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Vacant property protection services – Code of practice

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Contents

Foreword	<i>ii</i>
Introduction	1
1	Scope 1
2	Normative references 2
3	Terms, definitions and abbreviations 2
4	General company operations 3
4.1	Use of contractors 3
4.2	Staff employment vetting 3
4.3	Identity cards 3
4.4	Health and safety 4
4.5	Plant and equipment 5
4.6	Employee training 5
4.7	Insurance 6
4.8	Security of the company records and documentation 6
5	Property protection procedures 7
5.1	General 7
5.2	Risk assessment 7
5.3	Documentation and agreement with client 8
5.4	Commencing protection 9
5.5	Utilities 9
5.6	Other 10
5.7	Inspections and checks 10
5.8	Access management 12
5.9	Site activities 12
5.10	Maintenance of site 13
5.11	Protection by physical and electronic security 14
5.12	Protection by security guards or patrols 15
5.13	Protection by occupation 15
5.14	Actions at the end of protection (handover/handback) 18
Annexes	
Annex A (informative)	Summary of a possible process for risk management 19
Annex B (normative)	Temporary alarm systems 19
Bibliography	22

Summary of pages

This document comprises a front cover, an inside front cover, pages i to ii, pages 1 to 22, an inside back cover and a back cover.

Foreword

Publishing information

This British Standard is published by BSI Standards Limited, under licence from The British Standards Institution, and came into effect on 31 October 2015. It was prepared by Technical Committee GW/3, *Private security management services*. A list of organizations represented on this committee can be obtained on request to its secretary.

Use of this document

As a code of practice, this British Standard takes the form of guidance and recommendations. It should not be quoted as if it were a specification and particular care should be taken to ensure that claims of compliance are not misleading.

Any user claiming compliance with this British Standard is expected to be able to justify any course of action that deviates from its recommendations.

Presentational conventions

The provisions of this standard are presented in roman (i.e. upright) type. Its recommendations are expressed in sentences in which the principal auxiliary verb is "should".

Commentary, explanation and general informative material is presented in smaller italic type, and does not constitute a normative element.

Contractual and legal considerations

This publication does not purport to include all the necessary provisions of a contract. Users are responsible for its correct application.

Compliance with a British Standard cannot confer immunity from legal obligations.

Introduction

This code of practice is for security measures and services introduced when a property is at increased risk of criminal attack because it is vacant.

A typical vacant property is a building that has been occupied but is temporarily not in use prior to a new owner or tenant moving in. Many other reasons exist for the need to protect a property. It is assumed that the type of vacant property covered by this code of practice is intended to be vacant for a limited period of time (although this period might in practice be a number of years).

Although the property might already have security equipment or devices (e.g. high security doors) when it is temporarily unoccupied there might be greater risk of arson, burglary, vandalism, etc. simply because criminals are aware that the building is not being protected in the usual way.

This could also be the case when construction work is being undertaken. For example if an extension is being constructed, the fabric of the original building might be removed, thereby creating an easy access point for burglars or squatters.

1 Scope

This British Standard gives recommendations for the provision of security and management services, the provision of manned services (static guarding, mobile patrols, remote monitoring services), physical devices (barriers), electronic systems (alarm and CCTV), and protection by occupation (5.3.2), for the security of vacant properties.

NOTE The nature of this provision might vary considerably according to the type and condition of property. Protection may be given by a combination of methods.

It is applicable to providers of protection services for vacant properties. Such properties include and are not limited to:

- a) public & government [e.g. police, National Health Service (NHS), military barracks, nursing homes];
- b) commercial (warehousing, factories, retail);
- c) residential (private & social);
- d) construction sites;
- e) open land (at risk from travellers);

This British Standard is also applicable to the following types of vacancy:

- a) prior to first occupancy;
- b) refurbishment or redevelopment;
- c) following damage (e.g. fire, flood, or criminal activity);
- d) temporary unoccupancy (e.g. up to 60 to 90 days);
- e) long term unoccupancy;
- f) derelict/awaiting demolition;
- g) properties requiring additional security measures not those intended to be applied on a permanent basis.

This standard does not give recommendations for the execution of maintenance and the physical up-keep of properties.

2 Normative references

The following referenced documents are indispensable for the application of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

BS 7499, *Static site guarding and mobile patrol service – Code of practice*

BS 7858, *Security screening of individuals employed in a security environment – Code of practice*

BS 7984, *Keyholding and response services – Code of practice*

BS EN 50130-5, *Alarm systems – Part 5: Environmental test methods*

3 Terms, definitions and abbreviations

3.1 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this British Standard, the following terms and definitions apply.

3.1.1 agreement

part of the contractual arrangement between the company and the client describing the services and equipment provided for the vacant property protection of their property

NOTE This is different from the agreement between the company and a property guardian.

3.1.2 intruder alarm system

alarm system to detect and indicate the presence, entry or attempted entry of an intruder into supervised premises

[SOURCE: BS EN 50131-1:2006+A1:2009, 3.1.36]

3.1.3 property guardian

person licensed to occupy a property by a company, on behalf of the property owner

3.1.4 property guardian licence

legal agreement between a company and a person allowing them to occupy a property on a non-exclusive basis

3.1.5 protection by occupation

method whereby a company arranges for property guardians to live in the property

3.1.6 vacant property protection

provision of people, services and equipment at a defined building or site to maintain the integrity of that place against human, environmental and natural threats in lieu of normal occupation or use

3.1.7 temporary alarm system

system with the ability to detect and indicate the presence of unauthorized persons or a hazard within a vacant property.

