



In an emergency, every second counts

Systems from primion GET
freeing up valuable time for the Antwerp fire service

The Antwerp fire service is one of five municipal fire brigades in Belgium. The others so-called “Corp X” are stationed in Brussels, Ghent, Liège and Charleroi. They operate in different teams and watches, 24/7. In Antwerp alone, some 800 people, including fire officers, fire fighters, recruits and admin staff are employed at 6 locations.



Through the installation of new software and hardware for time recording and access control, primion's Belgian subsidiary, GET, has significantly simplified some complex processes. This has included making some previously long-winded methods much more user-friendly, with the result that valuable working time is freed up and staff motivation levels are higher. As the fire fighters have to wear their ID badges when they are deployed to an incident, robust, glass fibre versions were selected. This material is not only breakage-proof, it is also water and heat resistant.

Around 13,000 deployments annually

The Antwerp fire service is not just responsible for fire-fighting. It also looks after safety concerns at the port, in the petro-chemical industry, at Deurne Airport, in the city itself

and on the motorways and rail network. Every team member also has an additional qualification as a diver, paramedic or guard commander at the station. They handle around 13,000 deployments every year of which, however, only about 10% are as the result of a fire. Because of the complexity of the tasks that they have to deal with, the Antwerp fire service is subject to several statutory requirements. These have to be taken into account when designing the time management system. For example, meal breaks also qualify as paid working time as the fire-fighters have to be available for deployment at all times.

Payments for bike usage

Before the XTremis time management system from GET was introduced, it was only the working time of the admin staff that was recorded, in order to monitor the flexible work-



ing hours. Now however, because the working times of all staff are recorded through the software, many more functions are available. HR also needs the data for assigning overtime hours and to compare for performance measurement purposes. One of the reports that can be created from XTremis can also be used to monitor a special agreement governing the use of bicycles. Staff who travel to work by bike can record this through a special function key on the time recording terminals and automatically, their account is credited with the agreed supplement.

Interface to PeopleSoft

The fire service's HR management is integrated into the city's HR function, where the HR management system PeopleSoft is used. For this reason, it was very important for the daily administration that there was an interface between XTremis and PeopleSoft. The HR department enters absence, vacation and illness data manually for the fire fire-fighting teams. The admin staff book directly at the terminal using the additional functions there, e.g. generating a

vacation request. Using the Workflow functionality, such a request is then transmitted to their line manager who can approve or decline it. This decision is then automatically communicated to the request originator. In addition, the presence of the response teams can be checked simply and quickly using the Web module.

Logging on for duty

Before fire-fighters start work, their presence is recorded at various locations. When arriving at the station, they register at the GET system and the working time starts officially. Once they have changed into their working clothes, a further booking is made with the same badge, this time at the registration reader. This booking means that they are now available for deployment. This information is sent in realtime to the Ferranti registration system and the station is automatically informed about the change of team. The fire-fighter who should be relieved, is informed at the same time by pager that he/she can stand down. Information boards at the station display shift changes and alarm messages.

Automatic door opening

Tailored access control solutions were demanded by the new Noorderlaan station, which serves not just as a fire service support centre but it is also where the administration is centralised. The Xcess program from GET together with readers at all doors handle the access control throughout the complete site and in various areas of the building. Access is also controlled to rooms where special materials such as protective clothing for chemical deployments, diving equipment or valuables are stored. Outside normal office hours, access is not freely available to sensitive areas of the administration section. Readers in elevators and stairwells ensure that access is limited just to those with the corresponding authorisations, e.g. senior officers.

Read on

In order that fire service intervention teams can leave the site in an emergency as quickly as possible, long-distance readers were installed at the entrance doors with the corresponding transponders **continued**

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in the vehicles. As soon as the response vehicle approaches the door, it opens automatically, which is an important time element for the fire service that should not be underestimated.

Individual key management

The fire service's vehicle fleet has over 100 vehicles, including response vehicles, rescue vehicles, hydraulic lifting platforms, one vehicle fitted with div-

ing equipment as well as a wide range of service vehicles. In order to facilitate the management of the keys for the vehicles, for store rooms, for electrical lockers and for other purposes, GET installed two key safes. Authorised persons can reserve keys through a corresponding PC module. Then, using their badge, staff identify themselves at the reader installed at the key safe and are granted access to the safe and the keys that it contains.

