

A photograph of a tall, chain-link fence with stadium lights in the background, partially obscured by a blue diagonal graphic element.

Wachter Provides Retailer Peace of Mind with Perimeter Detection

THE ISSUE

The customer, a multinational retail corporation, operates two major facilities in the Chicago area: a fulfillment center and an import distribution center (IDC). Located near a major rail yard, the warehouses handle a significant amount of international freight, with containers arriving from overseas and being processed for retail distribution. The total value of U.S. international freight trade reached \$1.57 trillion in 2023, highlighting the importance of security for these facilities.

These locations are susceptible to acts of organized retail crime, with criminal groups targeting the facility perimeter to cut the fence and steal valuable goods. In one incident, a criminal group stole 23 boxes of high-value merchandise including televisions, a high-ticket item, in a single night. The customer's existing fence lacks video surveillance because the infrastructure necessary to support it is far away.

To combat this rising threat, the customer turned to Wachter to provide an advanced perimeter detection system capable of safeguarding their merchandise as quickly as possible.

THE SOLUTION

Wachter collaborated with another security company to install a comprehensive perimeter detection system to enhance security at the customer's facilities. Wachter and the security partner installed almost 8,000 feet of altimeter-based cable system along the entire perimeter of both facilities. The altimeter cable detects physical disturbances by measuring movement along the X-, Y-, and Z-axes. If the fence is tampered with, the system triggers an alarm that immediately notifies on-site security staff. The system includes built-in analytics that can distinguish between environmental factors (like Chicago wind) and actual intrusion attempts. If multiple sensors detect simultaneous movement, the system identifies it as a likely wind event, preventing false alarms that could lead to unnecessary security responses.

For seamless operation, Wachter connected the detection system to the site's existing network using fiber optic cable. The fulfillment center connects fiber optic cables from existing light poles to the building, allowing data to be transmitted to the building. The IDC location lacked existing light poles, requiring the installation of underground fiber optics. The systems at both sites allow security teams to monitor the perimeter in real-time, sending alerts for any breach or tampering.

As a second layer of defense, the customer wanted to add visual and audio notifications on the fence line. Wachter's Physical Security engineers wired in horn strobes on the fence line. If an intruder tried to cut a piece of the fence and climb over, the alarm would sound as a line of deterrence.

THE RESULTS

Since the implementation of the perimeter detection system, our customer has seen significant improvements in security and a reduction in theft incidents. Key outcomes include:

- **Zero Recorded Intrusions:** No further break-ins or container tampering incidents have occurred since the installation of the perimeter detection system, despite several alarm events triggered by disturbances.
- **Deterrence of Criminal Activity:** While the exact statistics on deterred thefts are difficult to quantify without video surveillance, security teams have noted that the alarms triggered by the system during the night likely deterred potential intruders. The sound of the alarms may have been enough to cause criminals to flee before they could complete their theft.
- **Successful Integration:** The installation of the fiber optic network and integration with the alarm system was successfully completed, with minimal disruption to operations. Despite challenges such as harsh winter conditions and tight timelines, the project was completed on schedule, protecting the facility during peak shipping seasons.

KEY CUSTOMER TAKEAWAYS

Effective Perimeter Detection Provides Peace of Mind

Innovative perimeter detection solutions like the altimeter system provide accurate, real-time alerts that prevent theft and intrusions.

Audio and Visual Deterrent Brings Extra Layer of Protection

The integration of horn strobes along the fence line adds an important second layer of defense for the customer. The audible alarms provide an immediate warning and have helped discourage criminal activity.

Zero Thefts Since Implementation

There have been no recorded intrusions since Wachter's Nationwide Services and Projects team successfully implemented the new system.

