

## A bridge over untroubled waters

How ANT Telecom is helping Severn Trent Water maintain secure, integrated communications with its lone workers

**More than six million people in the UK are now classified as lone workers with many of them operating alone in remote geographies in high-risk environments. HSE legislation means that UK companies are responsible for the health, safety and welfare of not only their employees, but also of contractors and self-employed workers. As such, employers have a duty to ensure that lone workers operating in isolated environments are supported with appropriate processes, procedures and technologies to mitigate risk and assure their safety. However, with many lone workers required to work in hazardous remote settings where mobile coverage is sub-optimal, providing such support can be challenging.**

Although the deployment of stand-alone lone worker solutions is a common and noble attempt to assure employee safety, on its own it is not enough. The most progressive organisations are those that have integrated lone worker solutions into their broader unified communications

network, in the process supporting vulnerable remote workers with greater connectivity and renewed reassurance. A great example of this can be found at Severn Trent Water, where a long-standing partnership with ANT Telecom is ensuring that lone worker safety is protected by an integrated system.

### Severn Trent

Severn Trent is a leading UK water company, responsible for water management and supply, as well as waste water treatment and disposal. The company, which draws its water sources – and indeed its name – from two of Britain's largest rivers, the Severn and the Trent, maintains 46,000km of mains pipes. It supplies around 1.8 billion litres of drinking water each day to around 7.7 million people. Almost a third (32%) of its supplies are from groundwater sources. The company, which operates a number of reservoirs and water treatment plants, also collects and treats around 1.4 giga-litres of wastewater each day across a 92,000km sewer network – to more than 1000 sewage treatment works. As such, the company deploys a high number of lone workers.



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## Lone worker partnership

To safeguard its growing team of remote workers, Severn Trent has established a long-running partnership with communications solutions specialists ANT Telecom. The relationship began in the late 1990s with the installation of a pager alarm system for Severn Trent's Trimpley treatment plant, and has subsequently evolved into the development and maintenance of an integrated lone worker solution across many of its sites.

"We contract ANT to manage all of the service, repair and call-out work to our lone worker systems," says Mark Purcell, Contracts Manager for Operational Support Services, EM&I at Severn Trent. "The systems are in place at sites where we have no mobile coverage – predominantly our clean water and water production plants. We have also adopted the solution at some of our sewage treatment works where they have no coverage in the dry wells, or intermittent coverage in some of the pipe galleries."

The lone worker system plays an important role in alerting problems with critical on-site alarms. The solution uses a two-way radio system, incorporating a panic button, tilt detection and a time surveillance system. The system, which integrates with the annunciator panel to pick up hardwire problems, also interfaces with Severn Trent's SCADA alarm system – meaning that operators can pick up alerts irrespective of where they are on-site. "If any pumps or critical assets fail, the system will radio straight through to our

operators to ensure they are aware of any issues. If they are not in the control room, the alert will go directly to nominated radios on site. Likewise, the access gates are connected to the same system – providing cross-site connectivity at all times," says Mark.

## The benefits

The ANT solution continues to have a major impact on Severn Trent's operations – not only helping to mitigate risk and drive productivity and efficiency, but also ensuring the company meets some of its key strategic objectives. "Health and Safety is a high priority for Severn Trent," says Mark. "One of my main annual goals is to reduce lost time caused by incidents and accidents on our sites – and our contractors and partners have a huge role to play in helping us to meet that objective. The lone worker solution is pivotal. And because of the nature of our relationship, we give ANT full autonomy to manage the system. This helps me direct my time towards other matters within the business.

"Moreover, with health and safety so important to us, ANT always engages heavily with us around all our safety projects, and their service engineers help make their implementation simple and effective. This makes a huge difference; it means that we can serve site managers and operators optimally, and this in turn makes my job a whole lot easier."

Severn Trent uses a 'Balanced Scorecard' to measure contractors' performance against agreed KPIs, many of which focus on safety

issues. "Our main goal is to ensure that our equipment is working safely. If it isn't, this inevitably puts our operators at risk – and this is something that we cannot afford to do. That's why we put in place really tight metrics and timescales to monitor performance. ANT consistently achieves or exceeds those targets. This is a real benefit to us," says Mark.

## The relationship and the future

With the trend towards lone working showing no sign of abating in the coming years, Severn Trent's long-standing partnership with ANT Telecom appears set to evolve further.

"The ANT account team is always looking for new ways to improve performance and extend coverage across our sites – and will frequently share information on innovations coming through that may be able to help us do that. It's a great combination; ANT's service engineers demonstrate extremely high knowledge and competency levels to ensure that the solutions integrate seamlessly with our business requirements, and at a more strategic level, the consultancy we receive ensures that our technologies are aligned for growth. They're a real asset to the business." Mark concluded.



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