Detectors: Aspirating Smoke Detectors for Business Continuity

An aspirating smoke detector (ASD) is a detection system with an air-sampling piping network for detecting smoke during the earliest stages of a fire. It is different than spot-type smoke detectors used in conventional smoke detection systems. Smoke must accumulate and reach a spot detector for a signal to occur. ASD actively draws samples of air from specific locations and analyses that air for smoke particulates and is inherently faster at detecting smoke particulates, potentially preventing a business shutdown.

For many of your customers, a conventional smoke detection system—installed in accordance with the fire alarm and signaling code (NFPA 72)—and the manufacturer's instructions are all that is needed. Those customers are mainly interested in compliance with minimum code requirements and spending as little money as possible in the near term.

But you probably also have customers or potential customers that need a higher level of smoke detection to give an earlier warning to detect a fire during its incipient stage. Those are the customers who understand the concept of business continuity. They want ASD installed to preclude business interruption, asset losses, and damage to infrastructure to remain profitable.

Mandates for installing ASD will often come from architectural and engineering (A&E) firms that have identified a client that needs Very Early Warning Fire Detection (VEWFD). A&Es specify ASD because they know that very early detection of fire during the incipient stage provides the best opportunity for manual intervention and a quick return to normal business operations. This intervention can be as simple as shutting down a piece of equipment or using a portable fire extinguisher. The intervention actions will be outlined in the company emergency plan, but ASD enables the opportunity for immediate intervention. Very Early Warning and removing the fire threat supports business continuity and helps preserve critical infrastructure necessary for profitability.

ASD provides significant benefits over conventional smoke detection systems including:

Early warning of a smoldering incipient fire.	Low incidence of nuisance alarms.
Opportunity to investigate and remove fire threat.	Ensures business continuity.
Time to evacuate an area or the entire building.	Prevents damage to business infrastructure.
Actively draws air samples into sampling ports.	Appropriate for harsh (dirty) environments.

If you are a technician without experience or training on Xtralis® equipment, then you should explore remote learning opportunities at the FED Learning Center https://fedlearningcenter.com/xtralis/. The Xtralis courses offered through FEDLC are on-demand and self-paced. Check with your employer to see if you are eligible for these courses and become certified to sell, design, install, commission, inspect, and maintain Xtralis systems.

ASD is the fastest early-warning fire detection system available today. Incipient fires can be detected early, investigated, and controlled. In our competitive world, protecting a business infrastructure and ensuring business continuity are essential to profitability. Offering the installation of ASD to customers and A&E partners can improve your bottom line.