

Synergy helps Category A prison implement a smarter approach to safety

“Prison facilities are no longer just about traditional security. The Synergy 3 solution benefits inmates and staff, and improves overall operational efficacy.”

Brett Longley

Technical Sales Manager, Synectics



An integrated surveillance and security management solution, developed and deployed by Synectics, is helping to improve staff and inmate safety at a major European Category A prison.

The vast site, which houses over 750 inmates, comprises multiple buildings, including cell blocks, visiting zones, gym and exercise areas, and special focus zones, all of which are monitored by over 2000 cameras.

A command and control solution was required that would allow operators to monitor and manage all cameras from a single location – the ECR (Emergency Control Room). The solution had to be capable of integrating with a wide range of third-party access control, security, and emergency systems operating across the prison estate that are designed to flag up staff and inmate safety risks – a key priority for the prison authority.

Single system, multi-site monitoring

The end-to-end Synergy-driven solution developed by Synectics gives security personnel located in each block 24/7 access to video footage but ensures that overarching control is only allowed by operators based in the central ECR.

Here, footage from any camera located in any block is monitored, controlled, and reviewed in real time, with integrated GIS mapping displaying camera points, additional location-based data, and live ‘field of view’ plotting on an exact site layout. Operators can simply point and click to immediately view live feeds and control PTZ cameras directly from the map.

Synergy is designed to integrate with a wide range of ONVIF-conformant systems and devices. Video footage can therefore be paired with data inputs from other third-party systems to provide the prison with a comprehensive alarm monitoring and alert solution.

Protecting personnel and vulnerable prisoners

By connecting data from the access control system and information from body-worn emergency alerts, Synergy can immediately flag up the location of a staff member and display footage from the nearest camera, allowing operators to undertake a visual assessment of any potential threat.

The map-centric display, teamed with alert-triggered on-screen guidance workflows, ensures that the right support is dispatched to the correct location as quickly as possible.

The GIS mapping capabilities of Synergy also facilitate the prison's 'safer cells' initiative, which changes the level of support and monitoring assigned to an individual cell based on the inmate's risk level. For example, if an inmate is suffering from mental health issues, they may require more frequent staff contact, observation, or in severe cases be assigned to suicide watch.

Using Synergy, operators in the ECR can monitor any designated 'safer cells' and therefore activate/de-activate associated systems including in-cell surveillance, pill-hatch status, and audio logging of conversations with prison staff and from audio call points implemented in partnership with the Samaritans.

In addition to supporting those inmates most in need of help, using Synergy to activate safer cell features removes the need to allocate specific blocks or areas of the prison to this purpose, thus reducing situations where vulnerable prisoners might feel even more isolated.

Emergency response through interoperability

Synergy's interoperability with other systems enables operators based in the ECR to engage precise emergency protocols should a threat be detected. For example, individual doors or whole zones can be locked down for incident containment.

Conversely, should the need arise to evacuate a particular area quickly, access control can be overridden to create the fastest route to safety. Synergy's workflow feature also enables lights and power to be controlled in response to evolving scenarios, such as disabling lifts in the event a fire or if a hazard has been detected on a specific floor.

360-degree security

While enhanced safety was an essential priority for the project, the Category A status of the facility requires the highest levels of security functionality from the surveillance solution supplied.

By integrating and interrogating data from a wide range of systems, the Synergy solution from Synectics delivers a 360-degree view of all site movement, activity, and alarms for complete situational awareness. For example, integration with the perimeter fence solution and video analytics generates alerts based on movement, touch, and approaching shapes for immediate review and action.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information on the products, services, and systems offered by Synectics, visit synecticsglobal.com.

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And with built-in redundancy functionality, including server failover and hot-swap recording to eliminate any single points of failure, coverage at the prison is guaranteed 24/7. Together with Synergy's operational and safety management capabilities, these features all help ensure that inmates, personnel, and facilities across the prison estate are supported and protected.

Brett Longley, Technical Sales Manager at Synectics, said: "Prison facilities are no longer just about traditional security. This project demonstrates that a fully integrated surveillance solution delivers a wide range of safety measures benefiting inmates and staff, and helps improve overall operational efficacy."

Synectics designs integrated end-to-end surveillance control systems for the world's most demanding security environments. We excel at complex projects that require innovative, tailored solutions with high reliability and flexibility, specifically for casinos, oil and gas, marine, public space, banking, transport and critical infrastructure applications. Synectics' Systems division is part of Synectics plc, a global leader in advanced surveillance, security and integration technologies and services.

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