

Fire departments are the responsibility of the state governments. Data from the Federal District are representative of the larger cities. Gas leaks exceed fires as causes for fire department mobilizations. The *Secretaría de Seguridad Pública del Distrito Federal (SSP)*, Secretariat of Public Safety for the Federal District, responded to a request for additional statistics on the incidence and severity of fires with a letter stating that this information is "confidential."

Mexicans are not typically as aware of fire hazards as other North Americans and they are generally lax in taking even the most basic precautions. A number of high-profile disasters have raised the public consciousness of fire safety and spawned public awareness campaigns. For example, in 1992 there was a massive explosion in the sewer system of Guadalajara. This was attributed to leaks from gas stations and gas pipelines. There was an immediate response from *Petróleos Mexicanos (Pemex)*, the national oil company, which owns the gas stations. A program calling for the re-vamping of gas stations was immediately put into effect and a privatization program was announced. Public awareness programs concerning the danger of gas leaks were launched. A gas leak hot-line was established in conjunction with the Guadalajara fire department.

CUSTOMERS

Mexican government entities, including police and fire departments, are currently the largest customers for safety and security products. However, individual consumers are the fastest-growing market segment.

Customers for safety and security equipment can be divided into four categories: industrial, institutional, commercial and individual. According to industry experts interviewed for this publication, the industrial and institutional sectors account for about 80 percent of the market.

COMMERCIAL ENTERPRISES

The commercial sector is exposed to both safety and security hazards. Almost 20 percent of all occupational injuries occur in commercial establishments, including restaurants and hotels. According to estimates from *Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e Informática (INEGI)*, National Institute for Statistics, Geography and Informatics, losses from crime tripled between 1995 and 1996. As a result, the commercial sector is an important customer for a wide variety of security equipment.