



Security.Improved

**National Security Inspectorate
ARC Gold
approval criteria**

These approval criteria are to be read in conjunction with the NSI regulations. No company may hold out or claim that it meets the ARC Gold approval criteria, save by virtue of holding NSI ARC Gold approval.

NSI document ref: SF 006 Issue 1 September 2010

The approval criteria for alarm receiving centres are set out in this document SF 006.

The approval criteria for security system installation and maintenance companies holding (or applying for) NSI NACOSS Gold approval are now set out in a separate document, SF 002.

Please note that the approval criteria for alarm receiving centres (formerly called central monitoring stations) and the approval criteria for security system installation and maintenance companies holding (or applying for) NSI NACOSS Gold approval were formerly set out in a single document, NACP 0 Issue 1.

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National Security Inspectorate

ARC Gold approval criteria

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1 Scope and introduction

- 1.1 This document lists the criteria for Alarm Receiving Centre Gold approval, known as NSI ARC Gold approval.
- 1.2 The criteria apply to NSI ARC Gold approved companies and to companies applying for NSI ARC Gold approval.
- 1.3 Definitions are as stated in the NSI regulations for NSI approval.
- 1.4 In this document, paragraphs identified with the word "*CRITERION*" are criteria for approval.

Paragraphs identified with the word "*GUIDELINE*" are guidelines for assessing compliance with the stated criteria. Nevertheless, we reserve a right to refuse approval if you do not meet the guidelines or to end your approval if you do not meet the guidelines.

2 Premises

CRITERION

You must operate from suitable and adequate secure premises.

GUIDELINE

We expect non-residential business/commercial premises.

GUIDELINE

When you apply for approval, you need to show us that you have reasonable security of tenure of the premises (for example, freehold; leasehold with at least three years to run; or a long history of occupying the premises and no reason to expect that you will have to leave).

CRITERION

In addition, your ARC must meet and keep to the recommendations given in BS 5979: remote centres receiving signals from fire and security systems – code of practice.

3 Equipment

CRITERION

You need to have tools, equipment, alarm systems, test instruments and other facilities such that you are able to operate the ARC in accordance with BS 5979 and the other relevant industry standards in criterion number 18.

4 Insurances

CRITERION

You need to hold employer's liability insurance, public liability insurance and products liability insurance extending to wrongful advice and failure to perform. Your insurance cover must be wide enough to cover all of your work and services of receiving, monitoring and processing signals from fire and/or security system installations. The limit of indemnity for any one event and also in total for any one twelve month period of insurance needs to be not less than one million pounds sterling.

GUIDELINE

'Wrongful advice' and 'failure to perform' are specialised forms of insurance cover not necessarily included in ordinary business policies. We advise you to check the scope and extent of your cover before you apply for approval.

GUIDELINE

When you apply for approval, you should send us evidence of suitable insurance (or a quotation for suitable insurance). If you send us a quotation, you will need to take up the insurance as soon as you achieve approval and then you will need to send us a copy of the papers so that we know you have taken up the insurance cover. The papers need to arrive in the NSI office within thirty days after you have achieved approval.

5 Experience of management

CRITERION

You need to have suitably experienced managers, (known as "qualifying managers"). These are the people within your company who are responsible for the monitoring side of the business and also for the overall business and financial management of the business. (This includes being responsible for the work and service provided by any sub-contractors).

At least one of the "qualifying managers" needs to have relevant monitoring and technical experience, which needs to include experience of receiving, monitoring and processing signals from fire and/or security system installations.

At least one of the "qualifying managers" needs to be a director or top manager who has relevant business management and commercial experience.

GUIDELINE

The number of qualifying managers you need will depend on the size of your company and on the nature and extent of the company's monitoring operations.

Sometimes one qualifying manager is enough, if he (she) has the appropriate monitoring and technical experience and also the appropriate business management experience.

