

CASE STUDY Exeter University



When security and IT managers at the University of Exeter, a member of the prestigious Russell Group, selected CriticalArc's SafeZone® as the best solution for lone worker safety, emergency response and targeted communications, they didn't realise that within months of the system being implemented, it would be tested in dramatic circumstances when an unexploded Second World War bomb was discovered close to the campus.

When SafeZone was introduced at Exeter as a cross-department initiative, in late 2019, its initial purpose was to ensure the safety of lone workers including laboratory researchers, and service

and maintenance teams working out-of-hours. The CriticalArc solution had the clear advantage of preparedness to deal with day-to-day security and safety operations through to emergencies by combining multiple capabilities within a unified management platform.

But it was SafeZone's targeted communications and mass communications tools that proved their immediate value when a construction worker uncovered a WWII 1000kg bomb that had been buried on waste ground adjacent to the campus for more than 75 years.

Head of Security Dan Nicoll confirmed that the device posed a genuine risk and instructed his control room team to implement a major incident response.



SafeZone

"The introduction of SafeZone has been a significant supporting tool and has given our students and staff extra reassurance that assistance is no more than the touch of a button away. In addition, CriticalArc has been really receptive to our needs and any development plans and have provided ongoing support and technical advice at every phase."

DAN NICOLL
Head of Security,
Exeter University

SafeZone solution

With an immediate threat identified, SafeZone was used to notify all patrol officers, including off duty members of the security team.

Officers responded immediately and returned to the campus to help implement an initial 100 metre exclusion zone.

Meanwhile the effectiveness of SafeZone's initial roll-out to the wider community of students and staff now proved invaluable. Around 4,000 users had already registered and downloaded the SafeZone app, and this now allowed a direct emergency message to be sent to each of them. In addition, push notifications were also sent via text and email to all 32,000 preregistered users on the university database.

This three-tiered approach allowed a rapid warning to be issued and contributed to a safe evacuation of all halls of residence and buildings located within an extended 400-metre exclusion zone. SafeZone then helped officers to coordinate efficiently, as they worked with the police and military specialists attending the scene, along with other external agencies including the local authority. Halls of residents were evacuated, and alternative accommodation found for everyone affected – a task that was largely handled by the University of Exeter team.

When the Ministry of Defence (MoD) bomb disposal experts subsequently triggered a controlled explosion, despite the precautions taken - including burying the bomb under 400 tonnes of sand - the force of the blast caused significant structural damage to nearby buildings, confirming the initial decision to evacuate the campus, and highlighting the value of the SafeZone communications technology used by the university security team.

Benefits and outcomes

SafeZone is now being used more extensively by the Exeter security team, with the control room routinely verifying the locations of all patrol officers across the university's four main sites, its main Exeter campuses, and its facilities at Penryn in Cornwall located within Falmouth University.

The security team from Falmouth University supports the Exeter University Penryn Campus to provide a rapid, location-precise response service to all Exeter students on the Penryn site – a typical example of the collaboration SafeZone enables between institutions.

With Falmouth also now adopting SafeZone, it will be easy for both universities to expand their services to provide safety everywhere and adapt to emerging challenges.

Solution benefits include:

- Optimized coordination and response to major incidents, with the locations of security personnel, volunteer first aiders, fire marshals, and support staff visible to the control room team.
- Lone worker protection is ensured 24/7 for isolated team members and those at heightened risk.
- Security controllers and responders can see the precise locations of all checked-in users and ensure rapid response to emergencies.
- Rapid implementation and ease of scalability.
- Cost-savings compared with disparate systems, yet improved functionality.



CriticalArc is a leading technology innovator, designing, and developing the distributed command and control solution, SafeZone, which is revolutionizing the way organizations manage safety and security operations.

Asia Pacific
+61 1300 13 53 40

Americas
+1 800 985 9402

Europe
+44 (0) 800 368 9876

Middle East
+973 17 716 704

www.criticalarc.com

safezoneapp.com

contact@criticalarc.com