

# Software and steel strengthen the perimeter

How the latest fencing hardware combined with advanced software is creating the most robust fencing systems yet

**Nigel Blackman**, European Fencing Industry Association, Atherstone, UK

Total control of perimeter security at ports and associated facilities can be achieved by linking together the latest control software with robust electrified fencing – exploiting the efficiency and power of a single system that can be operated and monitored locally or remotely.

Whilst electrified fencing systems should not be used within hazardous areas – for obvious reasons they are not intrinsically safe in explosion-risk applications – they are potentially very useful in wider port environments.

“Many petro-chemical, power generation and gas storage sites are protected by electric security fences, with the perimeter zone established in safe zones beyond the hazardous area,” explained Graham Harper, MD of Harper Chalice. “There are lots of good reasons for creating these safe perimeter zones. Most importantly the level of security you can achieve with electrified systems is much higher than with physical-only fencing. You can also get much more control, with zone monitoring and reliable intrusion detection, especially now that the fence systems can be integrated with CCTV and other security tools.” For the user the result is a tough perimeter barrier which can be fully monitored and controlled from almost anywhere, as part of a totally integrated and seamless solution.

## Integrated solutions

Informed customers and users are now specifying this sort of solution, in which total site security is monitored and controlled by proven integrated systems. The result is a seamless system extending from the control and monitoring of the perimeter through to access control, CCTV intruder and BMI systems. These latest systems are easy to install, and can really strengthen security in higher crime areas or at high risk sites.

A good example of how this works is Harper Chalice’s Protector electrified perimeter system, which is in use at a wide range of sites, including economic key points in coastal regions where environmental conditions are more challenging.

“Of course electric security fences cannot be used under water, although we do have a dummy one installed around a jetty that is covered by sea water when the tide is in – that was specified by a government client,” explained Graham Harper.

The Protector is designed to detect intrusion and tampering attempts, and deter attackers by delivering a painful, but safe electric shock. It is a modular system, and very easy to install, either on existing perimeter structures or independently.

Most importantly, however, the fence system can now be linked up with Europlex Technologies’ 3GS integrated management system. The 3GS system can control all security functions – including access, CCTV and alarms – plus building management functions as well.

“When we launched this system last year it was a real step forward because for the first time it brought perimeter protection fully into the integrated security family,” said Mike Brosnan, MD of Europlex Technologies. “The user is able to control every security device on his site using the same, easy Graphical User Interface (GUI). This includes the ability to arm and disarm individual zones, and to carry out remote maintenance checks to see if each zone is working properly.”



Electrified systems provide more control, with features such as zone monitoring and reliable intrusion detection, including integrated CCTV and other security tools.

A good example of the system in action is a new installation that was commissioned in June – a 1.8km perimeter fence protecting a major car storage site in the UK.

“The installer for this project already had experience of our electrified perimeter because they had used it to protect a major retail site at the end of 2005,” explained Harper Chalice MD Graham Harper.

“In that case a persistent crime problem was totally solved and break-ins stopped overnight. So when this new major project went to tender a few months later the same integrator was keen to use it again – and the fact that it could be linked with the 3GS control package and fully integrated proved very attractive to the customer.”

## Protector 3GS

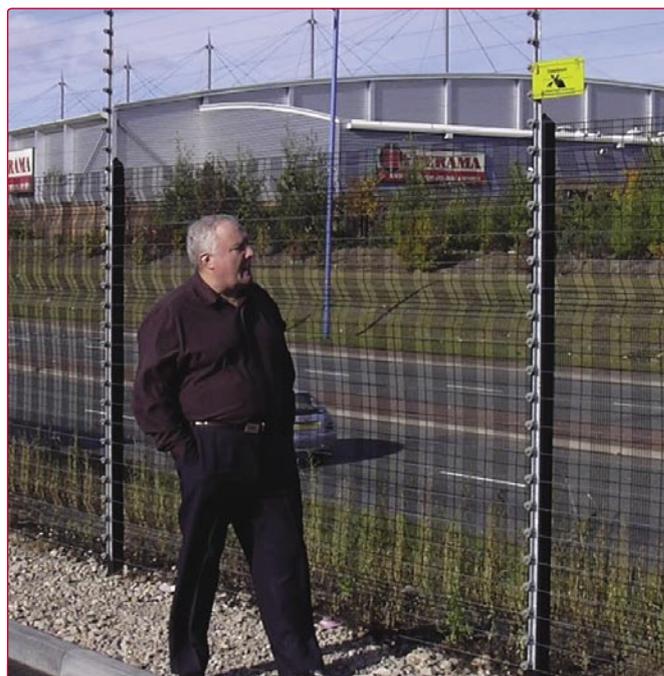
In fact, the combined Protector 3GS gives users maximum control and flexibility at the perimeter. Operating over IP, RS232, RS485 or fibre the system allows for up to 2,475 individual zones around the perimeter to be addressed, armed/disarmed, tested and even listened in to, for verifying alarms. The system can be armed and disarmed via a PC, keypad, fob or key switch.



