



An emergency strikes!

Can you effectively communicate within your facility?

Mass Notification / Wide Area Communications have recently been at the forefront of many discussions. The standards for commercial buildings in Canada are changing (NFPA 72 / UL 2572) and it will soon be important to have a reliable Mass Notification System (MNS) installed in public facilities. MNS will improve the safety, confidence and well being of the patrons and employees of the facility by providing clear, intelligible sound (instruction/information) throughout a facility during an emergency, or during times when it is important to communicate to the patrons within the facility. The system will aid in the execution of emergency plans, procedures and communications to everyone within the building, helping to maintain order and reduce the loss of life and prevent serious injury.

It will be important for the MNS to be able to communicate critical information (live or pre-recorded) intelligibly throughout a facility in a quick and efficient manner so that the message reaches everyone within the facility. MNS will need to work in conjunction with PA Systems and Life Safety Systems. Internal building MNS should incorporate, PA/Intercom systems, fire voice systems, network PC's, CCTV systems, Flat panel or LED displays, and phone systems. Wide Area MNS would consist of an outdoor public address, giant voice speaker systems, sirens and strobes, electronic signage, emergency call stations, and CCTV systems. MNS should also include a form of distributed recipients, including cell phones and SMS (text) messaging, pagers, personal email, hand held radios, instant messaging, or computer pop-ups.

MNS will be important in facilities where large crowds of people regularly gather. These venues include (but are not limited to) educational facilities, hospitality and retail spaces, office buildings, sporting venues, hospitals, and transportation.

An effective Mass Notification System should be able to be used in any number of emergencies, including; weather, building emergencies (localized disturbance, building hazard (electrical/mechanical failure), threatening individuals, and evacuation. The system will allow the operator to manage large groups of people and safely deal with the situation at hand.

When designing a MNS, it is important to think about the following questions. Who must be notified? What buildings or geographical area(s) require coverage? Who will operate the system and from where? Will the message be live or pre-recorded? How quickly will the information be required? Will the system be used in non-emergency situations? Will the MNS interface with other systems?

TOA Corporation's first emergency broadcast system debuted in 1963. Since then TOA has been an industry leader in Emergency Communication in the Asian and European markets. TOA products can be found throughout large and small facilities including, World Fairs (Expos), Several Olympic Venues (most recently including the Beijing National Stadium ("Birds Nest") at the Beijing Olympics), 1981 Kobe Portopia exposition (where TOA's large PA System earned an excellent reputation), airports including Osaka, Narita, and Tokyo international airports, and various commercial buildings, including sporting stadiums, schools, museums and other public buildings.

TOA introduced its popular intercom system in 1976, while megaphones were developed in 1954.

Over the next few months, TOA will discuss how many of our reliable products fit into Mass Notification/Wide Area Communications. We will be focusing on the; N-8000: IP Intercom, NX-100: Audio Network Adapter, VM-2000: System Management Amplifier, VM-3000: Integrated Voice Evacuation System (coming soon), A-9000M2: Modular Digital Mixer/Amplifiers, DA Series: Multi-Channel Amplifiers, F-Series Ceiling Speakers, SC Series Paging Horns, Megaphones and Digital Messaging products.

Next month TOA will discuss our N-8000: IP Intercom product line and the role this product plays in Wide Area Communication.

Please note that every application is unique. Our system examples are for reference purposes only. Please contact your Regional Sales Manager to discuss your specific application requirements. sales@toacanada.com or 1-800-263-7639.

For more information on MNS visit http://www.toacanada.com/news/voice_evac_MNS.html