NOTE A temporary alarm system is different from an intruder alarm system as defined in 3.1.2.

3.2 Abbreviations

ADSL	asymmetric digital subscriber line
CCTV	closed circuit television (for surveillance purposes)
GSM	global system for mobile communications
GPRS	general packet radio service
PSTN	public switched telephone network
TAS	temporary alarm system
VPP	vacant property protection

4 General company operations

COMMENTARY ON CLAUSE 4

This clause gives recommendations applicable to the operations of the company but not specific to the protection of individual properties.

4.1 Use of contractors

It is the responsibility of companies employing contractors to ensure that work is carried out in accordance with this standard.

4.2 Staff employment vetting

All staff with access to protected properties or information regarding protected properties, or undertaking activities covered by BS 7984 should be selected and screened in accordance with BS 7858.

If employees are acquired through a takeover, the organization should satisfy itself that the provisions of 4.6 have been fully met.

NOTE 1 Contractors carrying out work at the vacant property that is not related to the provision of protection or security need not be security screened in accordance with BS 7858.

Access to the property should be in accordance with 5.8. The company should ensure that the activities of contractors have not compromised the security provided.

NOTE 2 Property guardians are not contractors.

4.3 Identity cards

All employees operating in public or at the vacant property should be issued with, and instructed to carry at all times whilst on duty, a photographic card confirming their position with the company. The company should ensure the periodic renewal of identity cards for each employee, and the withdrawal and appropriate disposal of identity cards on termination of employment contracts. Each identity card should include the following information:

- a) company name, address and telephone number(s);
- b) employee's name, photograph, and signature;
- c) expiry date, not more than three years from date of issue.

NOTE 1 Legislation or standards might impose additional requirements.

NOTE 2 I.D. cards would normally have a unique identifier, such as a payroll number or employee number.

4.4 Health and safety

4.4.1 General

If the company has a health and safety policy, such policy should document health and safety policy/procedures directly relating to the vacant property protection (VPP) business and should address monitoring of compliance with the policy.

NOTE 1 Attention is drawn to the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 [1] (supplemented by the Management of Health & Safety Regulations of 1999) [2].

Companies should have carried out a full assessment of their obligations as a contractor in the vacant property marketplace and should have provided, or agreed, a written description of the work to be undertaken, together with associated terms and conditions.

NOTE 2 Attention is drawn to the Construction (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1996 [3].

4.4.2 Safety training

Each employee of a company should receive training to enable them to carry out a risk assessment for their personal safety at site locations as might be deemed necessary and commensurate with good working practice.

Where appropriate, employees should receive basic training in first aid and the use of fire extinguishers.

4.4.3 Hazardous materials and asbestos

All stored hazardous materials should be managed and documented (e.g. by removal, secured in a cage or clearly marked and identified [see 5.2 for the risk assessment process]).

For any properties with asbestos present, the company should ensure that no risk exists to the persons entering the property from the asbestos (i.e. that a current asbestos survey confirms that the asbestos is adequately contained).

NOTE Attention is drawn to the Control of Asbestos Regulations (CAR) [4].

4.4.4 Safety equipment and personal protective equipment

NOTE The Personal Protective Equipment Regulations [5] state that operatives are provided with, and wear, when appropriate, protective BS 5426 approved equipment, for example:

- a) protective footwear;
- b) hard hat/bumper cap;
- c) high visibility jacket;
- d) other equipment depending on risk assessment (e.g. torches/mobile communication devices).

The Health and Safety Management Regulations [1] state that representatives of companies are to be given the appropriate information and training concerning the health and safety risks that such equipment should avoid or limit.

For the purposes of a risk assessment, attention is drawn to the Personal Protective Equipment Regulations 2002 [5] (S.I. 2002 No 1144).

4.4.5 Loneworker operations

NOTE A lone worker is defined by the HSE as "an employee who performs an activity that is intended to be carried out in isolation without close or direct supervision". Employers have a duty of care to lone workers.

The company should have a lone worker policy in place with the intention of managing the risk to lone workers. Lone working should be decreased to a minimum or, if this is not possible, then risk mitigation techniques should be put in place.

4.4.6 Employee health

The company should have a procedure to ensure that employees are in a suitable physical condition to perform their work.

4.5 Plant and equipment

4.5.1 General

NOTE There are three categories of plant and equipment:

- a) *that owned by the client as part of the property to be protected but which is not in use during the period of protection (e.g. manufacturing machinery, air conditioning systems);*
- b) *that owned by the client as part of the property but which is used either to maintain the building and services or as part of the security (e.g. intruder alarm system, sprinkler system);*
- c) *that owned by the company and used as part of the vacant property protection or in readiness as part of threat mitigation plans (e.g. temporary alarm system, portable generator, and emergency pumps).*

Only employees with appropriate training and where applicable, with necessary licenses or permits, should carry out the operation, adjustment, installation or removal of plant and equipment.

