

## ARSON – A GROWING THREAT TO YOUR BUSINESS

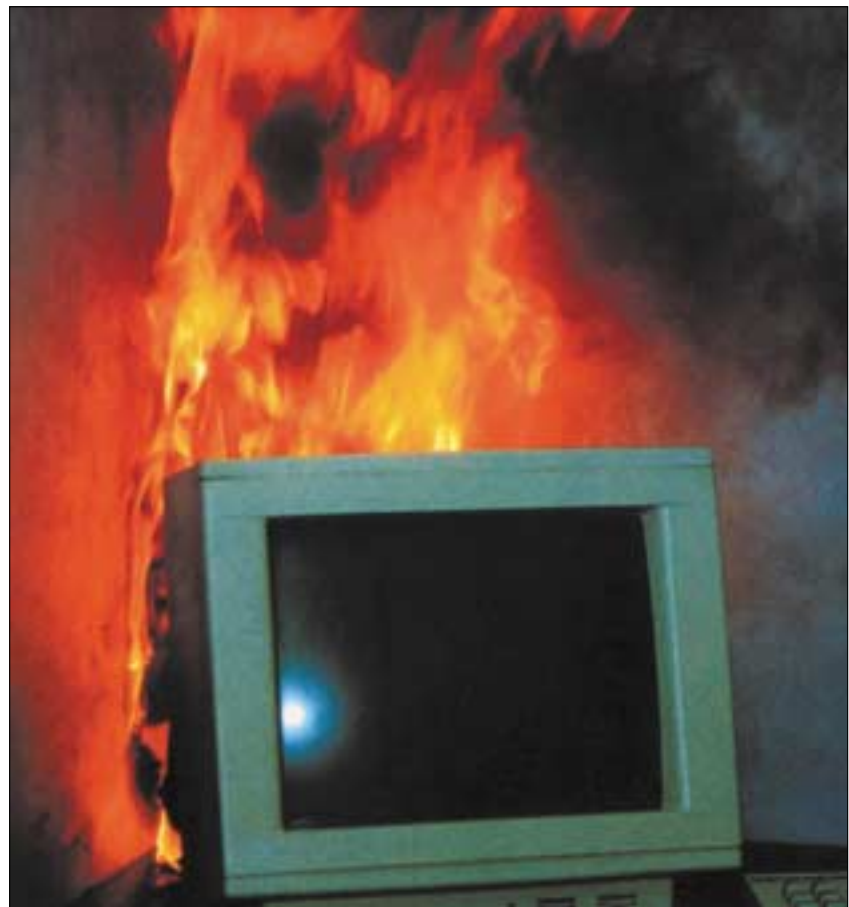
Fire whether started deliberately or accidentally can spread rapidly and could have a devastating effect on your organisation. A sobering thought is the statistic which indicates that over 60% of businesses that experience a major fire, cease trading within 18 months!

### How would your business cope?

In addition to the provision of fire extinguishers to meet statutory requirements, common sense coupled with some basic and relatively inexpensive precautions can go a long way to reducing the risk to any organisation, whilst practical advice should be available from your local Fire Officer.

### Anti arson mailbox systems

Every organisation receives mail and consequently arsonists often target the letter box as an



easy and natural point of attack. There are however a number of commercially available anti arson mail box products available designed to stifle fires before they can gain a foothold. Such products range in quality and reliability, price and method of operation but given their relatively low cost, in principle represent a worthwhile investment for any organisation. All are designed to react to a fire within the mail receptacle (normally a metal box) and to extinguish the fire either by releasing some form of extinguishant or by smothering the flame via an expanding intumescent lining.

### 'ALF' (Automatic Linear Fire guard system)

Among the lesser known fire protection products available is the highly effective and versatile 'ALF' automatic fire detection and extinguisher system which is based around a flexible thermo-plastic tube containing a fire extinguishant stored under a safe pressure. The tube which can be up to several hundred meters long will rupture at any point coming into contact with heat such as a flame, thus instantly and effectively delivering the extinguishant to the source fire before it has time to establish itself.



Originally designed to for use with racked computer equipment, the system has massive potential and is currently used for a wide and diverse range of applications. In colleges and universities it is used for protecting laboratory fume cabinets during unattended testing. The system is also used in offices and warehouses where applications include protecting PCs and other electrical equipment and where when used in conjunction with the ALF Powerstop, will automatically switch off the power supply to the equipment in the event of a fire being detected.

Within a building the system is ideal for protecting cables and detecting fires in cable ducting, whilst it is also widely used in unattended switchgear cabinets.

Rally cars, the family saloon, boats, combine harvesters, are just a few of the vehicles which have been fitted with the system, often with the approval of insurers and certainly to the peace of mind and improved safety of the owners.

For applications where high volumes of extinguishant may be required (e.g larger petrol fires) the special ALF tubing can be connected to one (or more) fire extinguisher cylinders. ALF systems can also be linked in such a way as to release extinguishant from multi points on detection of a fire at any point along the length of the tube.

- **According to Home Office statistics more than 28,000 buildings are attacked by arsonists each year**
- **The number of arson attacks annually has more than doubled since 1982**
- **Arson typically causes thousands of injuries and dozens of fatalities each year**
- **Arson typically costs insurance companies over half a billion pounds per year**
- **Businesses, homes, schools and public buildings are all under increasing threat**
- **Many arson attacks start at the letterbox**