Tragedies Highlight Need for Security Technology

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Ordinance Tightens Security at Gas Well Sites
Texas School District to Install Cameras

MORE CHANGES AT PRIVATE SECURITY BUREAU

RESIDENTIAL FIRE ALARM COURSE DELAYED

HIGH HOPES FOR ELECTRONIC NOTIFICATION PROGRAM

ILLINOIS LAW APPEARS TO HELP

SURVEY SHOWS AMERICANS INCORRECTLY CONFIDENT ABOUT FIRE SAFETY

FEDERAL GRANTS FOR FIRE SYSTEMS

ANTICIPATED AMPS NETWORK SHUTDOWN DATES
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Texas Burglar and Fire Alarm Association, Inc., [TBFAA] is a non-profit organization of security professionals who have joined together to enrich the industry by providing membership training and representing the membership as a whole in the Texas Legislature, the Texas Private Security Board and the Texas Fire Marshal’s Office among many other programs.

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Texas Burglar and Fire Alarm Association
307 West Seventh Street, Suite 1700
Fort Worth, TX 76102
Phone: 877.908.2322 Fax: 877.908.2522

Advertising Information
Brad Shipp 877-908-2322

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“The superior man, when resting in safety, does not forget that danger may come. When in a state of security he does not forget the possibility of ruin. When all is orderly, he does not forget that disorder may come. Thus his person is not endangered, and his States and all their clans are preserved.” Confucius- Chinese philosopher & reformer (551 BC - 479 BC)

Recent headlines clearly illustrate the need for security services. While we all share in the sorrow that comes with each tragedy, we should all be proud that our industry has and will continue to help Texas citizens protect themselves and their homes and businesses. Our products including access control, closed circuit television, intrusion alarms and fire systems are all key to protecting person and property from intruders and fire.

Schools, gas wells and government buildings each have specific needs, just like any home or business. Our responsibility as security professionals is to do our best to anticipate these needs and offer each existing and potential customer options to address them. Next time you make a sales call or inspect an existing system take a minute to check to see if you are addressing all the needs that your products could meet.

Statewide view Calendar

MARCH

04   NESA Meeting- Oklahoma City
07   Fire Prep Class- Houston
11   STAA Membership Meeting- San Antonio
13   HGCAA Membership Meeting- Houston
13   Northeast TX Chapter- Longview
19   NTAA CEU Training- Dallas
20   NTAA Membership Meeting- Dallas
27   Central Texas Chapter Meeting- Austin
27-28 Level 1 - San Antonio

APRIL

02-04 ISC West- Las Vegas
08   STAA Membership Meeting- San Antonio
08   TBFAA Board Meeting- San Antonio
10   HGCAA Membership Meeting- Houston
11   Fire Prep Class- Dallas
16   NTAA CEU Training- Dallas
17   NTAA Membership Meeting- Dallas
17-18 Level 1- El Paso
21-25 FARA Training Symposium- Charleston SC
24   Central Texas Chapter Meeting- Austin

Chris Russell, President
email: president@tbfaa.org
Houston Gulf Coast Association  Phone: 281.859.4569
Meets 2nd Thursday of the month 11:30 am - 1:00 pm at Cadillac Bar and Grill, Shepard @ I-10
POC: Brian McKinney  p: 713.983.0182  e: isgbrian@aol.com

North Texas Alarm Association  Phone: 214.352.9352
3rd Thursday of each month. Check website for locations and times
POC: David Simon  p: 972.871.3778  e: dave.simon@brinks.com

South Texas Alarm Association  Phone: 210.402.6262
Meets 2nd Tuesday of the month. Check website for locations and times
POC: Bob Vallance  p: 210.659.6751  e: bob2@vallance.com

Central Texas Chapter  Phone: 877.908.2322
Meets the 4th Thursday of the month except Oct & Dec at 11:30 am
Springhill Restaurant, 1119 FM 1825, Pflugerville, TX 78660.
POC: Jeff Bright  p: 512.845.1460  e: jbright@brightsecuritygroup.com

Northeast Texas Chapter  Phone: 877.908.2322
Meets quarterly in Longview Area. Plus local meetings will be held in various cities. Check website for times and locations.
POC: Patrick Craven  p: 903.792.7262  e: pacraven@cableone.net

