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This Security Tool Can Help When Emergency Strikes

BY CORRIS LITTLE ON JUNE 21, 2018 OPERATIONS, TECHNOLOGY

CHICAGO—In recent years, the hotel industry has experienced numerous emergency situations such as the hurricanes of 2017, the mass shootings in Las Vegas, and other crises. There's an information gap in providing first responders with the detailed information they need during an emergency, according to Kevin Oldenburg, director of business development, RealView LLC, a software development company based here.

“Safety and security is the number one priority, but maintaining a sense of hospitality also is critical so less obtrusive tools that are still effective are needed,” said Oldenburg. “Another issue hotels and convention centers face is that cities across the U.S. are cutting budgets that affect every department, including public safety departments. By installing CommandScope, hotel owners provide the technology in a quasi-public/private partnership.”

The CommandScope Pre-Incident Plan Program is designed to provide critical building details in a format that is easy to use and shareable, enabling first responders who may be unfamiliar with an emergency site to have working knowledge of the building, its occupants and its hazards. CommandScope is accessed on-site at building security stations via touch screens or on first responders' portable tablets.

“It is a tool that supports first responder or facility management in emergency response situations—fire, hazmat spills, active shooter, natural disaster, etc.—with property information en route or on site,” said Oldenburg. “Fire departments collect building data to recognize hazards and develop countermeasures to enhance responder safety. The problem is they don’t have the time to visit all locations and the information they have is usually outdated or stored in security desks in three-ring paper binders. CommandScope provides an easy-to-use platform to communicate vital information to first responders and mutual aid, and move those who need it to digital from paper.”

For hotels ready to be onboarded with the technology, staff can upload site plans, floor plans, emergency procedures, hazardous material details, utility shut-off locations, geographical maps, fire hydrants locations, locations of persons with special needs and other critical information into CommandScope.

“Once the information is uploaded it is synced,” he said. “First responders have instant access to the critical information on their (MDCs) mobile data computers and other mobile devices on site via touch screen monitors or portable tablets, providing them with the most up-to-date information on the building en route and on scene.”

Oldenburg outlined the services available:

Real-Time Data: CommandScope functions as a document management tool to organize, standardize and communicate the hotel’s incident command or emergency plans, business continuity plans, up-to-date floor plans and more.

Access: CommandScope can interface with first responders’ CAD and GIS systems.

Location: Responders have the ability to access the IP/web-based security cameras of a building externally, which is key in the event of an active shooter, fire or other emergencies. CommandScope also supports third-party 3D building maps, and other applications.

For RealView, the hotel and convention market is new.

“Our first goal is to join in the conversation about what 21st century security looks like,” he said. “There is a lot of education to do to get owners and facility managers to understand the options available for investment to protect people and property. We have designed CommandScope to be extremely user-friendly. With touchscreen access to 90% or more of the buildings information on the Command Summary screen, we have eliminated the need for in-depth training. RealView does provide on-site training if needed, personal webinars or on-boarding instructional videos.”