A qualifying manager is normally expected to have at least three years' relevant experience in a management or supervisory capacity in monitoring alarms from electronic security systems (for example intruder and hold-up alarms, CCTV, social alarms) and/or monitoring fire alarms. The experience may have been gained within your company or during previous employment/trading. The experience needs to be of a standard acceptable to us.

6 Repute of management

CRITERION

The people who manage, control and have principal interests in the ownership of your company need to be people who are demonstrably reputable people of good standing. If we ask them to, they need to provide relevant personal information, evidence of character and repute, references, guarantors and so on, to our satisfaction.

GUIDELINE

When we are assessing whether a company meets this criterion, we can take into account all the information we have about the people concerned. The mere absence of information against a person is not necessarily enough. We can refuse to approve a company if we are not satisfied that we have the necessary positive evidence of repute and good character. Similarly, if we are not satisfied, we can end approval or set a condition (for example a condition that your approval can only continue if you remove a named individual from office).

7 Finance

CRITERION

We can withhold approval or end approval if we have reason to believe that:

- your company does not have sufficient financial stability to be able to trade
- the financial affairs of your company are not being (or have not been) carried on in a responsible and prudent manner, or
- your company is not trading lawfully, meeting its just debts and other financial obligations.

GUIDELINE

We may get a report from a credit reference agency. We may view public records such as statutory accounts, county court judgments. To help us form a clear picture, we may ask you to send us financial information such as annual accounts, monthly management accounts, forward financial plans (projections).

We do not usually grant Gold approval to companies that have been trading for less than two years. However, we can allow an exception if there is evidence of substantial financial backing.

8 Twenty-four hour cover

CRITERION

You must provide a monitoring service in accordance with the standards, codes of practice and published documents in criterion number 18.

9 Level of trading

CRITERION

You must maintain a level of trading activity in monitoring intruder alarms and/or in monitoring signals from other types of electronic security system (for example CCTV) and/or in monitoring fire alarms enough for our representatives to assess and examine the standard of work carried-out and the management system applicable.

10 Contracts (general)

CRITERION

You must not try to get customers to accept contract conditions that are unreasonable.

GUIDELINE

We draw your attention to consumer protection law and good practice.

11 Monitoring contracts

CRITERION

You need to provide monitoring contracts that are consistent with the relevant industry standards (for example BS 5979) and with the policies of the relevant emergency services (for example Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) and ACPOS, Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA)).

12 Staff

CRITERION

You need to have suitably trained and qualified people, sufficient to meet your obligations to your customers and to NSI. Also, as a minimum, your ARC needs to meet the relevant industry standards (for example BS 5979) in relation to such matters as staffing levels and alarm handling performance.

13 Security screening of personnel

CRITERION

You must keep to the recommendations given in BS 7858 -- British Standard code of practice for security screening of individuals employed in a security environment.

14 Complaints

CRITERION

You must keep to:

NSI NACP 5: ARC Gold code of practice for management of customer complaints, or

BS ISO 10002: quality management – customer satisfaction – guidelines for complaints handling organizations.

NOTE: BS ISO 10002 supersedes BS 8600.

15 Compliance with statutory and legal requirements

CRITERION

You must keep to statutory and legal requirements that are relevant to the service provided, for example Private Security Industry Act licensing and working time regulations.

16 Compliance with standards, codes of practice and so on

CRITERION

You must make sure that **ALL** your monitoring of fire and/or electronic security system installations is done to the regulations and approval criteria. This includes

any work or other functions or activities that you sub-contract. It also includes work or other functions or activities that you accept as a sub-contractor.

17 Documented ISO 9001 quality management system

CRITERION

You must have a documented quality management system to BS EN ISO 9001 and the NSI quality schedule SSQS 102.

