The Transmitter

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AT&T Deadline for 2G Sunset by the End of 2016

AT&T Inc. has announced that the shutdown of its 2G wireless network will be complete by the end of 2016, a process that will force customers with older cellular devices to upgrade to another communication vehicle.

Unlike the 2008 AMPS sunset that was forced by the Federal Communications Commission, the 2G sunset is a decision made by cellular service providers.

AT&T said it's sunsetting the older network, which doesn't support high data speeds, city-by-city. By shutting down 2G and using the same space on the airwaves for 3G/4G, the company can increase data capacity by more than a hundred-fold, it has said.

Other companies, including Sprint Nextel, Verizon and T-Mobile, among others, are following suit.

While impact on the alarm industry will be great — some estimates say there are around 3 million installed 2G alarm communicators — ample time remains to make sure your customers are protected.

"My advice is to not install another 2G unit going forward," said Kevin McCarthy, National Sales Manager. "Check the specs on the equipment you have in place now and make plans to upgrade your customers' systems in the coming years. This is a sales opportunity."

IP Communication is an Option to Upgrade End-Users for 2G Sunset

Fast communication, life-cycle costs and future compatibility are the reasons to consider IP as an upgrade to customers' systems

It wasn't too long ago that the industry watched the sun set on AMPS and now another communication technology will eventually go dark.

With the coming sunset of the 2G network by the end of 2016, alarm dealers must plan ahead to make sure customers have a communication vehicle that will meet long-term needs.

Fortunately, there are several code-compliant solutions available to dealers so that customers will not be forced into making system upgrades again in just a few short years.

One solution to consider is Internet Protocol (IP) alarm communication. Although the initial cost of an IP communicator is steeper, you can explain to customers that IP eliminates dedicated phone lines and the related monthly tel-co charge. Over time, the installation cost will be recaptured.

For existing installations, your customers may consider adding a compatible after-market device that converts the system to IP communication. This eliminates the cost of replacing the installed panel.

Some Advantages to Consider

The foremost reason to select IP communication is the ability to cost-effectively poll the system's availability in short intervals.

Some of these systems default to poll every 90 seconds, but this can be overridden to shorten the interval.

In contrast, with POTS or cellular technology, polling intervals are usually set at 24 hours, meaning that a system could be down that long before a trouble signal is generated. Also, increasing the polling frequency can increase traffic charges by cellular service providers.

Something else to consider is that the industry's largest alarm companies are going to market with an offering of alarm, video and home-automation systems using an IP backbone.

Through nationwide television ads and other marketing tactics, those companies are creating a demand for such services.

Keep in mind that Emergency 24 alarm dealers have the ability to offer the same services via an IP alarm system. By selling customers on next-generation technology now, you can also increase your recurring monthly revenue for years to come.

Real-World Issues to Remember

As they say, timing is everything. Undoubtedly, there will be customers who were upgraded to 2G technology as AMPS faded away. With the coming sunset, these customers will need assurances that the new equipment they must purchase will be viable for many years to come.

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Educate Customers to Prevent False Alarms

Emergency 24 encourages alarm dealers to take a proactive approach to minimize false alarms by educating customers about proper operation of their system and best practices that have been developed by the Security Industry Alarm Coalition (SIAC).

The success of SIAC's program comes from years of study and then tracking the effectiveness of false-alarm reduction practices such as the "two-call" verification, model ordinances and CP-01 equipment standards.

SIAC's data suggests what the industry had concluded anecdotally: User error is by far the single greatest cause of false alarms and false dispatch requests. In fact, more than 77 percent of all false alarms and false dispatches are due to user error.

That said, the industry cannot push the blame to end-users because in most cases, the ONLY INSTRUCTION a system owner receives comes from alarm installers and technicians.

Here are some tips that your technicians can use to better educate customers on how to operate their systems.

■ After the installation is complete, your technician should walk the customer through the protected premise and show them every point of protection, the location of the alarm panel and its power supply to ensure it is not on a switched circuit.