National Electronic Security Alliance  Phone: 301.519.9237
NESA is a federation of state associations, including TBFAA, established to serve and promote the electronic systems industry at the direction of, and through its affiliated state associations.
POC: Rex Adams  p: 972.437.1213  e: radams@asdsecurity.com

False Alarm Reduction Association  Phone: 301.519.9237
FARA an association of persons working public safety False Alarm Reduction Units that exchanges information, influences legislation and establishes relationships and partnerships with other groups interested in false alarm reduction. TBFAA is an associate member of FARA.
POC: Brad Shipp  p: 301.519.9237  e: info@faraonline.org
Carrier * AMPS Shutdown Dates
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CC Communications April 1, 2008
Cellcom February 18, 2008
Cellular 29 Plus February 18, 2008
Comnet Wireless May 1, 2008
Dobson Cellular Systems February 18, 2008
Five Star Wireless June 1, 2008
Golden State Cellular February 18, 2008
I V Cellular June 30, 2008
Mid-Tex Cellular February 18, 2008
PetroCom March 1, 2008
Pine Belt Wireless February 18, 2008
U.S. Cellular October 1, 2008
Unicel/Rural February 18, 2008
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A nationwide survey conducted by the Society of Fire Protection Engineers (SFPE) reveals that 79 percent of Americans feel safer from fires at home than in a public building with an additional 9 percent feeling equally safe in both locations. These results are inconsistent with government statistics that show that home fires outnumber all other building fires by over three to one. At the same time, most fire deaths and injuries occur in the home.

Public buildings are subject to tough fire-safety regulations and inspections, whereas most homes are not. “Most public buildings and commercial office buildings are much better protected than homes,” says SFPE’s Engineering Program Manager, Chris Jelenewicz. “This is because fire protection engineers implement fire-safety strategies and technologies into building the design and construction of commercial buildings.”

Fire protection engineers are responsible for designing ways to protect people from fire. They use the latest technologies to design systems that control fires, alert people to danger, and provide means for escape. Fire protection engineers also conduct fire safety research on consumer products and construction materials and investigate fires to discover why protective measures failed, and how those measures could have been designed more effectively. Similar results were found in a 2005 survey conducted by SFPE, where 87 percent of Americans believed they were safer from fires at home than in a public building.

“It’s disheartening to see that public perception is not changing,” Jelenewicz says. “In spite of this, SFPE is working hard to increase the awareness of the importance of home fire prevention. Recently, SFPE partnered with Discovery Education to create and release new high school chemistry lessons that teach students about the science of fire -- a project that was funded by the Department of Homeland Security. As a result of this project, every high school student in the United States will have the opportunity to better understand the dangers of home fires.”

Along with the false sense of security at home, the survey also found that 44 percent of Americans think about the dangers of fire once or twice a year- or less.

The survey, commissioned Society of Fire Protection Engineers and conducted in January 2008 by Synovate, polled more than 1,000 American adults. The findings have a margin of error of plus or minus 4 percent.
Duncanville is adding police at City Council meetings, while Dallas could add more. Schools and colleges are thinking of further tightening security.

And Plano officials plan to give council members a refresher course on what to do in emergencies.

A series of chilling fatal shootings recently – at a suburban city hall and several schools and colleges – has spurred new security reviews at public buildings here and beyond.

On Thursday, a student at Northern Illinois University opened fire in a campus lecture hall, killing five and wounding more than a dozen before killing himself.

Just over a week ago, a gunman killed five and injured two others during a city hall meeting in Kirkwood, Mo. Three died in a shooting at Louisiana Technical College in Baton Rouge last week. Recent school shootings have shaken communities in California and Tennessee.

The shootings have resonated among elected officials, municipal workers and school administrators given the scale, frequency and public settings in which they occurred.

The incidents also have fueled a heightened consciousness of security not seen since last year’s Virginia Tech massacre.

"Safety should be one of the main issues in any group, whether it’s city hall or a school board," said Rita Crump, president of the Mesquite school board. "We live in a time when there are a lot of mixed-up individuals. Sometimes they become uncontrollable."