18 British standards and so on

CRITERION

You must keep to the following standards, codes of practice and published documents:

Alarm receiving centres:

BS 5979: remote centres receiving signals from fire and security systems – code of practice

NSI Directive NAD 2: policy in relation to keyholders

For alarm receiving centres monitoring intruder and hold-up alarms:

BSI PD 6662: scheme for the application of European standards for intruder and hold up alarm systems

BS 8473: intruder and hold-up alarms - management of false alarms - code of practice

NOTE: BSI PD 6662 calls up certain other standards and documents as normative. At the time of writing, the standards and documents called up as normative by BSI PD 6662:2004 include prEN 50131-1:2004 (a draft EN which is available from BSI as BSI document ref DPC 04/30080013 DC), BSI DD 243, and several other parts or sections of EN 50131, EN 50136 and BS 4737.

NOTE: BSI PD 6662:2004 is due to be superseded by BSI PD 6662:2010. The standards and documents called up as normative by BSI PD 6662:2010 include BS EN 50131-1:2006 +A1:2009, BS 8243, BS 8473 and several other parts or sections of EN 50131, EN 50136 and BS 4737.

For alarm receiving centres monitoring detector activated CCTV systems claiming compliance with BS 8418:

BS 8418: installation and remote monitoring of detector activated CCTV systems – code of practice

NOTE: BS 8418 calls up as normative BS EN 50132-7: alarm systems - CCTV surveillance systems for use in security applications - Part 7 - application guidelines. BS EN 50132-7 contains certain limited provisions relating to the configuration of CCTV control centres.

For alarm receiving centres monitoring CCTV systems claiming compliance with NCP 104:

NSI NCP 104: code of practice for the design, installation and maintenance of CCTV systems

NOTE: NSI NCP 104 calls up as normative BS EN 50132-7: alarm systems - CCTV surveillance systems for use in security applications - Part 7 - application guidelines. NCP 104 and BS EN 50132-7 contain certain limited provisions relating to the configuration of CCTV control centres.

For alarm receiving centres monitoring social alarms:

CLC/TS 50134-7: alarm systems – social alarm systems – Part 7: application guidelines.

For centres (known as systems operating centres or SOCs) providing Thatcham “Category 5” monitoring and tracking of after theft systems with vehicle immobilisation for vehicle recovery:

Thatcham: criteria for systems operating centres monitoring and tracking Category 5 after theft systems with vehicle immobilisation for vehicle recovery.

NOTE: These are issued by The Motor Insurance Repair Research Centre, known as “Thatcham”.

Home Office Publication No. 14/02: stolen vehicle tracking – ACPO and Home Office guidance to companies on police policy.

DD CEN/TS 15213-5: road transport and traffic telematics – after theft systems for the recovery of stolen vehicles.

For alarm receiving centres monitoring lone worker devices:

BS 8484: code of practice for the provision of lone worker device (LWD) services.

19 Police policies

If you have signed-up with the Police Service as a ‘police compliant company’ or if you apply for police response in relation to certain kinds of security system you must comply with the applicable police policies and requirements.

20 Agreed deviations

The ARC Gold approval service is based on the approved ARCs (and the monitoring services they provide) meeting the standards, technical codes and published documents identified in these approval criteria. It is on this basis that the ARC Gold approval service and ARC Gold approved companies enjoy wide support.

However, we recognise that there are particular circumstances in which or occasions on which fully meeting the standards, technical codes and published documents may not be necessary (or may even be not practically possible). With this in mind, you are allowed limited use of agreed deviations against the standard, technical code or published document, as explained below.

CRITERION

ARCs and the monitoring services they provide may deviate from the standards, technical codes and published documents if the deviations are limited in nature and extent, provided we have authorised the deviation in writing. You must not apply any deviation unless you have received our agreement in writing. You should expect that we will not agree unless we are satisfied that the circumstances are exceptional and that they justify allowing the deviation.

Please note that if the proposed deviation directly affects or may directly affect the standard of the monitoring service provided for a security system installation that is or may be intended to be police-calling, we will not agree a deviation unless you satisfy us that you have evidence in writing issued by the relevant police service that the relevant police service is content for such deviation to be allowed.

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