

## Axis surveillance ensures firefighter readiness.

West Babylon, New York fire stations use Axis network cameras to keep an eye on critical equipment.



Organization:  
West Babylon Fire  
District

Location:  
West Babylon, New  
York, USA

Industry segment:  
Government

Application:  
Firehouse safety and  
security

Axis partners:  
A+ Technology  
Solutions, IPVideo Corp.

### Mission

Because rapid response is so critical for a fire department, commissioners of the West Babylon fire district needed to put the lid on escalating incidents of misplaced equipment and careless handling of trucks that could impact firefighter efficiency. They wanted to install a surveillance system that would help them deter, detect and apprehend volunteers who disregarded firehouse safety procedures.

### Solution

A+ Technology Solutions, a Bay Shore, NY-based security integration firm and Axis partner, designed and installed a surveillance solution that integrated more than 50 network cameras and a door access control system for all three district firehouses. Operating over a secure VPN, the fire chief and authorized staff monitor the video from the main firehouse boardroom through an intuitive DynaView video management system from IPVideo Corporation, an Axis application development partner.

This centralized enterprise-class configuration saves the district the cost of maintaining and staffing separate monitoring stations in each firehouse.

### Result

With the cameras operating 24/7, the fire chief has been able to review archived video based on an estimated timeframe of when an incident was likely to have occurred. Because of the image clarity, the chief can easily identify anyone in the video frame and discover who was responsible. Fire commissioners have noted a significant drop in volunteers borrowing truck equipment without authorization and there have been dramatically fewer incidents of firefighting gear being stowed improperly.

"Our Axis network cameras help us keep a close watch on fire station activity – which deters volunteers from moving each others' gear from its proper place or borrowing equipment off the trucks."

Rich Vella, Commissioner for the West Babylon Fire District.

### Securing gear for rapid response

"In a volunteer fire department, speed is of the essence when getting our equipment to the scene," says Rich Vella, commissioner for the West Babylon Fire District on the south shore of Long Island. "Firefighters don't have time to hunt for missing gloves or, worse, arrive at a fire only to discover a critical piece of equipment isn't on the truck."

Before the Axis network cameras were deployed in the equipment bays, firehouse hallways and building exteriors, it was difficult to catch the culprit. "If someone didn't come forward and admit they were at fault, we would investigate the best we could, but could never prove anything," shares Vella.

### Reinforcing proper procedures

A+ Technology Solutions worked with West Babylon Fire District commissioners on strategic camera placement to ensure maximum coverage of equipment bays, truck cabinets and drug closets. They chose AXIS 216FD and AXIS 225FD Network Cameras to handle variable lighting conditions in the bays and outside the building. In addition to exceptional image clarity and embedded motion and audio detection, their low-profile designs and vandal-resistant casings minimize their susceptibility to damage from ladder trucks and other tall equipment.

According to Vella, the cameras help reinforce the importance of following proper safety precautions. Vella recalls how the Axis cameras caught a driver pulling a fire truck out of the bay without first checking to see that all the cabinets were securely shut. The damage to the cabinets was a costly repair for the district.

"The driver thought that he checked the truck," shares Vella. "But when we looked at the video, it was evident that he had just hopped in the cab and pulled out." Vella says that the cameras have helped cut back on minor accidents by reminding people to be more aware of their surroundings and to follow recommended procedures.

### Deterring scofflaws, "borrowing" and unauthorized entry

Because the community has learned that the network cameras are watching the building, the West Babylon Fire District has been able to deter certain activities, like illegal skateboarding in the vicinity of the firehouses and unsanctioned borrowing of equipment. According to Vella, there were times during bad snowstorms that volunteers took power saws off trucks to cut down trees and forgot to return them. "Now with the cameras, we know who is coming into the firehouse and are able to stop them."

Because the network cameras are tied to a firehouse's Identocard access control system, the district secretary can determine who is coming and going in the buildings at any time of the day or night. "We check the database at least once a week to see if there's excess usage during off hours," shares Vella. "During one of those routine checks we identified a former volunteer coming into the building using a key that he had failed to return to the chief when he resigned. Without the surveillance system, who knows how long that could have continued without our knowledge?"

### Getting to the crux of the problem quickly

Vella says that the Axis network cameras have made life a lot easier for the firehouse staff. "If something does happen, we're able to get a handle on it quickly," declares Vella. "Before the surveillance cameras were in place it was more or less guesswork and a lot of footwork spent investigating and questioning people. Now, once we know the general timeframe, we can just look at the surveillance video and get down to the nitty gritty of what's going on."

