

# Zetron Communications Consoles Trigger Faster Fire Crew Response in UK Airports Emergency 'First'

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When an aircraft slightly overshot the runway after landing at Birmingham Airport in September, fire crews were on the scene faster than ever thanks to a pioneering alert system built around Zetron communications consoles.

It was the first live incident since the commissioning of the Zetron system and the technology worked flawlessly, cutting 20 seconds off previous response times and winning praise from airport managers and fire crews – plus the attention of other UK airports.

“Twenty seconds doesn’t sound like much,” says Birmingham Airport control centre manager Chris Wilson. “But for us and everyone else involved in aviation safety getting fire crews to an incident that much faster could save many lives. That is why what we’ve done here is attracting so much interest.”

Birmingham’s alert system is part of a project to consolidate airport fire services and operations in a single control room. Three Zetron DCS-5020 Digital Consoles give operators touch-screen control over dedicated safety-related communications channels including ground and air band radio, hotlines to air traffic control and fire crews, and off-site fire and ambulance centres.

Previously operators took notes of emergency calls from air traffic control and then relayed the information to fire crews. Now, an innovation by Zetron partner Servicom uses the DCS-5020’s programmability to automate such alerts. When emergency calls go to airport control, fire crews hear the conversation live over the fire station PA system and can more quickly assess what response is required. Meanwhile, the Zetron system turns on fire station lighting and opens the main doors ready for fire tenders to leave.

Dispatching first response is only step one in the airport’s major incident plan. Operators may also decide to involve outside agencies. Because the Zetron screens are fully configurable, operators were able to specify a flow chart-like presentation with a logical hierarchy of actions. “They effectively start at the top and work their way down to the bottom of the screen. The operators really like it. It allows them to keep calm and helps ensure that nothing is missed,” observes Wilson.

“We test the system twice a day, every day, but nothing compares to a live incident. Although this was a minor incident, it did require a response by the airport’s fire and rescue service and everyone involved was very pleased with how the system performed. Thankfully there was no fire or injuries but the time savings we have recorded are real and consistent. In a serious incident they could, quite literally, mean the difference between life and death.”

The DCS-5020 Digital Console combines a small footprint with substantial capacity, putting up to 30 telephony and digital and analogue radio channels under finger-tip control. Around the world it is increasingly the system of choice for small to medium sized static control rooms in public safety, transportation and utilities, as well as for emergency response vehicles. A single system supports up to

16 customisable screen-based operator consoles. Distributed processing gives the DCS-5020 flexibility, scalability and robustness, delivering the high degree of resilience required for mission-critical 24/7 applications.

#### About Zetron

For over 30 years, Zetron has provided mission-critical communications solutions for customers in public safety, transportation, utilities, manufacturing, healthcare and business. With offices in the U.S.A., UK, Australia and numerous field locations, Zetron supports a worldwide network of resellers, system integrators and distributors. This gives Zetron a global reach as well as a local presence in the regions it serves. Zetron is a wholly owned subsidiary of JVC Kenwood Corporation. For more information, visit [www.zetron.com](http://www.zetron.com).

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