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National Security Inspectorate

NACOSS Gold and ARC Gold Code of Practice for Customer Communications NACP 2

This code of practice is to be read in conjunction with the NSI Regulations and the applicable NSI Approval Criteria. No company shall hold out or claim that it adheres to this code of practice, save by virtue of holding NSI NACOSS Gold or ARC Gold Approval, or having obtained the written permission of NSI

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Note: The terminology used in this code of practice has been updated to align with current NSI practice.
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NACOSS Gold and ARC Gold Code of Practice for Customer Communications

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In this document, material (such as guidelines, information, recommendations, advice) that does not form a mandatory requirement of this code of practice is shown in italics

1. SCOPE

1.1 *This code of practice aims to assist companies in reducing customer complaints, unnecessary call-outs and enquiries, and false activations of security systems and enhancing the integrity and image of security systems companies, by setting out criteria for maintaining effective customer communications.*

1.2 This code of practice applies to companies holding NSI NACOSS Gold approval and to alarm receiving centres holding NSI ARC Gold approval.

2. IDENTIFICATION OF PERSONNEL

2.1 Personnel visiting customers' sites or premises shall carry appropriate means of identification.

3. GENERAL

3.1 Owing to the nature of security systems, it is essential that companies engaged in the security systems business observe and maintain high standards of fairness and integrity at all times. Companies adhering to this code of practice shall not engage in misleading, unfair or pressured selling techniques.

4. ENQUIRIES

4.1 Before a contract is entered into, the company shall ascertain by correspondence and/or discussion the prospective customer's needs, expectations, and patterns of usage of the premises to be protected.

Short-cuts at this stage are likely to lead to customer dissatisfaction at a later stage (such as customer misunderstandings or unrealistic customer expectations).

Preferably, the discussion should take place during a site survey, at initial enquiry, or at some other stage prior to issue of a quotation and specification.

5. QUOTATION

5.1 A prospective customer shall be provided with a written quotation which shall include clear statements showing:

- a. initial contract price and Value Added Tax.
- b. whether the equipment specified is to be sold, leased or rented.
- c. period of warranty (which must not curtail the customer's legal rights).
- d. any annual charges (showing which annual charges are for rental of equipment and which are for future maintenance; alternatively it may be clearly stated that the charge is a combined rental and maintenance charge. Monitoring charges

shall be stated, where applicable; alternatively it may be clearly stated that the charge is a combined maintenance and monitoring charge, or a combined rental, maintenance and monitoring charge).

- e. what work will be done free of charge under the warranty and under any maintenance contract, and what work will involve further charge.
- f. whether a charge will be levied for replacement material, labour costs, or both.
- g. whether charges are to be made in any period in the event of work being caused by the customer's action or fault.
- h. whether the charges are to be made in any period in the event of work being caused by any intruder or attempted intrusion.
- i. whether a maintenance contract or call-out agreement involving charges is a condition of the warranty (if it is not otherwise stated, the assumption will be that the warranty is comprehensive and free of charges during its period of operation).
- j. a specification of the proposed system (refer to section 6 of this code of practice).
- k. the installing company's right of access (for itself and NSI) for the purpose of installing, maintaining and inspecting the system.
- m. arrangements (including financial) for the provision of telephone line facilities.
- n. a statement regarding interference with the system by the customer.
- o. a statement regarding any obligation of the customer to insure the installing company's property or to indemnify the installing company against loss or damage to such property.
- p. noise pollution obligations.
- q. arrangements for routine (preventative) maintenance inspections.
- r. arrangements for emergency service (corrective maintenance).
- s. statement of remote monitoring services (where applicable). (See also item d. above).
- t. statement of the extent to which the installing company accepts liability and of the liabilities that the company does not accept.

6. SYSTEM DESIGN SPECIFICATION

- 6.1 The system design specification (referred to in section 5.1.j of this code of practice) shall list the equipment and components to be supplied, detail their proposed locations and contain a general indication of their coverage or purpose.

The document shall be written in a zone/circuit format (including in the case of BS 4737 intruder alarms all items detailed in BS 4737:Part 1:1986:sub-clause 3.2.4).

- 6.2 This specification shall clearly state all work (if any) with regard to the condition of the premises which the installing company expects or requires the customer to carry out, in

order to make the security system effective, reliable, and to minimise the likelihood of false alarms.

- 6.3 In the case of a remote signalling intruder alarm installation, the specification shall include paragraphs similar to the following:

Your alarm system is linked to a remote monitoring centre and (subject to any verification routines) alarm signals generated by your alarm system will be relayed to the Police. We would point out, however, that if the Police receive an excessive number of false alarms this could result in them withdrawing their response to signals originating from your alarm system. This would leave you without the benefit of signalling to the Police.