4.5.2 Plant and equipment owned by the client

Property owned by the client should only be operated, adjusted, installed, removed or switched on/off by the company as stated in the agreement.

The company should obtain proof from the client that plant and equipment has been checked and serviced at regular intervals in accordance with manufacturer recommendations and legislation before the equipment is used.

Plant and equipment owned by the client should not be removed from site without the client's permission.

4.5.3 Plant and equipment owned by the company

All plant and equipment owned by the company should be checked and serviced at regular intervals in accordance with manufacturer recommendations. Records should be kept of checks and services.

4.6 Employee training

Prior to commencing duties employees should receive training. The training given to employees should include:

- a) an understanding of the vacant property protective business;
- b) health and safety requirements (see 4.4);
- c) installation and removal techniques (as appropriate);
- d) guarding/patrol techniques;
- e) risk assessment (see 5.2);
- f) awareness of company procedures;
- g) client care;

- h) an awareness of continuous business improvement (e.g. by providing feedback based on experience to improve procedures).

In-house training can provide employees with knowledge of how to fulfil their job function to meet employers' procedures. Where more specialised training (e.g. forklift truck training) is required, such training should be provided by a relevant organization

Training records and future training plans should be maintained for all members of staff. The effectiveness of all searches should be monitored and, if necessary, refresher or remedial training should be provided as soon as practicable. Employers should provide training to cover changes in methods, procedures or legislation.

4.7 Insurance

Companies should have sufficient insurance cover and communicate it to the client [see 5.3.1 f)].

NOTE 1 Examples of forms of insurance are public liability, contractual, efficacy, employer's liability, third party indemnity, and fidelity guarantee insurance.

NOTE 2 Contracts might impose minimum requirements.

4.8 Security of the company records and documentation

The company should have a documented procedure for the safe custody and confidentiality and restriction of access to materials and information related to the vacant property and employee records. This includes:

- a) safe custody of all keys, access and security codes;
- b) information about locks, safes and other security measures at the client's site;
- c) documentation relating to the vacant property and equipment; and
- d) personnel records.

Companies holding keys to vacant property should comply with the requirements of BS 7984.

NOTE 1 BS 7984 states that "all persons undertaking, or having access to details of an assignment, keyholding and response duties should be selected and screened in accordance with BS 7858".

Companies should have a clearly defined procedure to ensure retention of documentation for a suitable period. That period should be based on the completion of any contract but extended to include the start of the contract.

NOTE 2 Attention is drawn to statutes of limitation that may apply e.g. The Limitation Act 1980 [6], Prescription and Limitation (Scotland) Act 1973 [7] or The Limitation (Northern Ireland) Order 1989 [8].

NOTE 3 Attention is drawn to the Data Protection Act [9] and the Private Security Industry Act [10].

Companies should ensure that access to electronic media (e.g. data back-ups, CDs) and remote access to electronic storage is secured against unauthorized copying, alteration and destruction.

Employees should be required to enter into an undertaking to keep confidential any information relating to the company's business and their clients' businesses as part of their employment contract.

5 Property protection procedures

COMMENTARY ON CLAUSE 5

This clause gives practices for operations relevant to protection of properties to be applied on a site-by-site basis.

5.1 General

A survey or inspection should be made of each site. The survey should include a check on the presence of existing security features (e.g. perimeter fences, gates), other relevant equipment (e.g. fire detection and sprinkler systems). The condition of the premises and equipment present should be recorded for later comparison with the next inspection.

NOTE 1 It is the client's responsibility to ensure that existing measures are in a suitable condition.

The results of the survey or inspection should be recorded in a document. If possible this document should form part of the proposal to the client.

On the basis of this survey an assessment of the risks and threats to the security of the property should be made and a risk management approach used to determine appropriate risk mitigation measures. These should be agreed with the client.

NOTE 2 Protection characteristics might vary according to the stage of "life" of the property, which includes:

- a) construction site;*
- b) new build awaiting occupancy;*
- c) refurbishment (whilst part occupied);*
- d) end of tenancy;*
- e) vacant refurbishment;*
- f) vacant property;*
- g) new tenancy;*
- h) closure and demolition;*
- i) vacant brown-field site.*

Before commencing protection of the vacant property there should be clear understanding regarding who has responsibility for the assessment of the security risks. This should be documented in the agreement (see 5.3). If the company is not responsible for the security risk assessment, the agreement should clearly state the nature of the security provisions requested by the client.

5.2 Risk assessment

5.2.1 Process

When responsible for the risk assessment, the company should assess for impact and likelihood the threats related to the property to be protected to meet the client and/or their insurer's requirements (see Annex A for a summary for a process of risk management). The assessment should be documented as part of the risk management procedure (see 5.2.2).

Threats to be considered include:

- a) theft (of contents and building fabric, e.g. metal theft);
- b) damage/vandalism (including damage to windows, plant and machinery, and difficult to repair architectural features);

- c) fire/arson;
- d) illegal/unauthorized occupation of the building or site (e.g. squatting);
- e) misuse (trading, parties, drug related);
- f) fly-tipping;
- g) environmental damage (including flooding, wind, spillages);
- h) water ingress;
- i) health and safety related problems (e.g. possible risk to employees);
- j) liability to third parties (e.g. injuries to people entering site);
- k) animal infestation;
- l) threats to adjacent property;
- m) threats to occupied parts of a site.

