



## RISK MANAGEMENT GUIDE

### MANAGEMENT OF INTRUDER ALARM SYSTEMS

#### Introduction

The modern intruder alarm system is a valuable, sophisticated weapon in the fight against crime. However, like any technology-based supervisory system that depends upon human interaction and intervention to fulfil its purpose – its value is very significantly influenced by the quality and rigour of management control applied.

#### System Operation

It is most important that the greatest benefit be obtained from your intruder alarm system by correct operation and setting in its entirety when your premises are left unattended. You may be unable to set the system in its entirety (for example, a signalling communication path is unavailable or some other part of the system is in a "fault" condition). In these circumstances you must call the alarm company immediately and not leave the premises unattended until the fault has been put right and the alarm has been fully set.

#### False Alarms and Withdrawal of Police Response

It is the alarm user's responsibility to manage the system in a way that does not cause false alarms. The police forces in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, will normally downgrade their response from Level 1 (immediate) to level 3 (no police attendance, key-holder response only) to any system which generates 3 false calls in any 12 month period.

Any alarm system that has lost police response due to a poor false alarm record will typically need to:

- remain false alarm free for a period of 3 months, and
- be converted to or replaced by a confirmable alarm system before an application can be made for response to be reinstated. Thereafter, only confirmed activations may be passed to the police.

If you receive a letter warning you that police response to your system may be downgraded or withdrawn you must inform **MORE TH>N BUSINESS** immediately. Failure to do so may invalidate your insurance cover. You must make sure that everyone authorised to set and un-set the system has been fully trained in its operation. This should include, where applicable, the walk testing of movement detectors to ensure they are effective and that the field of cover is not obscured or restricted.

**MORE TH>N BUSINESS** have a "Checklist for Key-holders" available on our web-site for users of the system as an aid to prevent false activations.

#### Key-holder Response

If the alarm is activated, or any signalling path is lost whilst the alarm is set, you or your appointed key-holder must attend the premises immediately. If necessary, call the alarm engineer, but the premises must not be left unattended until physically secured and the alarm system is fully reset including the designated methods of remote signalling. Failure to both fully secure and alarm the premises may invalidate your insurance cover.

Most police forces require that key-holders must be able to be at the premises within 20 minutes of being contacted. Failure to comply may lead to withdrawal of police response.

Key-holding nominations and arrangements must ensure that someone is always contactable should a response be required. Delays in contacting key-holders can result in thieves having longer to steal or

damage your property. It should also be remembered that the police cannot enter and check your premises unless a key-holder is present.

The **MORE TH>N BUSINESS** "Checklist for Key-holders" is available for users of the system as an aid to list key contact points' telephone numbers in the event of an activation.

## Telecommunication Failure

British Telecom provides various grades of breakdown response cover on telephone lines to the local exchange. Customers whose alarm systems signal via British Telecom lines are strongly recommended to subscribe to their "Redcare Total" contract which will ensure that the best response is obtained when there is a fault on the line.

Where other telecommunications providers are used, similar enhanced fault-response services/contracts should be sought.

## Code Words

Caution must be exercised over the issue and management of code numbers used in operating the alarm system, and any passwords agreed with the alarm company. These are very important to the security of your system. Never leave a note of them on the premises, even in places that are not normally available to unauthorised persons and do not reveal them to any third parties who may be working temporarily at the premises (e.g. contractors). To do so may put your insurance cover at risk. Individually allocated codes provide the greatest security.

## Abort Codes

If you have been given a code to abort a false alarm consider now how to act:

- in the heat of the moment
- as quickly as possible
- with the least risk of disclosing this important code to unauthorised persons.

If you have a keypad type control, never let others see the command digits being entered.

## System Management Codes

If you have a code to authorise the remote centre to change agreed opening or closing times of your premises, observe the same confidentiality rules as above. Remember the credibility of your system is at stake and altering these instructions over the telephone carries risks.

You should arrange to keep to the agreed times and use your code only in exceptional or emergency situations.

## Check the Identity of an Alarm Company Representative

Make sure that you always check the identity and authorisation of visitors claiming to represent the alarm company. Remember even if you know the person, they may have changed jobs and no longer be authorised to attend your installation.

Always:

- Ensure the visitor is referred to the person who is responsible for your alarm system.
- Establish the reason for the visit.
- Insist on seeing an identity card and check the photograph.
- If in any doubt, deny the visitor access to any part of the system until you have telephoned the alarm company and obtained confirmation of the details of the identity card/document and that the person's visit is known and authorised.
- **REMEMBER**, don't rely on a telephone number given to you by the visitor – only use the alarm company's published number. If a criminal obtains access to your system when it is not "set" he may tamper with it and reduce your security. You are entitled to check with the alarm company **EVERY TIME** their representative visits. There may be special technical controls fitted into the control box that oblige engineers to telephone their company before working on your system.

## IMPORTANT

The information set out in this document constitutes a set of general guidelines and should not be construed or relied upon as specialist advice. Therefore **MORE TH>N BUSINESS** accepts no responsibility towards any person relying upon these Risk Management Guidelines nor accepts any liability whatsoever for the accuracy of data supplied by another party or the consequences of reliance upon it.