It is therefore in your interest to be aware of the causes of false alarms and to minimise the risk of their occurrence. Information on how to avoid false alarms will be provided for you.

The text should be modified to suit the circumstances.

- 6.4 For a security system incorporating an external audible alarm, the specification shall draw attention to the customer's duty to notify their local police force and environmental health authority within forty-eight hours of the coming into operation of the alarm. (The Control of Noise [Code of Practice on Noise from Audible Intruder Alarms] Order 1981 refers: Statutory Instrument 1981 No. 1829).

- 6.5 For a security system incorporating an external audible alarm, the specification shall draw attention to the recommendation (contained in the Order referred to in section 6.4 of this code of practice) that the audible alarm be fitted with a twenty minute cut-out device. Customers shall be advised that (where an alarm is fitted at the instance of their insurers) they should consult with the insurer before reaching a final decision regarding a twenty minute cut-out device.

A twenty minute cut-out should be used whenever it is acceptable to the customer.

- 6.6 **NOTE:** *After completion of the installation, the system design specification will normally form the basis of/for the system record; see section 9 of this code of practice.*

7. CONTRACT

- 7.1 The customer shall be asked to sign either (i) a form of acceptance indicating that they have read and understood the quotation and specification or (ii) a contract document referring to the quotation and specification.
- 7.2 The document which the customer signs shall either be one that is a permanent part of the quotation and specification or it shall refer to the quotation and specification in a unique way, for example by quoting the quotation number/specification number and/or by quoting the quotation date/specification date.
- 7.3 If the quotation and specification are accepted other than in their totality, the installing company shall confirm in writing the agreed changes within seven days.
- 7.4 If the quotation and specification contain options then the ones which the customer has selected or rejected shall be clearly shown on the acceptance document or confirmed in writing by the installing company within seven days.
- 7.5 Where a contract which includes provision of remote signalling has been entered into, the installing company shall inform the relevant police force in writing as soon as practicable and in any case before the remote signalling system comes into operation,

of the customer's intention to install a remote signalling alarm system.

8. INSTALLATION

8.1 Installation shall normally be by prior appointment.

9. SYSTEM RECORD

9.1 On completion of the installation of the security system (but before "handover", as referred to in section 10 of this code of practice) the installation shall be checked to verify if it corresponds exactly with the system design specification.

9.2 A detailed system record shall be generated complying with the appropriate British Standard (for example BS 4737* in the case of Intruder Alarms) and/or NACOSS Gold Code of Practice.

The original system design specification may be used as the system record provided that:

- a. it complies with the relevant requirements;
- b. the check (section 9.1 above refers) confirmed that there are no changes from the system design specification or that such changes are neatly and clearly recorded as an amendment permanently attached as an appendix to the system design specification;

(Note: customer agreement is required for changes from the specification; see section 10.15 of this code of practice); and

- c. the installing company formally endorses the system design specification to the effect that it forms a true and accurate record of the system as actually installed.

Alternatively, the system record may be compiled as a separate document.

The system record shall be in zone/circuit format.

The make and model number of all units installed shall be stated, (or alternatively the installing company's own identifying reference such that using its own records the installing company can identify the make and model number).

*Refer particularly to BS 4737:Part 1:1986:sub-clause 3.2.4 and to BS 4737:Part 4:section 4.2:1986:sub-clause 4.2.

9.3 The system record shall show any outstanding work required (whether of the customer or the installing company) which in the opinion of the installing company may (if left outstanding) detract from the effectiveness or reliability of the installation and/or cause incorrect activation.

10. HANDOVER

10.1 Each company shall take all reasonable steps to ensure that on completion of an installation an appropriate representative of the customer is available for handing over of the installation.

10.2 Wherever practicable the handover shall be carried out by someone other than the person who installed the system. This is especially important for the more complex systems.

- 10.3 The handover shall be carried out by a duly qualified representative of the installing company, who has received training in the giving of instructions.
- 10.4 Handover shall not take place until the appropriate final inspection, tests, and checks have been completed with satisfactory results and the appropriate documentation completed.
- 10.5 During the handover, the customer shall be instructed on how to use the security system and its use shall be demonstrated to them.

The installing company's representative shall ensure that, as far as it is practicable, the customer's representative is adequately conversant with the system, its method of operation and the action they are to take to obtain normal (preventative) maintenance and for emergency (corrective) maintenance.