5.2.2 Risk management procedures

The company should determine the security measures (methods of mitigation) to be provided by analysis of the risks. These measures should be agreed with the client and the agreed measures clearly documented (see 5.3).

NOTE Risks are analysed by considering the likelihood of the threat occurring and the impact of the threat. Methods of protection relevant to each threat should then be considered so that the risk can be reduced to an acceptable level (a possible method is described in Annex A).

5.3 Documentation and agreement with client

5.3.1 General

The company should ensure that clients receive terms and conditions, which clearly state:

- a) the frequency of visits;
- b) that surveys, when required, meet the client and insurers requirement or conditions;
- c) any special requirements;
- d) applicability of notice periods;
- e) actions to be taken in the event of issues being found as a result of an inspection;
- f) where, under the terms of the agreement, a client hires equipment from the company, the ownership of this equipment should be clearly identified together with the conditions relating to its return. Any necessary insurance arrangements should be specified; and
- g) insurance held by the company that would operate in connection with the contract (see 4.7).

5.3.2 Protection by occupation

COMMENTARY ON 5.3.2

Protection by occupation might not be suitable because of notice periods that might contravene legislation such as the Protection from Eviction Act 1977 [11].

Where protection by occupation is used, the terms and conditions should also state which party has responsibility for:

- a) utility usage;

- b) waste collections (where applicable);
- c) property related taxes if relevant;
- d) statutory duties (e.g. fire alarm maintenance and gas safety).

The company should request and obtain written details of the client's insurance policy requirements for vacant properties, to help the company inform the selection of services that might be required.

5.4 Commencing protection

COMMENTARY ON 5.4

Subclause 5.4 describes recommended actions. Not all of these will be appropriate in all cases. It is further recommended that if these actions are not carried out then a reason is recorded in case the failure to perform the action results in claims against the company. Additional actions and considerations specific to protection by occupation are given in 5.7.4, and 5.13.3.1.

5.4.1 Informing interested parties

The company should advise the client to inform interested parties that the property is vacant or protected by occupation.

NOTE Several parties might wish or need to know that a property is vacant or protected by occupation. In some cases the knowledge of another party can assist in the protection. Ultimately this is the client's responsibility although the company may offer this as a service. Example parties the client can consider include the following.

- a) *The insurer of the property (together with a check on their policies and conditions). It is important that adequate records of correspondence with the insurer are maintained.*
- b) *The local fire services. Fire services need to be aware of water supply locations, sprinkler systems, etc. The fire service needs to have details of keyholders.*
- c) *The local police service. The police need to have details of keyholders (if the local police retain this information).*

5.4.2 Commencement of access management

Management of access to the site should begin as soon as possible, and include the following actions (see 5.8).

- a) All keys allowing access to the property should be accounted for and a record made of their location or possessor. If this is not possible then the owner of the property should be advised to change locks or add new locks.
- b) When other systems are used to control access (e.g. an electronic access control system) then appropriate measures should be taken (e.g. temporary or permanent removal of permissions to individuals).

5.5 Utilities

The agreement with the client should clearly state actions to be taken with regard to utilities. The company should highlight the importance of managing gas, electricity and water supplies to the client.

Utility meter readings should be taken at the commencement of protection and periodically checked and recorded (see 5.7.2).

Where a building is unoccupied, consideration should be given to the following measures to prevent unauthorized use and reduce the potential for burst pipes, leaks, fires and floods.

- a) Water supplies other than for sprinkler installations may be turned off at the mains and the system entirely drained down.
- b) If the water system cannot be turned off and drained down then during periods of low temperatures a heating system should be kept in operation to ensure the temperature remains above 5°C.
- c) Unless a heating system is required to maintain a minimum temperature and this heating system is in use, all gas supplies may be turned off at the mains.
- d) Other than electrical supplies required to maintain heating, fire, intruder alarm systems, temporary alarm systems or other essential site facilities, all electrical supplies may be turned off at the mains. Electrical supplies may be reinstated temporarily for the purposes of periodic checks of the property or other visits to the property.
- e) If existing fire and/or intruder alarm system equipment is out of contract and/or the electrical supply has been disconnected, the company should consider the use of a temporary alarm system, which should be in accordance with Annex B.
- f) When possible postal deliveries should be ceased or redirected and letterboxes/letter plates closed.

NOTE 1 In some cases the use of a water flow detector can help with identification of leaks or misuse.

NOTE 2 Letterboxes are frequently used by arsonists using the unsolicited mail as tinder. Uncollected mail advertises that the property is not in regular use.

NOTE 3 The "locking off" of utility supplies can prevent their use by squatters and other unauthorized persons.

5.6 Other

As appropriate and taking into account the future use of the property, the client should be advised that some actions might assist in reducing threats to the property. Examples are:

- a) removal of all combustible materials and hazardous items;
- b) removal of any building contents that might attract thieves; and
- c) consideration of the visual appearance of the property.

5.7 Inspections and checks

5.7.1 Frequency of inspections

The company should agree a periodic programme of inspection with the client.

