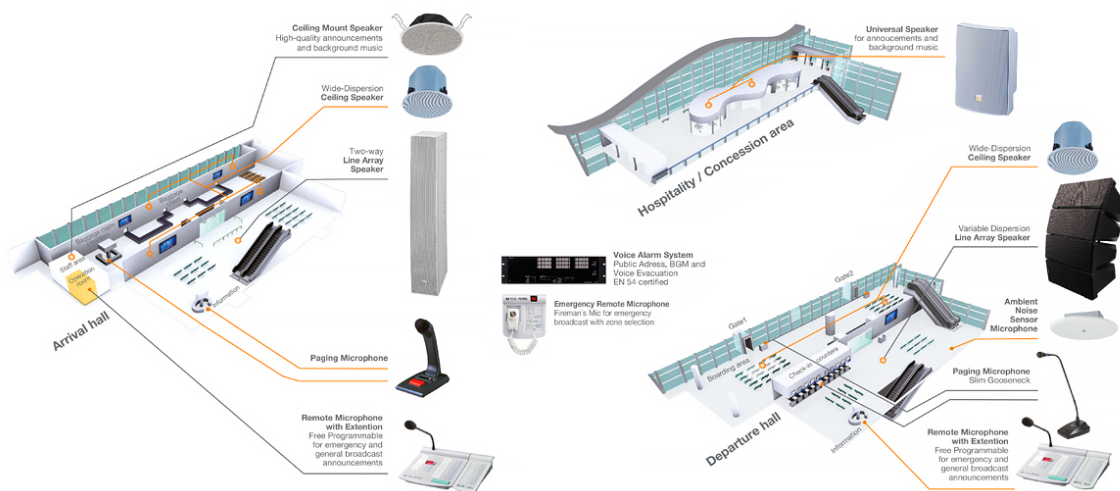


Safety in Transport Hubs



In recent weeks the UK has seen unprecedented issues within transport infrastructures especially in rail and air. In this article we look at how the increased level of passenger numbers has led to overcrowding, how cancellations have caused a bottleneck of unexpected passenger numbers that might cause safety concerns and how important voice announcements are in these applications.

Air

Flight cancellations have been top news with people either not being able to depart for travel or being stranded with no accommodation on return flights. During the pandemic many airport staff were laid off to cut costs and to survive they had to find new career paths with a reluctance to return to the industry, this has caused an issue with being able to facilitate an increase in services safely. Travel is at a peak in the Western Hemisphere as we enjoy less restrictive travel. We are also at the start of the traditional summer holiday period with many travellers desperate to get away after a two-year hiatus. Delays and cancellations have meant that more people are simply trapped in the departure lounge waiting for an available flight with passenger numbers increasing with each planned departure and stress levels have been high.

Rail

As our team recently attended events in London, we all noticed that it felt that transport was less crowded on Monday and Friday. There were noticeable peaks on mid-week days, and we know from speaking to people that are travelling for work that they are often required to work the same day as their colleagues to facilitate face to face meetings.

You can understand that most people would want to take advantage of hybrid working closer to the weekend, so our experience was that Tuesday-Thursday travel was far busier – almost at the level pre-covid. Hybrid working therefore is possibly less successful than we think. Certainly, we experienced transport staff having to hold customers because there were too many people on the platform which you would think with the working from home ethos would have been a thing of the past – few people were worrying about distance or wearing a mask just desperate to squeeze onto the next available carriage regardless of passenger numbers.

The reality is there seems to be lower passenger numbers but condensed into a denser travelling pattern. This is compounded by the current industrial action travellers are experiencing.

Incident Management

We have also seen huge changes in incident management in recent years and systems need to be designed for both evacuating passengers or locking them down in safe areas with emergency services being able to communicate messages until they have the incident under control. Voice alarm is transforming incident management away from the traditional bell sounding systems to facilitate communicating clear instructions during a lockdown situation.

Solutions

Safety is paramount in these situations. Staff need a simple to operate system that can aide how they can manage customers. Transport hubs must be able to deliver voice instructions in many formats to provide safety announcements, deliver public address and give an enhanced passenger experience. Systems need to be robust and flexible to provide the options to deliver departure and security information, background music, paging, general announcements, and emergency evacuation instructions to allow for safe reliable passenger transit.

With the need to broadcast to different zones with various announcements planning and designing a system is key to ensuring that it meets all requirements both current and for future development. TOA systems are specifically developed to have longevity and for clients to be able to add to current systems if projects expand. At TOA we work closely with our clients providing technical expertise to ensure that specifications meet all the end-users needs providing long term solutions for their PA/VA requirements.

TOA public address and voice alarm systems provide a complete sound solution. Integrated system connectivity between microphone, amplification and a huge range of speakers that can enhance different decors allows for clear announcements and ambient background music. This gives passengers peace of mind and a relaxed atmosphere whilst delivering important announcements and emergency messaging.

In airports the VX-3000 system can directly network with the AviaVox automated announcement system. This connects the PA/VA system directly to the Flight Information Display System (FIDS) which can automatically broadcast flight information and boarding calls giving immediate up-to-date information.

To find out more about how we can help specify for transport hub projects contact technical@toa.co.uk