- 10.6 During the handover, the customer shall be given written or printed operating instructions for the security system and they shall be advised either (i) to display these on or close to the control unit or operating panel, or (ii) to keep them safely, such that they are readily available for reference when operating the control unit or operating panel.
- 10.7 During the handover, the customer shall be advised to appoint and train keyholders whom they will then authorise to operate the security system. (They shall be advised to select persons who are able to attend the premises within twenty minutes and in accordance with the requirements of any local police policy).
- 10.8 During handover of an intruder alarm installation, the customer shall be advised to notify the installing company and/or the police in writing of keyholders' names and addresses and telephone numbers, both immediately upon commissioning of the installation and in the event of subsequent changes of keyholder details, in accordance with any local police policy.
- 10.9 In the case of an intruder alarm installation, where there are designated entry routes and exit routes (they may be the same), attention shall be drawn to these routes during handover. The customer shall be advised to inform the keyholders of these routes and to give the keyholders copies of the detailed procedures and verification codes, where applicable (agreed with the installing company) which are to be followed during unsetting, setting and testing of the system.

In commercial premises having their alarm monitored by a remote monitoring centre, it is common to agree alarm setting and unsetting times if these are to be monitored. Remember, if these times are to be changed, the remote monitoring centre, needs to be notified in writing well in advance.

- 10.10 In the case of an intruder alarm installation, the customer shall be advised of their responsibilities in the terms given in BS 4737:Part 4:section 4.2:1986:sub-clause 4.7.4, items (a) to (l).
- 10.11 For a system incorporating an external audible alarm, the customer shall be reminded of their duty (by virtue of the Control of Noise [Code of Practice on Noise from Audible Intruder Alarms] Order 1981) to notify the police and environmental health officer. (See section 6.4 of this code of practice).
- 10.12 For a system incorporating an external audible alarm, the customer shall be reminded of the recommendation (contained in the Order referred to section 10.11 of this code of practice) that a twenty-minute cut-off device be fitted to the audible alarm. (See section 6.5 of this code of practice).

10.13 During the handover, the customer shall be provided with:

- a. Operating Instructions: see Section 10.6 of this code of practice.
- b. Up-to-date System Record (as referred to in section 9 of this code of practice).
- c. System Log Book: this should permit the user to record details of alarm activations. General or specific information to the user of the alarm is commonly included in addition.
- d. A copy of the NSI leaflet entitled "Preventing False Alarms - Ten Points to Remember" or another suitable publication containing similar information.

Note: Items c. and d. are sometimes combined into one document. For intruder alarm installations, NSI publishes a booklet entitled "Information Handbook (and System Log Book) for your Intruder Alarm" which (when completed) can be used to fulfil the purposes c. and d. above.

The customer shall be asked to keep the System Log Book up-to-date.

10.14 At the end of the handover, the customer shall be asked to sign a Completion Certificate (an example Completion Certificate for an intruder alarm system is given at the back of NACOSS Gold Code of Practice NACP 11) confirming that they accept the security system, that it is operational, and that its operation has been demonstrated to them. The Completion Certificate shall include reference to the up-dated system record (referred to in section 9 of this code of practice), which shall be a unique reference (i.e. quoting the system record reference number or the system record date).

10.15 At the end of the handover, the customer shall be asked to sign specifically confirming their acceptance of changes (if any) between the original design specification and the system record (the latter being a record of what has actually been supplied and installed). This can be a separate signature position on the Completion Certificate or it can be on the system record itself or as a separate document. If there are no such changes, then the installing company shall sign to that effect.

10.16 The NACOSS Gold Certificate of Compliance in respect of the installation (as required by NSI's rules) shall be given to the customer at the handover or mailed to them shortly afterwards, unless there is a specific reason for delaying its despatch. The installing company shall have in place adequate systems to ensure that NACOSS Gold Certificates of Compliance are duly and promptly issued.

10.17 A system designed for connection to remote signalling may be handed over before the connection has been completed. At handover, the installing company shall clearly indicate in the documentation that the connection has yet to be completed. The documentation shall make it clear if any action on the part of the customer is required prior to connection of the remote signalling or to initiate connection of the remote signalling. The installing company shall have in place internal management procedures for following up cases where there is a longer than usual delay in completing the connection of the remote signalling.

10.18 For a remote signalling system, the approved company shall inform the police force concerned that the system has been installed and handed over.

For an audible-only system, the approved company shall, if so requested, inform the police force concerned that the system has been installed and handed over.

10.19 If a system is to be handed over in stages then the handover requirements shall be completed for each stage and the documents shall state clearly which stage, equipment or area is the subject of that handover.

10.20 If, at the time of handover, a part of the security system is to remain disconnected (for example the seven-day test period applicable for certain intruder alarm installations [section 3.6 of NACOSS Gold Code of Practice NACP 11 refers]) then this disconnection shall be declared in the system logbook or in a temporary disconnection record which shall be signed by the customer (for intruder alarms refer to BS 4737:section 4.2:1986:sub-clause 4.6).

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