NOTE 1 The client's insurer might have preferences with regard to the frequency of inspection.

Scheduled inspections should be recorded and provided as a method of confirmation that the protection agreed is maintained.

NOTE 2 Depending upon the number of items involved, this may include an agreed sampling procedure (e.g. in the case of window shuttering or grilles).

A risk assessment should be conducted for the safety of the inspector.

The client should be advised to provide a list of any personal effects, belongings or noteworthy items on site.

Consideration should be given to inclusion in the agreement for arrangements regarding additional visits to properties following bad weather conditions such as heavy snow or rain and flooding, and actions to be taken if such conditions prevent visits or access.

NOTE 3 A contingency plan for actions required if bad weather or other environmental hazards (e.g. from neighbouring properties) affect the property might be advisable.

When applicable, appropriate steps should be taken to ensure that the client's premises are not left in a hazardous condition. The client should be informed of any hazards identified during the inspection.

5.7.2 General checks

During inspections the recommended checks in 5.7.2 a) and 5.7.2 b) should be carried out as applicable to the protection provided and in accordance with the agreement.

a) Equipment checks.

- 1) Damage to equipment and graffiti should be noted and reported.
- 2) Door locking mechanisms should be checked and, as appropriate to ensure continued operation, should be kept clean and lubricated whilst ensuring residue is not at risk of staining clothing.
- 3) Regular checks should be carried out to identify equipment that has been tampered with. When discovered, replacement of faulty or damaged equipment should be carried out within a period agreed with the client (e.g. within one working day).
- 4) Breaches or unauthorized entries should be checked for, giving details of apparent method of entry and damage caused, if found.
- 5) Heating systems (by agreement with clients).
- 6) Temporary alarm systems and intruder alarm systems (if applicable) should be working. The availability of mains electricity to mains powered alarm systems should be checked.
- 7) For any equipment incorporating timed operation, the time should be checked for correctness. For equipment using automated switching (e.g. a dusk to dawn sensor) the correct operation and settings of the control device should be checked.

b) Property checks.

- 1) Site perimeter: the suitability of perimeter fencing and the security of gates should be checked, along with signs of whether any illegal or unauthorized occupation of the site has occurred, or whether any waste material is on site.
- 2) External building: the building should be checked to ensure that it is free from breach or attempted breach and for any signs of damage and vandalism.
- 3) Internal building: the building should be checked for combustible materials, rubbish, damage and vandalism. Internal doors, fixtures, fittings and chattel assets should be checked to determine that they are present and intact.
- 4) Services: gas, electricity and water should be checked to make sure that they have been disconnected or isolated (where applicable). Gas, electricity and water meter readings should be taken where applicable (see 5.5).

- 5) Structure: the building should be checked to determine that it is structurally sound, and that is safe to walk around on all floors, under all lighting conditions.

5.7.3 Checks of property guardians

Checks should be made that property guardians are occupying the property in accordance with their property guardian licence.

5.7.4 Documentation

Clients should be notified in writing of any breaches or unauthorized entries to the property, giving details of apparent method of entry and damage caused.

The inspections should be recorded on a suitable report that is available to the client within 24 h of the inspection. This should record the checks in 5.7.2, the defects found and the risks to the client or their property. It should also record agreed actions.

It is recommended that photographic records should be made to substantiate or refute any future claims.

5.8 Access management

Management of people entering a vacant property is important because without controls, any liability is impossible to assign. There are a large number of people who could wish to access a property including the client, plumbers, electricians, surveyors and potential purchasers. The agreement (see 3.1) should confirm the procedures to be used.

The company should manage all access to the vacant property including that by the client and their contractors. An audit trail should be kept detailing who allowed access and to whom it was given. For properties with protection by occupation, the property guardian should have clear instructions regarding which persons they may admit to the property and keep records or seek permission from a designated responsible party according to those instructions.

5.9 Site activities

5.9.1 Tools and utilities on-site

Permission to use any on-site utilities including water and mains-powered electrical equipment should be in accordance with the agreement and only used when appropriate and necessary (see 5.5).

The agreement should also cover the use of battery-powered, rechargeable or generator-powered equipment. Generators should only be used in suitable locations with adequate ventilation.

5.9.2 Vermin infestations

The presence of rats, mice, cockroaches, fleas and other vermin infestation, or the remains of such vermin or animal excreta in any work place, should be reported immediately to a manager of the company. Care should be taken to avoid the presence of materials that could attract vermin, such as food. A manager of the company should be alerted to the presence of such materials.

The company should have an agreed procedure for dealing with infestations. The procedure should clearly state which employees have the authority to permit work to be carried out in the area of infestation. If necessary and according to the type of infestation, as documented in the procedure, employees lacking this authority should withdraw from the area concerned and no work should commence or continue until suitable arrangements have been made for the elimination and safe removal of the infestation, any necessary fumigation has taken place or a safe method of work, including the provision of suitable protective clothing and equipment, has been determined.

5.9.3 Sharps and biohazards

The company should have a documented procedure giving guidance on how to manage objects contaminated with body fluids, such as discarded syringes, needles, broken glass and/or other items that might penetrate the skin or be hazardous to health.