A new wake-up call

Virtually all communities examined the security of their municipal buildings after the Sept. 11 attacks, and many schools and colleges revamped lockdown procedures in the wake of the Virginia Tech shooting.

Other high-profile shootings at schools, courthouses and public buildings, including one in Fort Worth in 2005, also have spurred changes.

Still, experts say the shootings in Missouri, Illinois and elsewhere should serve as a new wake-up call. That is especially true for smaller city halls, which traditionally have had little, if any, security.

"You can’t have security everywhere all the time. But there has to be the awareness that government at every level is potentially a target," said Brandon Graham, associate director of the Office of Homeland Security at George Washington University in Washington, D.C.

Although schools and colleges have made security a focus, most cities, limited by resources and the thought that "it won’t happen here," keep a minimal security presence at best: sign-in sheets, a police officer in the corner or a camera in the ceiling.

Overall, the push to improve security in public spaces such as state campuses and city halls has sparked a debate in communities about how best to weigh safety against citizen access.

The goal is safety. But officials are leery of turning campuses and city halls – the quintessential symbol of open government – into inaccessible fortresses.

"The public assumes rightly that local elected officials, as their representatives, will be accessible," said Donald Borut, executive director of the National League of Cities, an advocacy group.

Continued on Page 14
More Changes At Private Security Bureau

By: Brad Shipp, TBFAA

Leonard Hinojosa, Captain, Private Security Bureau has announced his retirement from the Department after 26 years of service to the state.

Hinojosa took over as Manager of the Private Security Bureau last year following the retirement of Cliff Grumbles.

No word as yet on a successor.

Residential Alarm Technician Course Delayed

By: Brad Shipp, TBFAA

Rules are still under review for a new type of license, a Residential Fire Alarm Technician License (RAL), to install, service, inspect, and certify residential single-family or two-family fire alarm or detection systems. Note, this does not include the design or planning for these systems.

This license was scheduled to be available in March of 2008 after adoption of all necessary rules. Existing fire alarm licenses will not be changed or deleted.

Best estimates project that the rules will not be completed before April of this year. TBFAA will keep you posted on developments.
Security at natural gas wells in Burleson will be heightened under a revised ordinance passed Feb. 12 by the city council. The ordinance, which replaced the city’s previous requirements, requires, among other things:

- Operators with wells outside the city limits to enter into a road-damage-remediation agreement if any portion of a city road is used as a haul route.

- A fully executed road-damage-remediation agreement to be submitted with a permit application.

- The road-damage-remediation fee to be fully paid before a permit will be issued.

- A remotely monitored, controlled-access, automatically closing gate and an exit-only gate for personnel.

- Internal fencing of all production equipment using chain-link fencing, landscaping of the site and the installation of security cameras at sites near high-pedestrian areas such as schools or shopping centers.

The council also adopted the fee schedule for road damage remediation, which takes into account the type of road being traveled on and the overall condition, or remaining “life” of the road.

Council members made a few changes, requiring locks on the gates for the internal fencing, specifying that gates must close automatically on entering and exiting, and changing the distance from high-pedestrian areas at which security cameras must be installed from a quarter mile to 1,000 feet.

Representatives from Chesapeake Energy and XTO Energy spoke to express their concerns about the ordinance, but Bob Montag of XTO ran into a buzz saw when he said he wished the industry had been given more time to review the ordinance.

Mayor Ken Shetter told Montag that he had been pressing the industry for 18 months about the issues covered in the ordinance, and they had not responded.

Council member Claudia chastised Montag as well, saying she’d been making the installation of controlled-access gates a requirement for permits approvals for three months.
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Schools more ready

That debate has become more heated in recent years as city halls, school facilities and courthouses in many communities have received security upgrades. The 2005 Fort Worth shooting, in which a gunman fired but missed a government staff member in the city hall lobby, prompted officials there to install metal detectors and post marshals at council meetings.

Other communities, including Dallas, also have upgraded security with armed patrols or other measures in recent years. Highland Park posts about three armed officers at council meetings that are usually sparsely attended, said public safety director Darrell Fant.

But most city halls are probably ill-prepared to respond to a catastrophic shooting, experts say. In contrast, schools and colleges have taken a hard-line approach. Most of the changes have come in response to the Virginia Tech massacre, administrators say.

