
Utilizing the IP1500 as a Panic Button

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Introduction

The number of locations that lack efficient and effective means to communicate during an emergency is dwindling. When a potentially dangerous event occurs, it is vital that individuals have the ability to easily request assistance and provide information that can prevent situations from escalating or becoming tragic. Panic buttons are an important tool in empowering individuals to swiftly contact first responders, providing an important layer of safety and security that ensures help is available at the touch of a button.

Background

Panic buttons - or duress buttons, as they're sometimes known - are commonplace in a wide variety of locations where it may be unsafe or ineffective to use other means of communication to request assistance. For example, if a threatening individual is standing in the lobby of a business or school, calling for help on a telephone may only exacerbate the situation. Instead, a panic button can silently notify first responders without alerting the suspect.

That's one reason why panic buttons are commonly used in locations, including classrooms, lobbies, offices, receptionist desks, banks, hospitals, senior centers, convenience stores, gas stations and other security stations and end points. They're a simple and fast way to request assistance. Simply push the button and help is on the way.

Challenge

Traditional panic buttons frequently have a series of limitations that prevent them from being fully dynamic and versatile tools for emergency communication.

For example, many panic buttons do not provide a means to communicate with first responders once the button has been activated. As a result, operators are naturally inclined to infer that a situation is potentially dire or dangerous, which may escalate situations that aren't life threatening or limit available options for help (think police vs. fire vs. EMT). It's difficult to know exactly what the situation entails when communication lines aren't completely open.

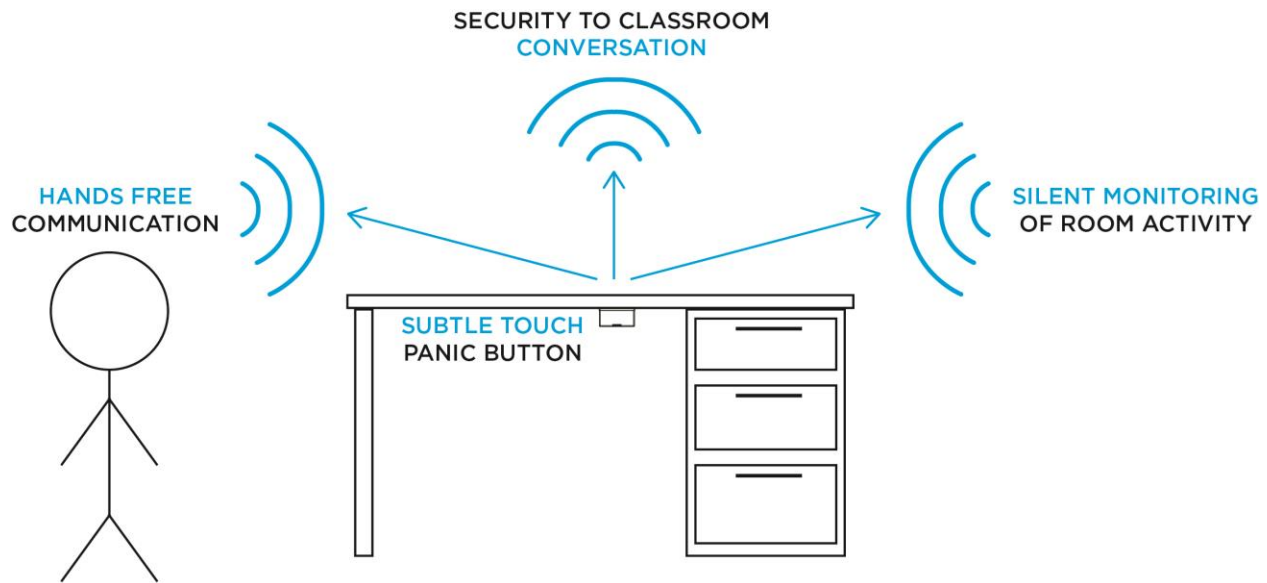
There is also the matter of activations that may occur by accident or as a prank, which can be both annoying and a waste of time and resources. Some panic buttons have fees tied to the number of times they are pressed, causing individuals to be confused or needlessly wary about when to push, while others can be difficult to reset and maintain.

These were some of the challenges faced by Schoolcraft College, a public institution located in the Detroit suburb of Livonia, as it looked to augment safety and security within each classroom on its 139-acre campus. Fortunately, Code Blue was there with the solution.