5.9.4 Cleaning (prior to handing back)

Site cleaning should be conducted and recorded as stipulated in the client agreement.

5.9.5 Disposal of waste

The disposal of any waste on site should be recorded as stipulated in the client agreement.

5.10 Maintenance of site

5.10.1 General

Inspections should be carried out in accordance with 5.7.

All fire and security equipment should be operational and tested regularly in accordance with manufacturer's instructions, applicable standards or the agreement. Care should be taken to ensure that any work carried out on site is adequately controlled to prevent fires.

5.10.2 Emergency property maintenance (e.g. glass repair/boarding, storm damage)

The agreement should state the procedure for authorization of repairs especially where third parties are required.

It is important to note that emergency repairs could be a cause of increased risk to the property and full repairs should be organized as quickly as possible.

The company should have a documented process to deal with emergency maintenance.

NOTE 1 Boarding-up of windows can increase hazards to fire-fighters and might result in refusal of fire and rescue services to enter a vacant property.

NOTE 2 Failure to make property repairs advertises the vacant state of the property to criminals.

NOTE 3 Scheduled maintenance would be covered by access management agreements (see 5.8).

5.10.3 Maintenance of installed protection/security measures

On installation, equipment should be free of all graffiti and be of a uniform colour.

Checks and relevant maintenance should be performed in accordance with 5.7.

The client should be made aware that any interference to the protective system by a third party would invalidate the integrity of the system.

Where necessary (e.g. following attempted entry to the premises) it might be necessary to re-fit or re-secure the protection. The company should maintain records giving the reasons for any refit or re-secure.

5.10.4 Response to security breaches

The procedure to be followed following a breach should be agreed with the client and included in the agreement. This agreement should include the need for the client to inform the company in cases where the client is aware of the breach before the company.

Breaches to the security can take a variety of forms and can be identified by a variety of means. The client should be notified of any breaches of the security or any incident whereby the property has been affected without breaching the protection provided (e.g. using a previously unforeseen method of attack).

The agreement should state what service is available, its hours of operation, and maximum expected time to complete work, for the repair, replacement or refit of the protection provided under the agreement.

NOTE 1 The company could offer out-of-hours services at extra cost.

The response procedure should detail:

- a) who to contact according to the type or degree of breach;
- b) differing actions according to time of day/day of week/holiday periods;
- c) the sequence of response escalation;
- d) under what conditions the police or fire service are to be called;
- e) when other services (e.g. plumbers, glaziers) should be called;

Any graffiti applied should be reported to the client and agreed actions taken at the earliest opportunity.

NOTE 2 The presence of graffiti is an indication that a building is not being cared for and might encourage further attacks. The presence of offensive graffiti is a greater indication that the property is not in use. Even an attempt to remove graffiti could demonstrate that it has been noticed.

5.11 Protection by physical and electronic security

A number of measures may be taken for the protection of the vacant property by physical and electronic security measures. Consideration should be given to the suitability of proposed measures with respect to the building to be protected. Consideration should include potential for damage to the property, health and safety risks, hindering legitimate access including emergency access and escape. Typical measures to be considered include use of:

- a) closed circuit television (CCTV);
- b) intruder alarms systems;
- c) temporary alarm systems (see Annex B);
- d) steel security doors (keyed & keyless);
- e) steels security screens (custom cut & panels);
- f) fencing (palisade & wire);
- g) wooden hoarding/metal panels;
- h) concrete barriers/bollards/posts;
- i) security gates;

- j) anti-climb measures;
- k) padlock & chain/hasp & staple/locking bolt.

These measures may be applied on a permanent or temporary basis.

NOTE 1 In some cases the use of certain measures might not be permitted. Examples include restrictions in place because of planning restrictions; the need for listed building consent; noise and light pollution restraints; and, in the case of CCTV, contraventions of data protection laws.

NOTE 2 Attention is drawn to additional requirements, such as those set by applicable emergency services.

NOTE 3 Users might wish to consider including a sign, displaying alarm company contact information, in places where alarm systems are installed.

NOTE 4 Attention is drawn to the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environments Act 2005 [12].

5.12 Protection by security guards or patrols

Security guarding and patrol services should be carried out in accordance with BS 7499.

NOTE Where the guards are not directly employed by the property owner, it is the obligation of the company to ensure that all staff deployed on site meet the criteria required under the Private Security Industry Act for employment in the private security industry [10]. Typically this means they will hold Security Industry Authority licenses.

Consideration should be given to the suitability of the site for protection by permanent or static guards (i.e. a manned guarding presence maintained at the property) or by mobile patrols. This consideration should include the threats to be faced by the security officers.

Security officers should have access to essential health and safety and welfare facilities (e.g. water, toilets, lighting and heating).

5.13 Protection by occupation

5.13.1 General

Protection by occupation should be achieved by an arrangement with one or more property guardians whereby they occupy the property, or part thereof, as a living space. The property guardian should not be employed by, act as an agent of or be subcontracted to the company.

An agreement should be sought from property guardians signalling their willingness to comply with policies and rules detailed in a property guardian licence, which entitles them to temporarily occupy the property.

