

Lift Station Monitoring System Eliminates False Alarms

Problem: Frequent false alarms from lift station

Solution: An alarm monitoring and automatic notification system using a separate telephone line for each lift station.

The Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District (EVMWD; Lake Elsinore, Calif.) uses 30 lift stations to service more than 80,000 customers. Each time a lift station alarm goes off, an EVMWD operator is dispatched, and, in the event of a false alarm, time and money are wasted. This was a common problem at EVMWD, says Bill Coleman, field superintendent of wastewater collection. "When I came on board 12 years ago we were getting three to four false alarms per day," he notes.

The district devised a solution using DialLog alarm monitoring and automatic notification systems from Antx Inc. (Austin, Texas).

The previous alarm system operated using one telephone line with a different frequency for each lift station. The line was open constantly. "If a telephone pole was hit by a car, or severe weather shook the telephone line, a false alarm was sent," Coleman says. Other times, an alarm signal was sent simply because telephone line frequencies changed. The DialLog alarm system uses a separate telephone line and telephone number for each lift station, eliminating frequency-related errors and false alarms.

The new system also offers more options than the old one. Instead of dispatching an alarm notice to the plant's 24-hour answering service, the DialLog system automatically calls an emergency telephone list to deliver a specific alarm message prerecorded by plant staff. If the telephone line fails, a "phone fault" message is sent instead of a generic alarm.

"We have eight phone numbers set, some of which are redundant," says Coleman. "I am the fourth number on this list, the on-call plant operator is first and third, and the 24-hour answering service is second." The system waits 10 minutes before dialing the next number on the list and can store up to eight telephone lists with 16 numbers each. The system also periodically verifies telephone line connections.

By 1991, all 30 of the plant's lift stations had been upgraded with DialLog units.



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DialLog Plus alarm monitoring and automatic notification units can monitor up to eight alarms. Other DialLog units can monitor up to 40.

"Since their installation, we have not had one false alarm," Coleman says. "We plan to add two more lift stations in the near future, and they will definitely be monitored by DialLog," he adds.

"The DialLog family of alarm notification systems starts at \$1,625 per unit, and annual equipment costs consist only of the telephone line," says Stephen Allen, Antx chief executive officer. For more information, call Allen at 1-512-257-1310, send a fax to 1-512-257-1374, send e-mail to sallen@antx.com, or visit the company's Web site at <http://www.antx.com/>.