

IN THE BEST OF HEALTH



Clear and effective communication between nurses, doctors and other members of staff in hospitals can literally be a case of life or death. It's why using a state-of-the-art intercom system such as the N-8000 Series from TOA Corporation UK contributes to a robust and resilient infrastructure.

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Modern hospitals are complex, often multi-site, environments that rely on staff being able to communicate with each other across departments and even different buildings. In medical emergencies seconds are vital, so having a reliable and effective method of communicating in order to share information can make all the difference when it comes to patient care.

Selection procedure

A combination of tighter budgets, increasing amounts of environmental legislation and greater financial accountability means that hospital and healthcare estate managers are under growing pressure to ensure that any money spent provides excellent value. When it comes to choosing a hospital intercom system there are a number of factors to consider, as not only must a system perform reliably, but it must also have a long life, be robust and offer a good return on investment (ROI).

Perfect for use in hospitals, the N-8000 Series internet protocol (IP) enabled network intercom system meets all the above requirements by offering flexible and scalable communications for up to 3,072 stations on a local or wide area data network. Built on TOA's proven NX-100 network audio technology, it occupies minimal network bandwidth for station-to-station calls that can be controlled and monitored through dedicated software using an internet browser.

Its ability to provide packet audio technology over an IP network achieves fast, accurate communications with optimal security and reliability. Meanwhile, its open architecture permits flexible interfacing with other systems, such as Public Address, Fire, Security, access control, and telephone systems. Recent additions to the range include SIP-based audio and video stations that will integrate with a variety of SIP server manufacturers (e.g. Cisco, Avaya, Genetec). With various cabling configurations, the N-8000 requires a minimum of onsite work as existing wiring can be used and new components simply plugged in. Since the N-8000 is not server based, users can use the dedicated software to manage settings, and to conduct real time monitoring of system operation and line status or use an Internet browser.

Safe from harm

While the functionality, flexibility and robustness of intercom equipment are key concerns, hygiene and infection control in hospitals remains a considerable public and governmental concern. It is therefore vital that rooms such as operating theatres, intensive care wards, pharmaceutical laboratories and critical care areas are kept hygienically clean to avoid bacterial contamination.

Intercom systems get a lot of daily use, so they can harbour many potentially dangerous bacteria, however, choosing the right solution will prevent contamination occurring. Products with strong anti-microbial properties, such as TOA Corporation's N-8033MS master station, provide a complete answer to the challenge of designing an intercom system that meets the requirements of an anti-bacterial specification.

The N-8033MS has an anti-microbial membrane that disrupts the bacterial cell wall, instantly killing organisms such as Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA), Klebsiella pneumonia, Escherichia coli (E. coli), Salmonella and other potentially harmful pathogens. Furthermore, thanks to highly engineered moulding tools it remains scratch free, so there are no dirt traps where harmful bacteria may breed. Its construction also means that it can be intensely cleaned and flush mounted to the wall.



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Easy does it

Almost every hospital has a unique layout, which means there is no 'one size fits all' when it comes to specifying and installing an intercom system. This makes devices that are flexible more beneficial, while a faster and more efficient installation process not only means less disruption in these busy environments but also allows a job can be carried out more quickly – something that can also help reduce costs.

Essex based UTL Cabling Solutions has installed intercom systems in hospitals all over the UK for many years and has worked with systems from several different manufacturers. Asked what he looks for in an intercom system, Paul Ellis, the company's Contracts Manager, replies, 'First and foremost we want ease of installation. Overly complex systems that require excessive time on-site are bad for us as well as the customer, so features that are simple to configure are a massive plus point. Secondly, we look for reliability, as we recognise the important role a hospital intercom system has in the overall communications infrastructure. If a device malfunctions, then not only does this inconvenience hospital staff, it means that we have to deploy one of our team to troubleshoot the problem and take remedial action.'

Paul Ellis and his team have been impressed by the N-8000 Series and he comments, 'Given the large number of features within the devices, they are surprisingly easy to install and require minimum on-site work, since existing wiring can be used and new components simply plugged in. Meanwhile, the software includes a maintenance application for system status monitoring and logging, as well as for system updating and remote control. As it is IP based, all calls between stations are free of charge, while overall ownership costs are also reduced by the open-ended system architecture, which also permits individualised configuration.'

Speak easy

Every hospital is unique and all elements of a building services infrastructure have a role to play in ensuring a smooth operation. Intercom systems are no exception and only technology that is easy to use, flexible, robust and reliable, and can help

reduce the spread of bacteria, should be specified. The N-8000 from TOA Southern Africa Pty Ltd ticks all these boxes and more to create a highly effective communications platform.

For further information please email: marketing@toasa.co.za or visit www.toa.co.za



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Kingston Hospital
Wishaw General Hospital, Glasgow
Guy's & St Thomas' Hospital, London
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Northwick Park Hospital
Watford hospital
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