

# Rescue crews get a boost

In Ireland, the Boyne Fishermen's Rescue and Recovery Service has seen a significant improvement in its performance after it replaced its old paging system with one from Swissphone



L-R: Jason Clarke, Mark Quinn, and Eugene Brannigan

**E**stablished during the 1970s to serve a fishing community centred on the Irish East coast town of Drogheda, the 30 volunteers of the Boyne Fishermen's Rescue and Recovery Service today rally to incidents not only along the River Boyne and its estuary but on inshore waters for some miles along the coast.

Funded wholly by donations, the service is at the ready around the clock, 365 days a year. It operates a capable fleet of rescue boats and vehicles. And it maintains a specialist diving team, which can perform underwater recoveries anywhere in the 32 counties of Ireland.

Callouts range from the most serious of incidents to cases such as a pleasure boat whose engine has failed or a car stranded in treacherously soft sand after taking a moonlit pleasure drive.

## 'Massive improvement'

Recently the service has seen a significant boost in its performance after replacing its old and increasingly unreliable radio paging system with a modern one by Swissphone, which has been trimming minutes off its response times. "There is a massive improvement," says Jason Clarke, who manages the system. In the past, he explains, patchy radio coverage meant that each callout had to be transmitted several times to ensure that everyone received it. "Definitely there's minutes

saved by only having to set them off once," says Clarke.

One particular weak spot was not far from the boathouse, in a part of the town where several of the responders live. "They could be sitting at home and they weren't getting the pages with the old system," says Clarke. "The new system gets to them, and that means the boat is now getting out much quicker on to the water."

Like the old system, the new equipment provides voice paging, delivering a brief spoken message to each pager the recipient can replay as required. Much of the improvement in performance with the new system is due to a change from UHF to VHF radio, which gives a longer reach. In addition, the Swissphone equipment offers selective calling to reach specific groups or individuals. Also, since the service has no central control room, it helps that the system can be operated from any telephone.

## Simple to use

To send a call, Clarke simply dials into the system – usually from his mobile phone – and enters first a security code (a precaution against false alerts). Then he keys the number of the individual or task group he wants to contact. "I have a list of all the pagers," he says. "So I could type in 101 and then I would wait about

six seconds and then I can talk. If I want the whole team, I can type in 999."

"It's simple to use and robust; it's why we recommended the Swissphone solution to the customer," adds Mark Quinn, managing director of EMR Integrated Solutions, the radio communications company that supplied the system. "Rescuers must have complete confidence in the system as they need high-performance communications to the emergency services and their colleagues that won't let them down."

## Future-proof

But the Swissphone s.QUAD Voice pagers used by the Boyne crews have capabilities that go well beyond their present needs. For example, they can also receive digital pages and display text messages. Also, they can use Bluetooth for linking to a smartphone which serves as a gateway to communicate the user's availability before an alert and to reply to a message. "What they wanted to start off with was just to replace the system that they had," explains Quinn. "If they want any additional functionality down the road, then we can give that to them – on demand." 



## New Voice POCSAG solution

Swissphone's new onsite voice POCSAG transmitter allows the dispatch of voice and text messages at the same time – for applications that require both types of messages, such as in industry or healthcare, or for migrating to digital while keeping old analogue pagers in operation.

# Fully integrated security

In Abu Dhabi, Swissphone's I.SEARCH alerting system is being used to enhance security for a major oil and gas project through integration with the site's security systems

**C**entred on two newly constructed artificial islands in the Arabian Gulf, some 120 km from Abu Dhabi City, the Satah al Razboot (SARB) project of the Abu Dhabi Marine Operating Company (ADMA-OPCO) supports the drilling of 86 oilwells. The installation's wireless alerting system is being supplied by 3W Networks – a Dubai-based systems integrator.

## Paging as a requirement

"For us this is a US\$15mn project," comments Walid Gamali, CEO of 3W Networks. "The oil and gas project has many telecommunications and security systems. Most oilfields require a paging system as a redundant alarming solution which can deliver the message dependably in even the most difficult radio conditions. Swissphone was the partner of choice for this key part of the safety system."

## Fully integrated backup system

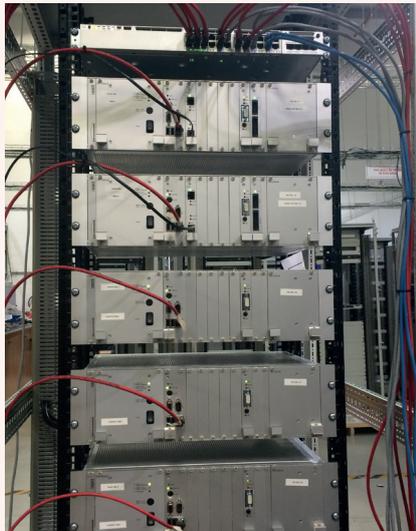
For a large part of its everyday mobile communication needs across the site, the oilfield operator will be able to use a local TETRA-based digital two-way mobile radio system.

"Two-way radio is very easy to use, but paging is required for two reasons", Gamali continues. "First, it is required as a fallback option if the two-way radio system fails, second our client needs a system owned by him for fully integrated alarming options. The TETRA system is provided by Abu Dhabi police – and so ADMA will not have the full features like interfacing third-party systems or having their own dispatching systems. Swissphone's paging solution is interfaced to the site's other systems like fire and gas systems through an alarm server also provided by Swissphone."

## Escalation management

3W's engineers have installed Swissphone paging systems on each of the three islands, each one providing

full indoor coverage. Management and message dispatching terminals are provided at each site, and the sites are interconnected over a shared business LAN. The installation is based on Swissphone's modular I.SEARCH alarm server (shown below).



It maintains a database of pagers, messages and settings, and supports a comprehensive range of messaging and alerting services, with automatic logging of calls and transmitter state. Predefined messages can be directed automatically to individuals or groups by telephone, web input or email, with instructions on how to respond.

An escalation management function enables unanswered alerts to be handled according a prepared plan. And there is an absence feature for the pagers themselves: Swissphone's multi-slot recharging stations can be monitored remotely by the administrator over the LAN, to find whether an individual pager is available for use or is out on duty.

"We can operate the system via a web browser," says Gamali, "so there is no need for special software or a special licence to run the system."

## High availability cluster

Another element of importance in this

messaging application is Swissphone's High Availability Cluster module, which combines two I.SEARCH racks into a cluster. "Our client likes the clustering mode," comments Gamali. "Instead of having an auto changeover unit for the main and standby, the clustering mode makes the main and standby understand each other and they are monitoring each other without any additional box for auto-changeover."

The whole cluster can be addressed via a single virtual IP address. One further benefit in a multi-site paging network such as the SARB installation is that the Swissphone system is fully asynchronous. "Having an asynchronous system helps us to have outdoor coverage and indoor coverage without having a GPS clock attached to every transmitter," Gamali concludes. 📶



## New s.QUAD ATEX

Swissphone's new s.QUAD ATEX pager can be used even in the most sensitive zones without risk thanks to its protective measures (protection class II 2G EEx ib IIC T4). It is IP67 rated, has an outstanding reception performance and battery lifetime, as well as a very high alerting volume.

The s.QUAD ATEX is available for digital POCSAG networks or analogue radio networks for voice paging, or it can work in both modes in parallel as a single device.

Together with Swissphone's new Voice POCSAG system, this option supports applications that require both voice and text messages, or migration to digital while keeping old analogue pagers in use.