■ When technicians arrive at the control panel, have them explain its operation in clear language. Avoid terms like "arm" and "disarm" and opt for "turn on" and "turn off." The technician should also keep the instruction manual in hand and point out the pages that give instruction on the proper way to turn the alarm on and off.

■ Explain ALL functions of the alarm system, including "home" or "stay mode," as well as "delay," which is the most difficult concept for customers to grasp.

■ By far the number one cause of false alarms is entry and exit delay violations. The CP-01 panels that most manufacturers are shipping today are defaulted at 90 seconds. Clearly explain that if the customer exits or enters during the exit delay period, the panel will automatically double the exit time. However, this only happens once for each arming.

■ Make sure that the customer understands they cannot arm the system in the "away mode" while other people are still in the protected premise. This is common in the morning when a person leaves for work. When other inhabitants wake up, they will trip any interior protection.

■ Explain in detail the process Emergency 24 will take if the alarm accidentally goes off. Stress the importance of remembering the passcode and insist that they choose something they will always remember. It is also critical to inform customers never to leave the premise after the alarm is triggered until they have spoken to an EM24 monitoring staff member.

■ Provide every customer with written instructions and Emergency 24 telephone numbers. It is suggested that the customer tape those instruction inside a nearby closet.

■ Finally, if the protected premise is in a jurisdiction that has an alarm ordinance you should provide them with a copy of the key provisions, such as the fine schedule for false dispatches, required registrations and renewal dates.

Other Common Causes of False Alarms

Call Waiting: When programming the alarm panel on a line with call waiting, some installers add a prefix to disable the function, causing the monitor to hear a busy tone when calling the premise. Instead, you should program the second receiver number without the prefix so the alarm will function with or without the call waiting function.

Web Enabled Phone Service: If your customer is connected to a phone service that is Web enabled, technicians must engage the technical staff of the service provider to learn about the system. It is highly likely that a special modem must be provided by the Internet Service Provider in order for the alarm to work.

EM24's CO Procedures Align with ANSI Standards

EM24's Carbon Monoxide dispatching procedures align with CSAA/ANSI standards.

Prior to dispatch, the national standard requires that monitors call the premise and instruct the occupants to move to fresh air. Monitors also advise subscribers not to re-enter the premise until cleared by the responding fire department.

The monitor then asks if all of the occupants are accounted for and if anyone is nauseous, dizzy or has a headache.

In the event of a voicemail or answering machine, a message is left indicating the date and time of carbon monoxide alarm.

The voice mail will also instruct all occupants to leave the building and contact the fire department. EM24 monitors then immediately call the appropriate emergency response agency and report that a CO alarm was received from the premise and that they were unable to reach an occupant.

Please note that the callback option for carbon monoxide alarms will be changed to one (1), to include a call to the premise. This is a liability mitigation issue for both alarm dealers and central stations. Should you have any questions about this protocol, you are able to review the standard at www.csaaul.org. You may also contact the EM24 Sales Department at 1-800-800-3624.

Importance of Compliance and Background Checks

A recent consent decree issued by the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation fined Utah-based Pinnacle Security $1,000,000 for selling its services using "unfair and deceptive" trade practices, hiring unlicensed sales personnel and allowing employees with criminal histories to sell products door-to-door in the state.

This decisive action by the state agency demonstrates the importance of compliance with standards put forth to protect the public.

Peers Can Hurt Industry Reputation

Fortunately, no tragedies can be attributed to this company's disregard for licensing regulations. However, had there been, your company would have been guilty by association. In fact, the entire industry would have received a black eye from these shoddy practices. If you know of an individual or a business breaking the law, take it to your state or local enforcement agency. They'll know what to do and you'll be helping yourself by keeping the industry clean.

ESA Pushes Background Check Legislation

In recent months, the Electronic Security Association (ESA) has been promoting legislation for national background checks for alarm professionals.

The ESA has endorsed U.S. Senate Bill 1319, the "Electronic Life Safety and Security Systems Federal Background Check Act," which would permit industry companies to access the FBI database for hiring purposes. The bill also would direct the Attorney General to work with the ESA to establish a nationwide system of criminal background checks for alarm-installation companies.