A number of school districts have installed surveillance cameras, locked their doors and funneled visitors through front offices during school hours. Several area districts also use scanners to check each visitor's driver's license against registered sex offender databases.

Meanwhile, colleges such as the University of North Texas and Texas Christian University have gone high-tech, installing systems that send text messages to cellphones in an emergency and using e-mail alerts, phone information lines and postings on the schools' Web sites.

The Dallas County Community College District has software that can broadcast emergency messages over the intercoms of campus phones, even breaking into a conversation if the phone is in use. The district also may soon install one-way locks on classrooms to hold back intruders.

Southern Methodist University relies on a closed-circuit TV system along with its Web site, e-mail and voice-mail systems. The university also formed a student committee that shares information on students who may need counseling or extra help.

Tough to safeguard

Installing similar security systems or procedures is not possible or realistic for many cities, some of which have stretched budgets and police forces as it is. Others point out that completely ensuring safety is all but impossible regardless of the security measures taken.

"If you’ve got somebody who's willing to die, there's not much you can do to stop them," Chief Fant of Highland Park said.

The Kirkwood city hall assailant, Charles Lee "Cookie" Thornton, killed two police officers during the Feb. 7 rampage, including one officer outside city hall. Police later shot and killed him.

School officials point out that college and school campuses are even more difficult to protect than city halls. The larger the university, the more difficult it is to safeguard, said Ben Agger, a sociology professor at the University of Texas at Arlington and co-author of a book on the Virginia Tech shooting.

"It's really hard to stop this, at least on college campuses," he said. "All you can do is try to deal with the kids and young adults who are clearly troubled."

Mr. Graham said the key is to mix security measures that are visible, such as uniformed police and cameras, and invisible, such as undercover police, bulletproof armor installed on council or lecture podiums and silent alarms.

"Anything as tragic as Kirkwood is a wakeup call," said Robert O’Neill, executive director of the International City/County Management Association, an advocacy group. "I guarantee, that evening, that city halls across the country were having conversations about security.”

Staff writers Ian McCann, Dave Levinthal, Elizabeth Langton, Jeff Mosier and Matthew Haag contributed to this report.
Here’s just some of the many TBFAA Training Courses Available:

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Illinois Law Appears To Help

By: Security Systems News

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.-- The state law here that requires that CO detectors be installed in all homes, which had its one-year anniversary on Jan.1, appears to be working, according a story in Pantagraph.com on the subject.

Following incidents in recent years where homes had dangerous levels of CO, fire authorities have seen, in the last year, increased use of detectors.

"Bloomington Deputy Fire Chief David Adelsberger said calls to his department indicate CO detector use was rising before the law went into effect. But his department saw a sharp increase in the last year," the story said.

Bloomington firefighters received more than 60 calls about carbon monoxide detector alarms, compared to 17 calls in 2006 and eight in 2005.

In neighboring Normal, Fire Chief Jim Watson is quoted as saying his department handled more than 90 calls for CO alarms this year, up from about 70 in 2006.

Watson said many of the calls were related to "weak batteries triggering false alarms or open doors to attached garages allowing car exhaust into houses ... however, at least a couple of calls did lead to identification of problems with furnaces that could have become larger problems."

Security System News checked with David Myers, Midwest regional sales manager for System Sensor, in Illinois about CO detector sales in the state. "There's definitely been a dramatic increase in sales because of the law," he said.

Myers' territory includes 10 states and he said he frequently hears discussions outside of Illinois about the possibility of implementing similar laws. Currently 12 states have mandatory CO detector laws. "It's not a matter of if, it's a matter of when. We hear it all over," he said.

Richard Robert, senior product manager at System Sensor said in addition to Illinois, the states of Minnesota, Massachusetts, Vermont, Connecticut, Utah, Tennessee, Alaska, New York, New Jersey, Rhode Island, and West Virginia all have mandatory CO detector laws.

"A law is pending in Michigan right now and California is potentially taking a look at a mandate," he said. In addition, he said Texas passed a CO law last year that seeks to increase awareness about the dangers of CO, but it is not a mandate.
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WASHINGTON--A bill that would allow colleges to use federal matching grants to purchase security and fire systems moved one step closer to becoming law on Feb. 7 when it passed the U.S. House of Representatives.