Solution

The IP1500 from Code Blue is a full duplex VoIP speakerphone that can be used for panic button applications. Ideal for both indoor and outdoor locations, including hallways, classrooms and stairwells, the compact and lightweight design ensures an easy installation, while offering a full package of unique features – SIP standards, fault monitoring, auxiliary output, outdoor rating – in one convenient package.

Schoolcraft College installed an IP1500 in every classroom under the desk for faculty members. The setup allows instructors to silently push the button, similar to what might be found in a bank building, which connects them directly to campus police. At that point, security personnel can then silently monitor the activity in the room and decide how to proceed, whether that's directly interacting with people in the class or sending help right to the room.



Benefits

Code Blue's sophisticated IP solutions, including the IP1500, offer a number of advantages over traditional panic buttons.

- **Full Duplex:** Code Blue phones come with full duplex capabilities with echo cancelling, sometimes known as open duplex, which provides natural and superior communication during an incident. Unlike a radio or intercom, both the caller and first responder are able to communicate simultaneously, keeping communication lines open and active while eliminating buzzing or static that might interfere with the sound.
- **One-Way "Listening" Mode:** While Code Blue phones allow for simultaneous interaction between a caller and operator, the speaker portion also can be disconnected or removed entirely to allow for silent monitoring of situations where the button has been activated. This gives security and safety personnel the opportunity to give each situation the unique treatment it deserves and deliver the appropriate response and help each time.
- **Piezoelectric Data Buttons:** The data buttons that Code Blue uses for its industry leading Help Points[®] and emergency speakerphones is a high-tech solution that ensures individuals are able to make direct contact with first responders when assistance is needed most and seconds matter. When Code Blue's buttons are pressed, a corresponding change in voltage is instantly produced that triggers an alert that is quickly delivered to first responders. Because the buttons are not mechanical and contain no moving parts that can jam, stick or deteriorate over time, Code Blue products are able to efficiently and effectively offer dependable communication. Additionally, ring back is muted so the button press will have a silent activation.

Schoolcraft College, however, was worried about knees bumping the buttons and causing inadvertent activations, so they opted for a custom recessed button option that Code Blue has done in the past for other customers.

- **Durable:** Regardless of the environment and the elements that exist in them, the IP1500 can withstand the harshest natural and man-made conditions thanks to quality components and construction, including its rugged 16 gauge aluminum housing.
- **Ease of Use:** Not only is help easily available with the touch of a button anytime, eliminating concerns about use and operation, the IP option requires only one technology platform to manage after installation.
- **SIP Compatible:** The IP1500 offers increased collaboration and functionality with a number of leading device management systems, including Avaya, Cisco, Genetec and the ToolVox[®] X3, an award-winning systems management platform offered by Code Blue that can remotely monitor and provision the phones and run scheduled tests of connected devices to monitor speakers, buttons and microphones for failure.
- **Tamper Proof:** In addition to its durable construction, the real-time, self-monitoring solutions provided by the ToolVox can alert authorities in an instant if any of the IP1500s are disconnected or damaged.

Conclusion

Panic buttons remain an easy way to alert first responders to incidents. The IP1500 from Code Blue can not only alert authorities during a potentially dangerous situation, but it also offers a number of additional features that provide increased flexibility and functionality for locations looking to provide help at the touch of a button.

References

<http://www.silvaconsultants.com/introduction-to-panic-alarms.html>

About Code Blue Corporation

For more than 25 years, Code Blue Corporation has been the industry leading manufacturer of durable emergency communication solutions. The pioneer in developing and producing vandal-resistant Blue Light Emergency Phones at thousands of education, corporate, hospital, airport and municipal locations around the world, Code Blue's expansion includes the innovation of advanced public address and mass notification systems to provide a complete end-to-end solution.

Founded to address the growing need for sophisticated audio security solutions, Code Blue offers American-made Help Point®, Emergency Signaling, Incident Response and Systems Management products that are innovative, rugged, powerful and easily integrated.

Code Blue's evolution continues with the engineering of new software and hardware designed to meet the ever-changing needs of customers who require an advanced level of incident deterrence that establishes a safe environment. No matter where you go, you can feel safe knowing that there is help **at the touch of a button®**.