Press info

New European standard as possible outcome

Euralarm broadens scope of False Alarm study for further reduction of false alarms

Zug, March 2019 - After the successful study and publication of its book 'False Alarm Study' the Fire Section of Euralarm recently decided to continue the study and ask the Technical Group False Alarms how the reduction of false alarms can be further progressed. A new European standard might be one of the proposals.

False alarms from fire detection and fire alarm systems is a topic that Euralarm's Technical Group False Alarms is working on since 2012 and that resulted in the last step in the publication of a book covering a 3-year study of the risk-based understanding of the topic in various European countries. The work was initiated after budget cuts and a subjective perceived high rate of false alarms. In some European countries it even lead to changes on specific practices of fire services. An example is the verification that is required in some countries before intervention forces are deployed, in order to avoid unjustified costs. This calculation is however limited to the impact of false alarms on fire services alone with its negative effects: it could lead to an increase of the risk to lives and inflict more cost in overall to society. Establishing the objective high risk of the false alarm rates as a basis for further analysis e.g. of their costs was one of the main reasons to start the false alarm study.

The study offers a clarification of false alarms as a phenomenon. It includes a description of the processes to initiate fire service intervention, formulas to calculate false alarm ratios, as well as a methodology of the overall analysis. This scientific approach allows for a precise picture of the situation in selected European countries as regards false alarm: Germany, Great Britain/England, Switzerland, Sweden and Austria/Vorarlberg, are covered in the study.

The study also contains recommendations and strategies to reduce false alarms, which are based on carefully examined statistics on fires and, in particular, the number of fire alarms due to detection of actual fires by fire detection and fire alarm systems, as compared to the false alarm rate. The TG False Alarms of Euralarm argued to increasingly integrate the topic of false alarms into fire protection and fire alarm strategies: handling false alarms must become an active part of the management of a site. The negative and positive effects of false alarms must be taken into consideration in the analysis.

However, the false alarm topic continues to accompany the fire safety industry. Although much has been achieved, the statistics show that there is a sizable potential for continuing improvement. Therefore, the Fire Section of Euralarm agreed to continue its study. Further, the TG has been asked to look into how the approaches for reduction of false alarms can be further progressed. One of these aspects will be the proposal of European standardised terms and the discussion about the acceptance level of false alarms.

"We have seen that there are positive effects of false alarms and that the number of real identified fires is increasing with the number of installations. However, the proportion between the consequences of real and false alarms is not adequate", according to Sebastian Festag, chairman of the TG False Alarms.

About Euralarm

Euralarm represents the electronic fire and security industry, providing leadership and expertise for industry, market, policy makers and standards bodies. Our Members make society safer and secure through systems and services for fire detection and extinguishing, intrusion detection, access control, video monitoring, alarm transmission and alarm receiving centres. Founded in 1970, Euralarm represents over 5000 companies within the fire safety and security industry valued at 67 billion Euros. Euralarm Members are national associations and individual companies from across Europe.

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