The Protector detects intrusion and tampering attempts, and deters attackers by delivering a painful but safe electric shock.



The 3GS system can control all security functions including access, CCTV, alarms and building management functions.



The EFIA's approved manufacturers and installers can offer up to 10 years insurance-backed guarantees under the QFAS scheme.

Using the 3GS the perimeter package – featuring a user-friendly graphic display – the Protector perimeter can be further strengthened with a variety of alarm detectors and cameras and other security devices.

The Protector includes important advances over previous systems. It is a fully-monitored, double pole pulsed system which continues to detect all intrusion attempts, even when the high Voltage deterrent is switched off. Individual zones can be turned off for maintenance, or at pre-defined times when use of the site changes. Uniquely, the Protector system can be installed with either industry standard 2.5mm wires, 2mm wires or the high security 1.6mm wires.

In addition to the Protector system, a range of other Harper Chalice perimeter products can also be controlled and operated using the 3GS, including the FenceSecure, the Active Topping System (ATS) and the WallSecure. “Our partnership with Europlex delivers major advances in perimeter security capability,” added Graham Harper.

### Beware corner cutting with the fabric

Meanwhile where electrified systems such as Harper Chalice's are mounted onto steel fencing – palisade, expanded metal, welded mesh etc – buyers should beware of corner-cutting which is a bigger problem in the industry than many realise, according to leading manufacturers.

“To the untrained eye one length of fencing may look very similar to another, but they can have very different strengths and serviceable lifetimes,” said Colin Bates, Chair of the European Fencing Industry Association and MD of Expamet Security Products.

“A steel palisade fence can be made with a range of steel grades and thicknesses and different quality coatings. A cheaper fence will be lighter and thinner, though may look the same as a more durable one. It will surprise nobody that the thinner the materials, the weaker the fence.”

The EFIA warns buyers to be cautious – not just in specifying fence fabric that is sufficiently robust, but also in checking that they get what they pay for.

“We regularly see examples where suppliers do not deliver the agreed grade of fencing. They rely on the fact that it is unlikely that most buyers will spot the difference, or check once the fence is installed.”

The difference can become apparent in a few months, especially in demanding coastal locations, as weakened pales succumb to casual or deliberate damage, or as fixings and coatings fail.

The association's advice to buyers is to tell prospective suppliers that random checks will be made on the fence material supplied – this will deter most opportunist corner-cutting.

Ideally though, buyers should do what they say, and carry out spot checks during the installation. EFIA can provide free help and advice, and also offers independent inspection services.

To provided extra protection, the EFIA's approved manufacturers and installers can offer up to 10 years insurance-backed guarantees under the QFAS scheme.

Full details of this may be found at [www.qfas.ltd.uk](http://www.qfas.ltd.uk), but other useful information can be found on the association's website: <http://efia.fences.org>.

#### ABOUT THE ORGANISATION

European Fencing Industry Association (EFIA) has been established now for 25 years and represents all interests in the industry including designers, manufacturers and installers. We are recognised as the leading employer association in the European Community and by achieving this aim we constantly seek firms of repute to welcome them into membership. Whilst originally concentrating on UK EFIA is now able to represent fence interests in Europe in recognition of the strong trading links the European Community has brought. EFIA has an important role in the maintenance of standards particularly with British Standards Institute and also maintains long established links with other statutory bodies

#### ENQUIRIES

European Fencing Industry Association  
 PO Box 1, Atherstone  
 Warwickshire  
 CV9 1BE  
 UK  
  
 Tel: +44 845 450 4898  
 Fax: +44 182 771 8081  
 Website: <http://efia.fences.org>