

School District Learns to Pass Safety Inspections

Computerized emergency light management system
increases confidence and reduces costs

Power outages are a real possibility in Ontario Canada, particularly during harsh winter conditions. When the power goes down, the students, parents, teachers, and employees in the thirty two schools in the Renfrew County School District depend on the emergency lights. Monthly and annual tests are designed to keep the system functioning and in compliance with local safety codes. However, the time-consuming, cumbersome labor required to manually test each emergency lighting unit was becoming unmanageable for the custodial staff. When a fire inspection revealed that several school buildings were not up to code, Renfrew County School District Plant Manager James Brose knew it was time to invest in a more efficient emergency lighting system.

For a cost-effective, long-term solution, the answer was to install a centrally-monitored computerized system. The Nexus[®] Emergency Lighting Management System from Thomas & Betts offered the long-term return on investment, functionality, and network compatibility the Renfrew School District required. With Nexus[®], each emergency light could be tested automatically using two-way communication sending the test request to the light, with results sent back to the Nexus[®] server in real time. The Nexus[®] reporting functions would automatically document testing and maintenance to satisfy code requirements. Manpower would no longer be needed to test the lights and manually log results, so valuable labor resources could be saved for performing essential maintenance and repair. Plant Manager James Brose explained, “We need to use internal staff and stay within our budget. By investing in Nexus[®] we will save money on servicing and maintenance of the emergency lighting system.”

The flexible installation and design options available with the Nexus[®] system accommodate new construction and existing locations. To work within the Renfrew School District budget constraints, a phased-in installation approach was planned, with priority given to schools that had failed previous inspections and those that required upgrading. By replacing older units with more energy-efficient LED lights, the school also took advantage of local “green” incentives. Brose comments, “As we worked out the details of the requirements for our first installation I was pleased by the good cooperation between our electricians and the Thomas & Betts designers.” By integrating the Nexus[®] emergency lighting system into the school’s existing building automation, the emergency light system status became easier to view as part of the overall building safety picture.

For the two-thirds of the Renfrew County schools running emergency lights on the Nexus system, testing is being controlled on the central Nexus[®] server with documented logs recording that all units in every building are being checked and maintained as required. The real-time updates now allow Plant Services to direct labor resources where they are most needed.

Brose is pleased with the results he sees with Nexus[®] system: “Now I’m confident that the required tests are being done on schedule, and with the automated reports we’ll pass our inspections with no problem.”

For more information, contact Nexus[®] Support:

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