Telecoms Want to Bypass Licensure in MI

In Michigan, Senate bills 1291 and 1292 would create separate licensing requirements for IP-enabled security systems, while also circumventing existing statutes currently followed by the state's other providers.

The major proponent of the legislation is AT&T, which is fast moving into the electronic security market. Rather than working within the boundaries of existing statutes, the proposed legislation would require many current alarm dealers to obtain two licenses and allow new entrants in the industry to bypass criminal background checks as required by state law.

(continued from Cover: IP Communications)

Although technology advances daily, IP technology appears to be stable enough that current equipment will not be obsolete in just a few short years.

However, that does not mean IP should be the only technology to consider going forward.

Although NFPA 72 does not specifically prohibit sending alarms over the Internet, some Authorities Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) still will not accept it. Make sure to check with the AHJ before installing the equipment.

Additionally, IP communication requires network connectivity, thus there is the need (and cost) of having additional battery back-ups in place to ensure ongoing network operation.

What is the Best Option?

As you can see, alarm dealers still have many choices. There is no "right answer" — only preferences.

"Although the 2G sunset makes the industry ponder communication options, the truth is, alarm dealers do that right now," said National Sales Manager, Kevin McCarthy. "For IP signal delivery, dealers already must choose between dial-capture designs or systems that output through the data bus. My recommendation is this: For every installation, make your decision based on what will work best for that specific property."

Fire Panel Communication Options to Consider

Please note that this is not a complete list, but only a sample of the systems EM24 has tested.

Make/Model	Full Reporting	Type of Transmission	Delivery to EM24	Trigger	Time of Transmission
AES Intellinet					
7744		Radio	Internet	Point	Seconds
7788		Radio	Internet	Point	Seconds
7744 w/ Intelli-Tap	x	Radio	Internet	Dial-Capture	15-30 Secs.
7788 w/ Intelli-Tap	x	Radio	Internet	Dial-Capture	15-30 Secs.
AlarmNet/Ademco/ Honeywell					
GSMCF	x	Cellular	Cellular	Data Bus	Seconds
iGSMCF	x	Internet/Cell	Internet	Data Bus	Seconds
IPGSM-DP	x	Internet/Cell	Internet	Dial-Capture	15-30 Secs.
7847i-L	x	Internet/Cell	Internet	Dial-Capture	Seconds
Bosch/Radionics					
C900v2	x	Internet	Internet	Dial-Capture	15-30 Secs.
DX4020	Bosch	Internet	Internet	Data Bus	Seconds
ITS-DX4020-G	x	Cellular	Internet	Both	Seconds
DMP					
i-COM	x	Internet	Internet	Data Bus	Seconds
i-COM-E	x	Internet	Internet	Data Bus	Seconds
i-COM-SL	x	Internet	Internet	Data Bus	Seconds
XR100FC/463G	x	Internet/Cell	Internet	Data Bus	Seconds
XR500FC/463G	x	Internet/Cell	Internet	Data Bus	Seconds
DSC					
GS3055-ICF	x	Internet/Cell	Internet	Dial-Capture	15-30 Secs.
TL-250	x	Internet	Internet	Data Bus	Seconds
TL-300	x	Internet	Internet	Dial-Capture	15-30 Secs.
Napco					
NL-MOD	x	Internet	Internet	Data Bus	Seconds
FireLire/Notifier/ Gamewell/ SilentKnight					
IP-Dact	x	Internet	Internet	Dial-Capture	15-30 Secs.
IPGSM-COM	x	Internet/Cell	Internet	Dial-Capture	15-30 Secs.
UpLink					
2550-CF	x	Cellular	I-Net/POTS	Dial-Capture	15-45 Secs.
Telular					
TG-7FS	x	Cellular	I-Net/POTS	Dial-Capture	15-45 Secs.

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EM24 is Now a Telguard Master Reseller

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EM24 offers another option for alarm dealers to transmit signals to our nationwide network of central stations throughout the United States.

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- Telguard gives alarm dealers the tools to break their dependence on landlines that will soon be sunsetting.

For more information on Telguard from EM24, contact the Sales Department at 1-800-800-3624.

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