

# Lighting Control Panels Provide a Reliable Control Solution

In any fire station, reaction time to an alert is a number one priority. In most stations, when a signal comes through, alarms sound throughout the facility and all lights switch on simultaneously.

Project managers for the new East Providence Fire Station were looking for a way to upgrade this system (from the one used at the old station, which relied on an error-prone technology from the 1930s). Using lighting control panels from The Watt Stopper, the new fire station could ensure that lights came on when a signal is received and shut off after a preset time delay.

The prior mechanism that switched lighting proved faulty in two ways: it either turned all lighting off after a time delay, meaning that firefighters who stayed in the station were left in the dark; or it would leave all lights on, so that remaining firefighters had to switch lights off in vacant rooms.

At the old station in Providence, all the lights were turning off, and the

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**– Fire Chief Bassette**

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firefighters were getting tired of sitting in the dark after every alert. Fire Chief Bassette sought a reliable control solution for his new station -- the most modern in Rhode Island.

Bassette inquired with John McDonough of Power Engineers about products on the market. He



wanted lights to continue to switch on immediately at the time of an alert. But he also wanted lights to switch off only in areas where lights were off before the alert.

The old station was already equipped with Watt Stopper lighting control panels that swept lights on and off via time schedule. McDonough knew that Watt Stopper panels provided numerous control possibilities. In order to get the desired function from the panels, The Watt Stopper performed a custom reconfiguration of the Smartwired Control network for the new station.

Now, when a signal of a fire or emergency comes through, the lights immediately switch on in bedrooms, bathrooms, gear rooms, hallways, the kitchen, the apparatus bay (where the trucks are kept), and outdoors. At the same time, instruction on where to go repeats over the P.A. system.

After five minutes, the panel signals lights to turn off in rooms where lights were off before the signal -- the lights in rooms where lighting was already on stays on. The five minute time delay gives firefighters more than enough time to react to the signal and vacate the building. Remaining occupants always have the option of manually flipping a switch if they want specific lights on or off.

Three networked lighting control panels cover the entire 12,000 square foot facility, including exterior lighting.

Chief Bassette is happy he found a manufacturer who could specifically configure a system to his needs. He said “The system’s working great – we’ve had positive reviews from the firefighters, especially from those that stay in the station and used to get left in the dark”.

Bassette, now retired, hopes that other stations adopt the same control configuration