Lauded by security and fire officials, the bill would also require colleges to make full disclosures to prospective students and parents about their life-safety systems and fire history, something fire industry advocates are happy about. "This legislation is a tremendous leap forward for fire safety across the nation," said Campus Firewatch publisher Ed Comeau in a statement. "Students and parents will now have access to vital information that will help them make an informed, fire-safe decision when selecting a school. In addition, this will be an opportunity for schools to showcase how they protect our nation's future."

The Security Industry Association worked to get a provision included in the House bill, that would allow grants to be used for the "acquisition and installation of access control, video surveillance, intrusion detection, and perimeter security technologies and systems."

SIA’s legislative director Don Erickson said the grant "gives colleges and universities another option when accessing campus safety grant funds to develop a more complete or holistic approach to protecting faculty, students, and visitors on their campuses."

Before this bill becomes law it must go to a House-Senate conference committee to reconcile differences between H.R. 4137 and a similar bill passed in the Senate last summer.

While the Senate version does not currently include the SIA provision, SIA "certainly intends to communicate with the Senate about this provision," said Don Erickson. "I am not aware of any opposition to it at this time. I know the House committee, as it was developing its own changes to the bill, was understandably very strict about the number of new proposals that it would consider. To their credit, they saw the value of our suggestion," he said. "Rep. Yvette Clarke (D-NY) was instrumental in advocating for this security provision with her committee leadership," he added.

Erickson said the conference is expected to be completed by the end of March and the House and Senate are expected to vote on the final agreement in April.
IRVING, TEXAS -- A school district in Irving, Texas, plans to install more than 1,000 digital surveillance cameras at its campuses and other facilities.

Officials for the Irving Independent School District say the cameras will be in plain view for students, faculty and visitors to see, adding that the majority of the cameras will be placed at secondary schools, reported the Dallas Morning News.

McKinney Security Systems of McKinney, Texas, will supply the cameras to the schools. The surveillance equipment will be installed in areas where most problems break out, such as entrances and exits, hallways, cafeterias and outdoor areas. Cameras will be also be placed in kitchens at elementary schools and at the Irving Schools Stadium. The district plans to have the cameras running by fall.

The installation for the cameras and other security measures, including keyless entry and a visitor identification system will cost $3.5 million. The project is $1.5 million over the budget set by the school board in August.

Supporters of the new security measure believe the cameras will help with investigations into vandalism, theft and assault. Having the cameras in clear view, supporters say, will discourage crime.

Critics have voiced concerns about the cost of installation and the difficulties monitoring the surveillance footage. Opponents contend the cameras will not necessarily prevent crime, but do raise the potential for privacy issues.
High Hopes for Electronic Notification Program

By: Leischen Stelter, associate editor - Security Systems News

RICHMOND, Va.--A pilot project started in 2004 as a joint effort between the Central Station Alarm Association and the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials (APCO) to test the viability of an electronic notification system between central stations and public safety answering points (PSAPs), or 9-1-1 centers, is set to make significant expansions in the first quarter of 2008.

Vector Security, which has been the leading alarm company involved in this project and has successfully transmitted thousands of alarm signals electronically, will expand its testing region from York County and Richmond, Va., to Guilford County, N.C. As part of the program’s expansion into a second state, another alarm company, CPI Security Systems, headquartered in Charlotte, N.C., will be brought on board to begin sending electronic transmissions to a new and third PSAP, located in Guilford County. In addition, a third computer-aided dispatch (CAD) system will be tested.

"It is the belief of the two associations that getting this program into one more state, one more PSAP, one different alarm company and another CAD vendor will demonstrate that this program is certainly viable and something that can benefit those [PSAP] centers that want to utilize it," said Stephen Wisely, the technical services manager for APCO, who has been involved with this project for several years.

The electronic notification system is primarily a CAD-to-CAD interoperability program, where alarm information that was traditionally transmitted via a phone call from a central station operator to a PSAP operator, is instead electronically relayed directly to the PSAP operator for dispatching to authorities.

"This system eliminates the potential for errors resulting from verbal transmission," said Vector Security’s executive vice president Pam Petrow. "With this system, all the data is transmitted electronically so it increases the speed of transmission and increases the reliability of the data because it’s not being re-entered. It saves time on the 9-1-1 side and it makes dispatch much more efficient and accurate."

