What is a fully integrated security system?

The right security at every level

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As businesses grow, so do security needs. One location area may quickly evolve into a complex of buildings, workplaces, production sites and activities. Such expansion calls for regular and ongoing assessments of security risks and safety challenges.

These structural and environmental changes may pose challenges for access control; monitoring movements of employees, visitors and contractors; defining boundaries for facilities and grounds; standardizing procedures and decision-making processes; and prioritizing resource allocations.

A fully integrated system is the ideal, but such a system begins by having the right security at every level of need. To achieve a fully integrated security system, consider these four primary levels of access management and control

Level 1 – Mechanical Access/Egress
Simple safety and security measures begin with mechanical access control systems for exterior and interior doors. Mechanical security includes door hardware like exit devices that allow quick easy egress in an emergency, door closers that help ensure doors close and latch securely, mechanical locks, patented and high security keying systems, and portable security like cable locks, padlocks or U-locks.

Level 2 – Electronic Access Control and Key Management
Key management means having a structured system for assigning keys, and identifying and tracking who has keys to which doors. Combining key management with a system that also includes programmable electronic locks takes your security up a level because you know exactly who used the electronic locks and when, while limiting who has keys to what doors. Since they require credentials such as PIN codes or card credentials to allow entrance, electronic locks also help reduce the risk of lost or stolen keys, unauthorized key duplication, and the need to rekey the facility if a key is lost.

Programmable electronic locks are a simple and cost-effective way to increase security because they do not have to be connected to a network of any kind.

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Level 3 – Networked Access Control

Networked security means that the devices, such as electronic locks, are managed from a central source. This makes programming the system quick and easy, and streamlines credential management because you don't have to program each lock individually. Networked systems provide superior control of your access control system because they allow for real-time monitoring of security, instant credential management and options for higher security, such as dual authentication, a combination of card and PIN for access. Biometrics introduces more advanced technologies that recognize individual features, such as hand geometry or fingerprints, for greater control over access to facilities. Biometrics can also eliminate the need for any type of credential, so there is no need to replace lost, damaged or stolen cards or keys. There are networked systems available to fit the demands of businesses of any size.

Level 4 – Facility Integration

Totally integrated security solutions tie together access control, time and attendance data, and even lighting and HVAC systems for complete management of assets and people.

When it comes to choosing and implementing an integrated system, look for one that is built using "open architecture." This means that the products you choose can be managed and integrated with a wide variety of other technologies and software you may already have or be considering. The result is that you can customize your system to fit your security, budget and building needs. You'll also be able to make easy additions or upgrades to your security system in the future.

The modular, scalable characteristics of these systems allow the kind of flexibility needed for growing businesses. You can choose which openings should remain "offline" (not connected to your network) or moved to the network, and you can manage both types of locks with the same software and database. As your security needs evolve, you can have more locks on more doors and move more offline doors to a network solution when the budget allows.

Before making any decisions consider having a site survey and evaluation performed by a professional security and safety consultant. These consultants can provide cost-effective solutions to maximize security, and minimize operation and maintenance of your building's openings. These surveys include evaluations of your building's key control, access points, building security and maintenance practices. They also examine what new hardware best fits with your existing hardware and/or technology.

Recommendations should define how to best secure and segregate building spaces, including a building's perimeter, public access areas, and private and restricted spaces. With cost and value in mind, specifications should include appropriate hardware and software solutions to ensure overall security and safety of your facility.

Learn more about integrated security

For more information about how Allegion fits into an integrated security solution, please contact a professional security consultant in your area by calling **888.758.9823** or fill out the **Contact Us** form on our website at allegion.com.

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