

Chubb - Over 200 years of innovation

Chubb has been protecting people and assets worldwide for 200 years. A global fire safety and security solutions provider, we work to make the world a safer place by providing end-to-end solutions and services to ensure our customers' peace of mind. Chubb offers high quality service, and innovative, technology-enabled solutions - from design and installation to service and monitoring.

The Early Years

Chubb Fire & Security has roots dating back to 1818 with the demand for 'security' resulting from the impact on society of the industrial revolution.

Factory production gave rise to the modern city, and with increased urbanisation came increased crime. Two enterprising brothers, Charles and Jeremiah Chubb, invented what was called the 'Detector Lock' – the first and original secure lock mechanism whose design and construction has remained largely unchanged for nearly 200 years.

The patented lock was advertised in the 1820s for use on 'iron doors and frames, chests and bookcases' and in the first century of Chubb's existence, more than two and a half million locks were made.

After the invention and patenting of the Detector Lock, Charles Chubb opened a factory in Wolverhampton and concentrated on the manufacture and sale of locks, as well as the development of further security products. By 1827 Chubb was supplying wrought iron doors, safes and boxes, to order, with locks. In 1835 a patent was taken out for a burglar-resistant safe and by the mid-1840s Chubb had become a household name, and even appeared in playbills and popular verses of the time.



Chubb set up a subsidiary in the US as growing crime rates peaked in the 1870s, with more and more violent attacks on banks and private individuals. It was during this period that the Time Lock – a clockwork or electronically operated time mechanism that is fitted to a safe or vault door with no outside connections – was developed. Once the Time Lock was activated and the door closed, even the correct keys or combination would not open it.

Although Chubb has made a number of further refinements to the time mechanism, the basic system is still used today and is one of the most secure locking systems available.

Fire Safety



While the Chubb brothers focused on security, there were parallel developments in the range of products to fight fires – many from inventors for companies that would ultimately fall under the Chubb umbrella.

Whilst the first recorded patent for a fire extinguisher dates back to 1723, the cartridge-operated extinguisher was invented by two Scottish engineers – Read & Campbell –

Chubb - Over 200 years of innovation

who registered a design in Great Britain in 1881 to cover the 'arrangement for piercing capsules' to expel water by means of a CO₂ cartridge. A patent was granted in 1909. By 1911, Read & Campbell were selling a carbon tetrachloride model called the 'Petrolux' for petrol fires that was marketed towards the automotive market.

Concurrently, other businesses and inventors began to emerge: Minimax launched its famous conical extinguisher in 1903. In 1907 a Scottish engineer set up Pyrene Company in Delaware (USA) to sell pump extinguishers, bringing them to the UK seven years later. And in 1910 Rampart Engineering was established to sell fire extinguishers to the trade. In 1917, also in the US, an American inventor by the name of Walter Kidde began experimenting with fire detection and extinguishing systems, establishing a business in the UK in 1935.

Beyond Locks

By the 1940s, Chubb had expanded its operations from a single company manufacturing specialised security products with just two overseas subsidiaries, into a broad based group of companies covering many aspects of security work in the UK and 17 countries worldwide. The acquisition of Burgot Alarms in 1962 moved the company into electronic security for the first time, resulting in the launch of Chubb Alarms.



Success continued and in 1964 Chubb & Sons acquired Read & Campbell, thus taking its first foray into the fire safety market. The Read & Campbell name continued until the foundation of Chubb Fire Security Limited in 1971, which by then also included the Rampart, Pyrene and Minimax brands.

The strategic development of Chubb continued to be influenced through the later years of the 20th century by a number of acquisitions. The Racal Electronics Group purchased Chubb in 1984 only to demerge eight years later as Chubb Security plc which was subsequently acquired by Williams Holdings plc (later Williams plc) in 1997. Williams, which at the time had Kidde as part of its business portfolio, instigated a major redevelopment programme and repositioned Chubb as a provider of a wide range of security services rather than a specialised manufacturer of locks.

In 2000 the Swedish-based lock manufacturer Assa Abloy bought Chubb's locks business, thus finally bringing to an end the company's association with locks, safes and keys and moving its focus into electronic-based security systems and fire. Later in 2000, Chubb plc and Kidde plc were each floated on the London Stock Exchange.

Chubb - Over 200 years of innovation



United Technologies Corporation

In 2003 Chubb plc was acquired by United Technologies Corporation (UTC), after which a further period of acquisition and consolidation began in earnest. In 2005, UTC acquired Kidde plc and created UTC Fire & Security, one of the leading players in the fire safety industry. Kidde Products, comprising brands such as Angus Fire and Autronica, became part of the global product offering, and the Gloria and Kidde Fire Protection Services brands were brought into the Chubb Fire group.

In 2007, UTC acquired Initial Electronic Security in the UK, France and Benelux and integrated it into Chubb, further expanding the business' coverage and capabilities in the UK. Initial could trace its security roots back to 1962, with the founding of 'Shorrocks' which it later acquired.

Whilst Chubb Fire and Chubb Electronic Security had grown as specialised, standalone businesses under a shared brand, values and ownership, by 2010 the time was right to combine the businesses to create Chubb Fire & Security, which today provides an unrivalled range of fire & security services and solutions in 17 countries worldwide.

APi Group



Since January 2020, Chubb has been part of APi Group (NYSE: APG), a global, market-leading business services provider of safety and specialty services.