5.13.2 Property guardian vetting

Prior to issuing a property guardian licence, the company should ensure that all persons named in it have supplied the following:

- a) proof of identity, including name, date of birth and nationality;
- b) details covering the previous five years of:
 - 1) previous names and aliases;
 - 2) addresses;
 - 3) full details of employment, unemployment and education with dates;
- c) a statement regarding unspent criminal convictions, pending prosecutions;
- d) next of kin (or similar emergency contact);

e) proof of entitlement to work in the UK (where applicable).

The company should have a process in place to verify all of the relevant information has been provided during the vetting process.

A credit check of the property guardian should be conducted as appropriate.

5.13.3 Preparation of properties

5.13.3.1 General

Consideration should be given to the use of non-residential properties as temporary non-exclusive living space, and the associated problems which should be solved in order to ensure the safety of the property guardians. An initial property inspection should be undertaken, and should detail all issues which need to be addressed before occupation by a property guardian can commence.

NOTE In some cases properties with property guardians are classified as a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) and be subject to additional regulations affecting safety and environmental health requirements.

Areas of the property that are out of bounds to property guardians should be clearly marked.

For the safety of the property guardians and to assist with security of the property, consideration should be given to the use of monitored intruder or temporary alarm systems in out of bounds areas.

5.13.3.2 Fire safety

Consideration should be given to the fire protection requirements specific to the property.

NOTE 1 HM government publication *Fire Safety Risk Assessment – sleeping accommodation [13]* gives guidance about fire safety measures for all sleeping accommodation in the UK, dependent upon their size, number of occupants, location of sleeping quarters, etc.

The living area should have adequate fire safety provision, including appropriate fire alarm, fully protected means of escape from all parts of the living area, functioning fire doors and suitable exit doors (e.g. fitted with thumb twist locks).

There should be appropriate fire alarm test and service management regimes in place for each property.

There should be an appropriate property inspection regime in place for each property to ensure that the fire safety of the property is maintained fully during the occupation period, focusing on maintaining the fire safety of the property and property guardians (i.e. escape routes kept clear, cooking restricted to kitchen areas, etc.).

A detailed fire risk assessment should be completed prior to occupation with copies available.

NOTE 2 PAS 79 gives guidance on fire risk assessments.

5.13.3.3 Facilities

The company should agree with the client what facilities are to be made available to the property guardians and who should be responsible for their provision and payments for charges. Adequate facilities should be installed for the number of property guardians in occupation as per environmental health requirements.

As a minimum the facilities should include:

- toilets with hot and cold water for hand washing;

- showers (either electrical or boiler heated) or baths;
- a kitchen area of suitable size with hot and cold water;
- bedrooms with ventilation and at least one window;
- a method to supply heating; and
- water and electricity supply.

Arrangements should be defined for the removal regularly of domestic waste.

All temporary facilities fitted should be fitted by qualified persons. All electrical work should be undertaken by qualified persons and certified before use. Certificates should be held by the company.

The agreement should clearly define areas of the property that the property guardian has access to and any associated restrictions (e.g. no-go areas for safety reasons).

5.13.3.4 Water management

Safe, clean water should be provided for drinking and bathing under the provision of facilities.

It is important that the water on site is free from contamination (e.g. legionella). Where the number of property guardians does not provide adequate turnover of water, for example from large tanked supply, the company should ensure that the water provided is mains fed and water tanks managed to prevent health risks.

5.13.3.5 Induction

All property guardians should receive a basic introduction to their role and responsibilities and be provided with a guidance document detailing their responsibilities and emergency actions (e.g. telephone numbers, fire extinguisher types).

The property guardians should be instructed as to facilities within the property which they may or may not use and areas of the property which they are permitted to use or not.

A document with similar guidance should be displayed at the property.

5.13.3.6 Property guardian conduct

The company should provide clear rules and regulations for the property guardians to live by, and have a process of enforcement to prevent and record breaches.

The rules and regulations should stipulate that the guardians do not, by their actions, create any additional risks. This might include the use of electrical equipment.

NOTE Property guardian living is different from normal rental accommodation. The company has to be able to manage and control the behaviour of the property guardians to ensure the safety of other property guardians and the company's employees and to ensure satisfactory completion of the security contracts to their client's requirements.

5.13.3.7 Property inspection and compliance visit

Properties with protection by occupation should be inspected regularly as appropriate to their size and the number in occupation. Inspections should be undertaken by the company and should include the following checks.

- All fire safety provision should be checked to determine that it is still functional and appropriate (e.g. fire alarms for faults, make sure escape routes are clear, etc.).
- Cooking equipment should be restricted to the kitchen area and not in use in bedrooms.
- Only the authorized property guardians should be in occupation.
- Only authorized equipment should be in use.
- Meter readings should be recorded (where appropriate).

Following the inspection any issues should be corrected within an agreed time period and if necessary a follow-up inspection carried out.

5.14 **Actions at the end of protection (handover/handback)**

Prior to the handing back of the property to the client or their tenant, advice should be given to them regarding expected actions at this time. They should also be advised about the heightened level of risk that can occur in the time immediately surrounding the time of handing back. These increased risks can occur because of the reinstatement of normal conditions and the removal of protection (i.e. a property where utilities have been reinstated and perimeter protection removed is at greater risk). The client should be advised about care required when advertising the change of state of the property.

