



Ministry of Defence, United Kingdom

How Ascom Wireless Solutions have supplied a unique radio comms installation to improve lone worker protection and voice communications at a key British Military Base.

Defence Munitions at Kineton is one of Europe's most up to date ammunition and explosives Depots.

- Vast 2500 acre (10.1 km²) complex.
- 200 widely dispersed buildings.
- 21 miles (33.8km) of railway track.
- 22 miles (35.4km) perimeter fence.
- 300 military and civilian personnel.

Customer Needs

Obviously the site is well guarded but, following a review of procedures, it was decided that improvements to internal communications and staff protection were needed. Two concerns were identified. The first was to provide lone worker protection to sentry and support staff working in remote areas. The second was to replace the ageing PMR installation used by people in Depot Operations.

The physical nature of the site, materials involved and type of work carried out, required a very demanding specification for any new communications system. Initially it was thought that the two separate requirements would need different approaches.

Ascom Solution

When the Project Team at Kineton began discussing the Lone Worker specification it became clear that Ascom Wireless Solutions radio based telePROTECT system was more than capable of combining solutions into a single integrated mobile comms platform.

Nevertheless, the task presented our Engineers with many challenges. Complete radio coverage of the 2500 acre site and reception inside all the thick walled concrete munitions bunkers was a mandatory requirement. Cost constraints meant that as much as possible of the existing copper wire infrastructure had to be utilised. The entire system had to be 'intrinsic safe' and, in terms of day to day operations, show a quantifiable contribution to improving efficiency and health & safety. After nine months of surveying and system design a plan was agreed and commissioned.



System Operation

As installed, telePROTECT provides a very sophisticated mobile communications facility across the site. Lone Workers are equipped with two-way voice handsets that include three separate radio alarm functions. Users can instantly raise an alarm by pressing a button on the set. Alarm calls will also be automatically transmitted if the unit is snatched from its owner and the pull cord detached, or, in the 'No Movement' mode, if the wearer remains still for a pre-set length of time. This latter function is seen as particularly valuable for Sentries on remote Guard Duty, or lone maintenance workers who may suffer falling accidents.

Alarms are instantly transmitted to a central Security Control Room, along with the individuals' identity and the type of alarm initiation. Acknowledgement of receipt is automatically sent back to the carrier. Other versions of telePROTECT have the ability to transmit exact location information, but this function would not be viable at a site such as Kineton.

Security Control will try to establish voice contact with the person raising the alarm and at the same time transmit an instantaneous 'Group Call', alerting them to the situation, to all other handset carriers across the site. Initially the request will be for information on the whereabouts of the person in distress or, if a specific location is known, 'Group Calls' will be directed at special groups such as Security or Medical Teams. Two-way talk radio communication will be used to monitor developments throughout the event.

On the Depot Operations side, management and munitions handling staff are issued with two-way voice handsets. These also have text messaging facilities. All mobile units are fully integrated with the existing on-site PABX and can contact or be contacted by anyone using their ordinary desk telephone. They also are part of the lone worker alert system.

Positive Benefits

The ability to instantly communicate with workgroups, wherever they are across the site, has already made a significant contribution to improving efficiency. Progress reports, urgent changes to instructions, or detailing the next job can all be achieved without teams having to return to base for orders, or managers having to drive to remote locations. The 'Group Call' facility also allows all work groups within a particular district of the site to be called simultaneously, a real communications plus in the event of an emergency.

The experience so far at Kineton has been very positive. Users of the system like the mobility and flexibility it offers and lone workers have welcomed the safer working environment, knowing that if they are in trouble help will be at hand. From a management point of view, Ascom's single system solution has produced reliable and effective communication across the site, together with obvious gains in efficiency. Phase two, to extend the number of handsets to other functions, is already under consideration.

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