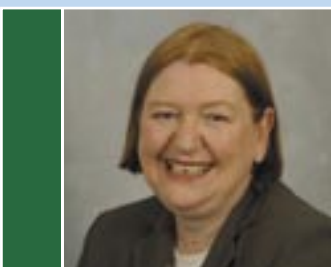
So, thanks to this new legislation, growing numbers of new care homes are being fitted with sprinkler systems, and retro-fitting is also on the increase. There's been a definite shift in

attitudes towards sprinkler installation – what was previously seen as a cost consideration has become a valuable safety and staffing solution. However, England is still lagging behind on the issue. In Scotland, Building Regulations policy states that all new care homes must be fitted with sprinklers. And, even though retro-fitting isn't compulsory, ever since the Rosepark Nursing Home tragedy in January 2004 there's been strong support for legislation to cover existing properties too.

And in February, the Welsh Assembly passed legislation (with full, cross-party support) that all new residential buildings – from private residences and care homes to hotels – must be fitted with a sprinkler system.

Sadly, the English parliament won't be reviewing it's policies until 2013, so until then we'll just have to keep up the pressure and hope that care homes come to the sound decision to install without being forced by law.

**With thanks to
Ian Gough,
Technical Advisor to**



Welsh Labour Assembly Member Ann Jones was the first to introduce the compulsory sprinkler measure to the Assembly three and a half years ago. Having worked in the fire industry for more than 20 years before joining parliament, it was something close to her heart.

'This is a narrow piece of legislation but the implications are huge,' she said. 'I am proud that Wales is taking action to put out the fires that cause avoidable deaths. Not many of the votes we pass here save lives – that one did.'

The first line of Defence

It used to be said that behind every great man was an even greater woman... well at Fire Defence there are five! The central admin team is very much at the heart of the company, and there's literally nothing that gets past them.

Christy Castle is the Admin Supervisor, and she and her team deal with everything that goes in and out of Fire Defence across the UK – from initial enquires to final invoices. And thanks to the company's bespoke email system, the team know exactly what's going on with every project at any time.

'We have to code and allocate every project email that comes through the system to ensure all the project managers are fully up-to-date with each job – which can be around 400 emails a day,' explains Christy. 'We're the first point of contact for everything that the company is involved in – or the firing range depending on which way you look at it!'

Their inside knowledge of every pitch and project is invaluable when it comes to answering client queries, and also for prompting project staff about deadlines. But it's not all about answering phones and filing emails. Christy, Hannie, Robyn, Karen and Cassy are responsible for preparing quotes for new jobs, sending out prospective pitch information, organising risk assessments at installation sites and managing all the time sheets for their team of engineers.

And of course they are also the public face of Fire Defence. First impressions count for everything in business, and the company is very lucky to have five such knowledgeable and professional ambassadors.



The Central Admin Team from left to right: Karen Howson, Robyn Browning, Christy Castle, Hannie Hogan, Cassy Allwood

'The company's expanded a lot recently,' says Christy, 'but even with an increased workload and new offices opening around the country we still manage to put faces to all the names. It's a great team, and we all really love working together.'

New season, new image

The company has had a good spring clean of its vehicle fleet recently, and the latest deliveries from the forecourt are 17 VW Transporters for the mobile engineers, and five Toyota Hilux pick-ups. These will go to the service engineers, and should make life much easier next winter if we get the same levels of snowfall as they battled through this year.

The vehicles will be on the road over the next three months, and will make the service side of the business much more economical and cost effective.

And they'll also look great – the whole fleet has a new livery to make them super striking as they drive around the country.



Engineers from left to right: Aaron Palmer, Dave MacKirdy