

## ▶ NEXEDGE® helping fire fighters across Poland

Kenwood NEXEDGE® helping fire fighters to work more safely and effectively across Poland.



### Fire and rescue services in Poland

The State Fire Service (SFS) of Poland consists of a National Headquarters in Warsaw, 16 Regional Headquarters, 353 District (Municipal) Headquarters and 499 Fire and Rescue Units.

The service has an illustrious history and in addition to providing fire protection and rescue services within Poland have also participated in international operations with other European countries, as well as in missions coordinated by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, EU Monitoring and Information Centre and NATO Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre.

The national fire fighting service operates an integrated system where incidents are first reported to a District Center who would generally respond. Each district reports all incidents into their Regional Center who would provide and coordinate support, including additional crews and specialist personnel and equipment if required and can call on the National Center to coordinate support from other regions.

Since joining the European Union in 2004, all of the emergency services in Poland have undergone major restructuring and invested in new equipment and technologies.

The past three years alone has seen Kenwood NEXEDGE® digital radio systems installed and operational in a growing number of County and Regional Fire Services across Poland.

Today, five major fire services responsible for an area of 65,530 km<sup>2</sup> and a population of over 1.5 million rely on the coverage, clarity and flexibility of NEXEDGE® systems in their daily fire and rescue operations, helping to coordinate their services in the most extreme conditions.

### NEXEDGE® digital radio systems operating in the Fire Services, Poland

Service	Location	Area	Population
City of Białystok	Region	20,187 km <sup>2</sup>	294,989
City of Olsztyn	Region	24,173 km <sup>2</sup>	176,522
City of Toruń	Country	1,520 km <sup>2</sup>	205,640
City of Łódź	Region	18,218 km <sup>2</sup>	739,832
City of Gorzów Wielkopolski	Gorzowski County	1,432 km <sup>2</sup>	125,408



The NEXEDGE® systems were all designed and installed by Elektrit Sp.zo.o., Kenwood’s distributor for its communications equipment and solutions in Poland and their dealer Alfa Radio of Bydgoszcz, which specialises in communications solutions for fire services.

### Implementing NEXEDGE® at the Provincial Headquarters of the State Fire Service in Łódź

The Regional Headquarters of the State Fire Service in Łódź, is the latest fire service in Poland to adopt the NEXEDGE® system, we were fortunate to have the opportunity to meet with their senior management on a recent visit, to get insights on operational considerations, the selection process, testing regime and how the new system is being rolled-out across the region.



L-R: Tomasz Masłowski, Brig. Paweł Stępień, Jacek Łapszo



Brigadier Paweł Stępień, Deputy Regional Commander and Tomasz Masłowski, IT & Communications Senior Inspector took time out to share the challenges of migrating from their existing analogue system to building a digital radio system infrastructure across the entire region in a Fire Service staffed by both full time professional fire fighters and volunteers, Brig. Stępień stated: “Our existing analogue radio system has served us well for many years, but there is no doubt that a digital system would greatly improve our ability to communicate across wider areas with greater clarity in both voice and data”, he continued: “However, we are one of the largest regional operations in the country and migrating from digital to analogue across the 48 local sites will take time. This is one of the reasons we were keen to test the NEXEDGE® system as the Mixed Mode capability was of great interest to us”.

Mixed Mode is a key feature of Kenwood NEXEDGE® digital radio systems which allows a NEXEDGE® radio to receive calls from both analogue and digital radios automatically, without the operator having to switch between the two. He stated: "This was extremely important for us as our current fleet of radios is 85% analogue. One of the issues we discovered in our field trials was the need for training and clear instructions to operators of the radios in considering the composition of the fleet when in a live fire fighting or rescue operation".



*The Regional Control Center*

The initial NEXEDGE® system comprising both hand-portable and mobile units for field trials was supplied by Alfa Radio in Bydgoszcz, an authorised Kenwood dealer specialising in radios for fire service applications and one of the largest and longest standing partners of Elektrit Sp.zo.o., Kenwood's distributor in Poland.

Jacek Łapszo, Managing Director of Elektrit, who attended the visit to Łódź, commented: "We were very excited to learn from Alfa Radio in late 2010 that they were to supply NEXEDGE® radios for extensive field trials with the State Fire Service in Łódź, most especially as we knew that they already had some experience with another digital system and that their trials would be both demanding on equipment and extensive".

Tomasz Masłowski, IT & Communications Senior Inspector picks up the story: "Our strategy to migrate from analogue to digital started in 2008 when we introduced IDAS digital equipment into field trials operating alongside our analogue fleet. You have to remember that the vast majority of the radios in use in our region are analogue and it would be impossible to convert the entire fleet to digital in one hit in terms of operations, training or budget, so it was vital that our migration path would focus on digital equipment with analogue compatibility". The first trials proved that the digital radios typically gave a 20% increase in coverage and much improved audio clarity, both were important benefits when operating in the noise and varied conditions of a fire or rescue operation. Tomasz continues: "Having proved the case for digital communications, we then reviewed the available options and selected NEXEDGE® for our final field trials – why NEXEDGE®? Four main reasons, first, we were reassured that it was already operational with other Fire Services in Poland, second, it would integrate with our existing IDAS equipment, third, the Mixed Mode function was the most advanced available and lastly, the ability to employ Over The Air Programming (OTAP) would be extremely useful when deploying radios for specific situations and when adding devices to the fleet".

The NEXEDGE® system is configured to operate in conventional mode and is used for both voice and data communications. It interfaces with a multiple platform telecoms console in the Regional Control Center – which handles some 200 calls each day from fire services in the region requesting assistance, reporting on situations or updating the status of events as they happen.

In addition to the Regional Control Center, the State Fire Service in Łódź have recently taken delivery of a fully equipped, state of the art Mobile Command Center, the first and only one of its type in Poland which can be deployed within 3 minutes in response to a major emergency or incident. The vehicle is built to military standards to withstand blasts and is designed and equipped to operate independently from telecommunications infrastructure. Equipment installed in the 25 sqm internal space includes a bank of Kenwood NEXEDGE® hand-portable radios with GPS specifically for use by fire commanders leading and coordinating operations on the front line.



**“We are very satisfied with NEXEDGE® and have selected it as our primary radio system of choice for our digital migration strategy...”** Following completion of the field trials, Tomasz reports that he will be rolling-out more NEXEDGE® equipment for the Fire Service Special Operations teams on a phased basis, he concludes: “We are very satisfied with NEXEDGE® and have selected it as our primary radio system of choice for our digital communications migration strategy. We have recently commissioned seven portable programming units incorporating mobile radios which will allow us to programme NEXEDGE® devices on site and perform as mobile base stations for operations, deployed where they are needed, whenever needed.”

For more information on the Provincial Headquarters of the State Fire Service in Łódź, please visit [www.straz.lodz.pl](http://www.straz.lodz.pl).

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