

CASE STUDY:

African fire safety specialist stresses importance of advanced technologies



Customer:
Specifire

Region:
Africa

Project Name:
Pepkor Clothing Warehouse

Product Solutions:
TYCO® Sprinklers and valves

Profile

Established in 1984 to contract in the Fire Detection and Automatic Extinguishing Systems market, Specifire prides itself on providing a professional approach to each individual customer. Building on this success, the company expanded in 1995, opening a sprinkler division that is now the biggest installer of fire protection and detection systems in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. Thanks to its excellent reputation, Specifire has steadily built up a large client base that includes some of South Africa's biggest companies, including Sappi Fine Papers, Illovo Sugar, Hulamin, Toyota S.A., Unilever and numerous shopping centres.

Scope of Works

Specifire focuses almost exclusively on the KwaZulu-Natal region, including the city of Durban – which accounts for approximately 95% of its business. Featuring 150 employees, the company sees annual revenue of up to £6 million – thanks largely in part to the installation of fire control technology in industrial sites such as sugar mills and warehouses.

“For our customers, price is always a consideration, so we aim to be competitive, but at the same time we don't want to compromise our high quality,” explained Martin Holmes, Managing Director, Specifire. “We do everything in-house, from design to fabrication to installation, and finish every project on time.”

In over thirty years of business, Specifire has seen exponential growth in the marketplace and constantly evolves its own operations to meet changing demands. The implementation of a new management structure is just one of its latest innovations, along with a renewed focus on services rather than simple installation.

“Our mission is to provide the very best in design, installation and service; leveraging advanced technologies such as AutoCAD and Tyco sprinkler systems. By putting detailed planning at the heart of every project, we can ensure success,” added Holmes. “Furthermore, by focusing more on services, we can generate annuity income on a regular basis.”

“The supply, delivery and service we receive from Tyco is excellent; any concerns regarding pricing, availability and technical detail are answered within a day by the local team.”

Martin Holmes
MD, Specifire

Extensive range of Tyco® products helps ensure projects run smoothly and on time



Tyco® TY-B Conventional Sprinkler
Automatically distributes water in a spherical pattern below the deflector



Tyco® Alarm Valve (AV-1 wet assembly)

Benefits at a Glance

- Quality products that give peace of mind
- Competitive prices that don't compromise on quality
- Effective fire protection of valuable stock

Profiled Project Solution

One recent project that showcases Specifire's attention to design and detail is the deployment of circa 20,000 Tyco® in-rack and roof sprinklers in a large clothing warehouse.

Founded in 1965, PEP Stores is a large multinational discount clothing company based in Cape Town. Operating in 11 countries, including Australia and Poland, the company employs approximately 44,000 people. Operating more than 4,600 retail outlets, the company wanted to build a new 90,000 m² central hub warehouse that would house and protect its precious inventory from fire damage.

"Pepkor has consolidated all its warehousing facilities into one single distribution depot and needed a robust fire-protection solution. We put together a design concept with guaranteed compliance with regulations and won the business," continued Holmes. "In the past five months, we have installed 75% of the Tyco sprinklers and we are on target to complete the project within the agreed tight schedule."

The Tyco® in-rack and roof sprinklers, along with Tyco® high velocity sprayers and guards and pre-trimmed wet Alarm Valve (AV-1) assemblies will ensure that millions of dollars' worth of stock will be protected from fire.

"We are the current holder of the ASIB "Best Installation Award" for our nearly £1 million installation at the new premises of Unilever in Durban and we wanted this ambitious project to be similarly well regarded," said Holmes. "It is certainly a flagship example of how to properly integrate fire protection into a greenfield development."

Benefits

For Pepkor, the clear benefits are having peace of mind when it comes to fire protection as well as security in terms of full regulatory compliance. For Specifire, its relationship with Tyco® products delivers multiple advantages; from the quality of the sprinklers and valves to the support it receives.

"Tyco not only supplies premium quality products at affordable prices, but also has a strong local presence so I know that if I have a question, it will get answered quickly," commented Holmes. "There are support boffins in the region who will happily come talk about the equipment and respond to any technical enquiries."

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With the Pepkor project nearing completion, Specifire is looking to the future and hoping to build on its reputation as the region's most professional and meticulous fire protection specialist. It fully expects Tyco® products to continue to play a vital role in the company's ongoing development.

"The supply, delivery and service we receive from Tyco is excellent; any concerns regarding pricing, availability and technical detail are answered within a day by the local Tyco team," concluded Holmes. "I simply don't get that level of support from anyone else."

TYCO® Products are part of Johnson Controls, a global diversified technology and multi industrial leader serving a wide range of customers in more than 150 countries. Our 117,000 employees create intelligent buildings, efficient energy solutions, integrated infrastructure and next generation transportation systems that work seamlessly together to deliver on the promise of smart cities and communities.

Our commitment to sustainability dates back to our roots in 1885, with the invention of the first electric room thermostat. We are committed to helping our customers win and creating greater value for all of our stakeholders through strategic focus on our buildings and energy growth platforms.

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