Currently, the program has only been beta tested using GE Security’s Mastermind software, but Petrow said other software vendors are "queued up and ready to be involved in the process and they will soon be incorporated into the program."

The electronic notification program made significant progress in late 2007 when it gained approval to operate over Nlets, the international justice and public safety information-sharing network, the primary interstate law-enforcement network in the United States.

"When this program expanded to the Nlets network, which connects and transmits mainly police information across the U.S., that represented the ability for this program to have a secure network that can go anywhere in the U.S. and that’s a benefit," Wisely said.

Although the Nlets network is a national network, approval to operate as a third party over the network is granted on a state-by-state basis, said Petrow. Because states are concerned about managing their networks, Petrow estimates that once Vector can readily demonstrate how much bandwidth is needed to operate this program, it will become easier to gain approval in following states.

"What we’re doing now is benchmarking for the future," said Petrow. "We are going to strategically pick areas and do our case studies and as we win approval for the methodology we’re using and the PSAPs find value in it, I think we’ll gain greater acceptance. The next year to year-and-a-half is going to be critical as we open new markets and add new companies. You’re not going to see the mass proliferation of this technology. It’s just too complicated to do that quickly."
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ID Software and Southwest Dispatch partner to launch GPS tracking and monitoring service

By Leischen Stelter - 02.14.2008

Security Systems News

ATLANTA, Ga.-ID Software, a software development company, announced on Jan. 31 its partnership with Southwest Dispatch Center, a third-party monitoring center in Richardson, Texas, to launch a GPS tracking and full-time monitored response service.

ID Software, which started in 1995 as a biometric software developer for law enforcement agencies, recognized the market potential of GPS for the consumer market. "We started to step back and recognize the large market penetration GPS could have from a volume perspective, but we wanted to keep our core focus as a public safety company," said Gregory Chevalier, president and chief executive officer of ID Software. "We are not about GPS tracking, we're about GPS safety and monitoring based on the location of a person - that's what moved us in the evolution in past years to focus on developing software for a GPS tracking solution," he said.

"The fact that we are focused in the personal safety market, we were very diligent about finding a call center that was capable and qualified to handle emergency and 911-type calls," said Chevalier. "Southwest made a conscious decision to get into location-based monitoring market because of the rapid growth of that environment ... and built into their automation system the ability to raise panic alerts as high as possible into their queue."

"We respond, they develop - it worked out perfect," said Brant Pierce, vice president of Southwest Dispatch. Pierce said the partnership and development of the GPS platform has been in the works for over four years. Pierce met representatives from ID Software through a mutual acquaintance four and a half years ago and "we started talking about GPS products and the potential of GPS solutions and where it was going in the future," he said.

The two companies agreed in the market potential for GPS applications and agreed to work together to develop a full-time monitored and tracking GPS solution.

ID Software developed its SafeZone GPS software, which currently works with its Personal Safety Companion device and will be distributed by Southwest's dealer network beginning in Q1 of 2008. Although the Personal Safety Companion is specific to the software, ID Software developed the application to be "device agnostic" allowing compatibility with any GPS-enabled device.

Bosch G Series panels meet UL 9th edition requirements

D7412GV2 and D9412GV2 panels meet newest U.S. fire regulatory requirements

FAIRPORT, N.Y. - Bosch Security Systems, Inc., a full-line manufacturer of high-quality security solutions, has met Underwriters Laboratories Inc. (UL) 864 9th Edition requirements with its G Series Control Panels and has received approval for these panels to be installed in applications requiring 9th Edition fire approval. The listing validates the D7412GV2 and D9412GV2 Control Panels meet the newest fire regulatory requirements in the United States.

Meeting the requirements under UL 864 9th Edition reinforces Bosch's reputation as a provider of equipment that consistently remains up-to-date with current revisions of the National Fire Alarm Code, NFPA 72. The listing provides Bosch dealers and distributors with expanded sales opportunities for the D7412GV2 and D9412GV2 Control Panels -- scalable systems that fit in a variety of applications, including bank branches, commercial office space, manufacturing facilities and retail stores, among others.
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