

# Case Study: Children's Museum of Denver

## ExitPoint™



The Children's Museum of Denver takes pride in offering surprises around every corner, providing playful interactive learning experiences for children, newborn to age 8. But museum management realized that the facility's fun-filled mazes of displays, spanning three floors, could make it difficult for visitors to find an exit in the event of a fire.

Per an agreement made with the City of Denver, the museum was allowed to open with just a basic fire detection system. The museum would, however, eventually need to upgrade its fire and life safety systems to compensate for the lack of an adequate water supply and fire department access. When the time came to make good on this agreement, museum management enlisted the help of System Sensor and several Denver area installers and consultants, among others, to get the job done.

The museum enhanced its fire and life safety system with the addition of duct and open area detectors, manual pull stations at its exits, System Sensor horns and strobes, and a NOTIFIER® intelligent fire alarm control panel with a remote annunciator, which has a zone map of the building for fire department use.

Kitty Bond, the museum's vice president of business operations, who spearheaded the system upgrade search, was especially drawn to the opportunity to install the System Sensor ExitPoint™ directional sound system. ExitPoint deploys a series of directional sounders that emit non-verbal cues to lead people to an exit in the event of a fire. Evacuees intuitively know to follow the sounders to safety.

According to Dave Boswell, director of business development for Hughes Associates, Brookfield, Colorado, the engineering firm for the project, ExitPoint is a good fit for the type of populations the museum serves. "The nature of the museum lends itself to this type of technology by the fact that you've got a transient occupancy," he says. As many as 90 percent of the people in the museum at any given time aren't familiar with the building's layout, he estimates, so giving occupants clear, easy-to-understand exit cues is a real benefit.

Serving people with special needs also emerged as a plus for ExitPoint. "One of the major criteria for recommending ExitPoint is that it would clearly enhance egress for people who were

visually impaired," says Boswell. During a test conducted at the museum, a blindfolded firefighter easily found his way to an exit when the ExitPoint system was activated.

It took that test, as well as others conducted that same day at the museum, to make believers out of some of the local fire officials who had never heard of ExitPoint and were skeptical about its effectiveness. Boswell notes that Denver's chief fire protection engineer was particularly concerned that ExitPoint might interfere with the evacuation signal for the museum's fire alarm system. Thus, Hughes Associates and the City of Denver agreed to a compromise: ExitPoint would go on an independent circuit.



"We designed it such that it was on a separate circuit so if the fire department wanted to, it could silence ExitPoint without silencing the fire alarm signal," says Boswell.

Cleveland says the System Sensor horns and strobes do a good job of alerting people that they need to evacuate the building, which can be an especially difficult task with children who have trouble

disengaging from their activities. Although the museum has chosen to have ExitPoint and the fire alarm go off simultaneously, having ExitPoint on an independent circuit does enable the option of programming it to kick in seconds after the initial attention-getting alarm has started sounding to provide occupants with critical directional information.

### Effective emergency evacuations

The ExitPoint sounder provides the ideal solution for new and retrofitted fire alarm systems. As an audible exit sign, ExitPoint guides people to building exits — reliably, intuitively and safely. It can reduce evacuation times up to 75 percent, prevent injuries and help save lives.

For more information, visit [www.systemsensor.com/ep](http://www.systemsensor.com/ep).



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