On completion of work to remove security measures, any resulting dangerous materials, such as broken glass, should be cleared away and disposed of.

All company equipment should be removed from the site. The client should be informed of any damage or deficiencies and given the opportunity to carry out an inspection.

All keys, fobs and access cards relating to the property should be returned to the owner or appropriately destroyed.

Utility meter readings should be recorded and documented.

Annex A
(informative)

Summary of a possible process for risk management

The risk (R) exists prior to the introduction of the vacant property security measure and is defined in terms of the product of the impact of each threat entering the protected area (T) and the likelihood of that threat (L) given the circumstances, i.e. $R = T \times L$

Factors increasing T are the value of assets inside the protected area or the resulting potential damage to critical infrastructure.

Factors decreasing L are other security measures (e.g. CCTV, strength of barriers), the presence of people (whether security or not), restrictions (e.g. building characteristics that prevent access by vehicles), threat of retribution (e.g. criminal prosecution).

The purpose of the vacant property protection is to reduce R to an acceptable level (i.e. mitigation). This can be achieved by introducing deterrence, delay, detection of entry, etc. in combination with a security response.

For each threat the client will have a risk appetite. This is the level of risk they are willing to accept in the knowledge that it is impossible to completely remove every risk.

For every threat three possible actions can be taken. These actions are as follows.

- **Ignore/accept:** This action implies that the client's risk appetite is greater than the risk and that any action taken to reduce the risk would be unacceptable (e.g. too costly).
- **Export/transfer:** The client has chosen to handle the risk in an alternative way (e.g. they accept that arson is a possibility but have insured against losses).
- **Address:** People, processes or technology are used to reduce the risk. This is usually known as mitigation and refers here to the security provided by the vacant property protection.

The purpose of the risk management is to change the T and L values so that R is less than the risk appetite.

Over time the factors in the equation can vary and it is important to revisit the threats and confirm that the protection provided is still adequate (e.g. adding one security measure can increase the likelihood of another threat or threats might vary by season).

In determining the likelihood of a threat, the frequency of incidents and breaches of security are considered together with the likelihood of repeated incidents.

NOTE It is frequently observed that, having chosen a target, criminals return to the same target repeatedly thereby distorting assessments of frequency.

Annex B
(normative)
B.1

Temporary alarm systems

Introduction

A temporary alarm system (TAS) is typically, but not exclusively, battery powered and designed to be rapidly deployed on a non-permanent basis with the ability to detect and indicate the presence of unauthorized persons or a hazard within a vacant property.

B.2 Structure

A TAS may consist of a single component comprising a means of control, detection and notification to a remote monitoring centre, or may be made up of various individual components which together provide the same overall function.

B.3 Environmental suitability

All components of a TAS should be suitable for use in the environmental conditions found in the vacant property.

Components should be tested in accordance with BS EN 50130-5 to verify their environmental suitability and a statement of this suitability provided to the company.

B.4 Tamper protection and detection

Components should be capable of detecting attempts to tamper the system and be protected against tampering.

Components used to provide control, notification and status indication should be capable of withstanding physical attack such that an alarm can be notified prior to disabling of the component. These components should also have provision for anchoring to the structure of the building.

B.5 Access levels

Access by users to operate the system should require the use of a method of identification (e.g. code, fob). There should be a minimum of two levels of access including one for assignment to keyholders and one for persons responding to alarm activations.

B.6 System test

The TAS should provide a facility to enable testing of the operation of the detectors and means of notification including the alarm transmission system. A walk test facility should be provided whereby the TAS can indicate to the user that a test of all movement detectors has been satisfactorily completed.

B.7 Notification of alarm conditions

Following detection of an alarm condition the TAS should be capable of notifying people on site using an audible warning and providing alarm information to a remote monitoring centre using an alarm transmission system.

A TAS is permitted to provide non-alarm notifications provided this does not interfere with the notification of alarms.

B.8 Event recording

Information detailing the time and date of events on site should be recorded and a method provided to make this available to authorized persons on site. The TAS should be capable of transmitting information providing details of events to a remote monitoring centre. The TAS should be capable of storing a minimum of 100 events.

B.9 Power supply

The TAS should include one or more primary power source(s) (e.g. a battery) capable, at the time of installation, of powering all components for a minimum of 12 months. It is permitted for components to be mains or solar powered but should not be dependent on this to continue operation of the TAS for the defined time.

Changeover from mains or other sources of power to the primary power source should be automatic and not cause alarm conditions. The primary power source should be housed within the TAS component or a suitably protected container.

All battery powered devices should be capable of signalling low battery conditions to a remote monitoring centre.

B.10 Alarm transmission system

Notification to a remote monitoring centre should be provided. The method of transmission utilized should be determined by the risk assessment.

B.11 Installation

B.11.1 System design

The design of the system should, as far as possible, take into account environmental factors including:

- a) expected temperature ranges;
- b) likely cause of false alarms (e.g. heat and light sources);
- c) wildlife, animals, pests, insects;
- d) movement (e.g. of doors in the draughts);
- e) damaged doors, windows, floors and ceilings;
- f) interference with wireless signals.

B.11.2 Acceptable buildings

TAS should not be used in buildings that cannot be secured against unauthorized, unforced entry by the public.

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