

Millhaven Institution, Ontario, Canada Case study

Prisons and correctional facilities are frequently regarded as an anomaly within the perimeter security sector. The primary focus at such locations is the need to keep inmates inside an enclosed area as opposed to detecting intruders from the outside. But these institutions should not be regarded as a one-way street since responsibility for keeping drugs, contraband and would-be escape collaborators out of the area are also important tasks for prison authorities. The following article looks at the use of Senstar equipment at a high-profile prison in Canada.



SYNOPSIS

Millhaven Institution is a maximum security federal prison with a capacity for 411 inmates located in Bath, Ontario, in central Canada. The site is adjacent to the city of Kingston at the eastern end of Lake Ontario on 640 acres shared with a lower security prison, Bath Institution. Millhaven was opened in 1971 to replace the Kingston Penitentiary, the area's other maximum security facility. The prison features a federal intake assessment unit and at one time, operated a Special Handling Unit until a dedicated facility for this purpose was created in Quebec. In addition to housing its maximum-security population, Millhaven is where offenders are assessed, given a rehabilitation plan and then transferred to high, medium or minimum security prisons.

DETECTION FOR PROTECTION: SENSTAR'S LINE OF SENSORS DELIVERS

Millhaven, like many of Canada's correctional institutions, has been one of Senstar's system projects since the 1980s. The company's products have been integral to Correctional Service Canada's (CSC's) security upgrades for two decades with solutions evolving alongside client needs. A core product at Millhaven is Senstar's Intelli-FLEX™, a fence-mounted cable which is installed on perimeter fences. Intelli-FLEX™ is a microphonic intrusion detection system that analyzes signals generated by the flexing of a proprietary triboelectric coaxial sensor cable. The product is ideal for correctional institutions - it detects cutting of the fence fabric, climbing on it or lifting it and can distinguish between the three types of intrusions.

Installed between the two perimeter barriers is Perimitrax® that detects based on conductivity, size and movement. Thus, anybody seeking unauthorized passage would need to defeat not only the two physical barriers, but also the invisible electromagnetic system. The advantage of an additional security zone between the two barriers is ideal in the case of drugs being thrown over a fence from the outside. The covert system also creates a delay barrier during an escape attempt and will confirm any initial alarms generated by the fence system. When the field is disturbed, an alarm is declared and instantly communicated over the sensor cables to a PC-based communications and control post. The fact that the product is terrain-following means it can be installed in many applications including VIP estates, military bases, utility sub-stations, transportation depots and in prisons where there is a clear, wide zone.

AUTOMATIC VIDEO ASSESSMENT

At Millhaven, the Perimitrax® installation is controlled from a communications post where perimeter alarms are displayed and monitored by a Senstar Security Management System (SMS) which allows users to monitor an entire network of exterior and interior sensors in real-time from standard PCs. Site details are presented using customized, colour maps. This application software has successfully performed for more than 20 years and illustrates that Senstar was a pioneer in the development of communicating site management information as a graphical user interface long before the practice became popular. Prison officers use simple touch-screen procedures and menu-driven response sequences during alarm situations.

At the time an alarm is reported, the associated video systems start increased frame recording. The system also logs and records related activity such as use of radio and telephone. A mobile unit is dispatched from the control post and mobile patrol personnel provide a radio response either confirming an escape attempt or reporting the cause of the alarm. This broad, multi-disciplinary coverage of an incident is invaluable at correctional facilities such as Millhaven, particularly when reporting incidents to police forces and other judicial authorities.

PROTECTING STAFF INSIDE

Beyond the perimeter, Millhaven also uses Senstar products to protect staff which includes personal portable alarms and an inmate cell call system. The Flash™ and Flare® systems are radio frequency based personal duress units used by the majority of non-security staff and stationary security staff. When entering the facility, each staff member picks up an assigned RF transmitter before reporting to their work area. Should they be faced with an incident, they can activate the wireless duress system which communicates with the control post so that an emergency response team can be sent to the officer's work location. The inmate call system provides an emergency duress system for inmates while they are located within their cell. These alarms are generated to the bubble or to the main control room during reduced staffing times.

COST SAVINGS FREE UP RESOURCES

Senstar products are used widely across other CSC facilities and have produced significant savings for the organization. Aside from financial savings for the operation, the funds released can be used to promote inmate welfare in a variety of ways. Assistance to offenders with substance misuse problems and educational programs are two examples of programs provided for inmates.

IN CONCLUSION

Senstar's technology at Millhaven enables staff to be highly efficient in their role as correctional officers while freeing up resources so they can contribute to inmate welfare as well as the tools to help officers do their jobs more efficiently. Senstar's sensor's and life safety devices can be found in correctional facilities throughout the world. It serves as a first line of defence and offence in supporting the personnel who work at these institutions. For more information, visit www.senstar.com



Intelli-FLEX is Senstar's fence-mounted cable installed on perimeter fences at Millhaven Institution. The microphonic cable detects cutting, climbing and lifting.



Perimitrax is Senstar's covert buried intrusion detection system.



Flash is a radio frequency based emergency notification system for use by staff at Millhaven and correctional facilities around the world.



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