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# ARC Gold approval criteria

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

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## Contents

1	Scope and introduction .....	4
2	Standards and Codes of Practice .....	4
2.1	Primary Scheme standards and Codes of Practice.....	4
2.1.1	Management System .....	4
2.1.2	Alarm Receiving Centres.....	4
2.1.3	Alarm monitoring .....	4
3	Premises.....	5
4	Equipment.....	5
5	Insurances .....	5
6	Experience of management.....	6
7	Repute of management.....	6
8	Finance .....	7
9	Twenty-four hour cover .....	7
10	Level of trading .....	7
11	Contracts (general) .....	8
12	Monitoring contracts .....	8
13	Staff.....	8
14	Security screening of personnel .....	8
15	Management of sub-contracting (outsourcing).....	9
16	Management of complaints.....	9
17	Compliance with statutory and legal requirements.....	9
18	Compliance with standards, codes of practice and so on .....	9
19	Documented quality management system .....	10
20	Police policies .....	10
21	Agreed deviations .....	10

NSI reference only

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## 1 Scope and introduction

This document lists the criteria for Alarm Receiving Centre Gold approval, known as NSI ARC Gold approval.

The criteria apply to NSI ARC Gold approved companies and to companies applying for NSI ARC Gold approval.

Definitions are as stated in the NSI regulations.

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 Standards and Codes of Practice

NSI certifies companies to the 'primary' scheme standards and Codes of Practice related to this scheme.

You must meet these standards in order to achieve and maintain ARC Gold approval.

Note: Where requirements for "standards" are mentioned throughout these approval criteria this also includes the relevant Codes of practices.

### 2.1 Primary Scheme standards and Codes of Practice

#### 2.1.1 Management System

ISO 9001:2015 – Quality Management System – Requirements for use of Alarm Receiving Centres (ARCs) providing monitoring services including intruder and hold-up alarms, fire alarms, CCTV systems and activations from lone worker devices.

#### 2.1.2 Alarm Receiving Centres

BS 5979:2007 - Remote centres receiving signals from fire and security systems. Code of practice (Not permitted for new ARC Gold applicants);

or

BS EN 50518:2019 - Monitoring and Alarm Receiving Centre.

#### 2.1.3 Alarm monitoring

BS 9518 - Processing of alarm signals by an alarm receiving centre. Code of practice.

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### 3 Premises

Criterion	Guideline
You must operate from suitable and adequate secure premises.	We expect non-residential business / commercial premises.
	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).

### 4 Equipment

Criterion	Guideline
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 relevant industry standards contained in section 2.	None.

### 5 Insurances

Criterion	Guideline
<p>You need to hold employer's liability insurance and public liability insurance.</p> <p>You need to hold 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.</p>	<p>'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.</p> <p>Some of your contracts are likely to require you to hold cover for more than one million pounds sterling.</p>

## 6 Experience of management

Criterion	Guideline
<p>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 all the work and service provided by any sub-contractors.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>At least one of the "qualifying managers" needs to be a director or senior manager who has relevant business management and commercial experience.</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>Sometimes one qualifying manager is enough, if he (she) has the appropriate monitoring and technical experience and also the appropriate business management experience.</p> <p>A qualifying manager is normally expected to have <b>at least three years' relevant experience</b> 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.</p>

## 7 Repute of management

Criterion	Guideline
<p>The people who manage, control and have principal interests in the ownership of your company must be demonstrably reputable and of good standing. During the application process and at any time subsequent to approval being issued, we may ask specific individuals within your organisation to provide, through completion of NSI personal data forms and / or other methods, relevant personal information, evidence of character and repute, references, guarantors and so on, to our satisfaction.</p>	<p>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).</p>

## 8 Finance

Criterion	Guideline
<p>We can withhold approval or end approval if we have reason to believe that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>your company does not have sufficient financial stability to be able to trade;</li> <li>the financial affairs of your company are not being (or have not been) carried on in a responsible and prudent manner; or</li> <li>your company is not trading lawfully, meeting its just debts and other financial obligations.</li> </ul>	<p>We usually 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).</p> <p>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.</p>

## 9 Twenty-four hour cover

Criterion	Guideline
You must provide a monitoring service in accordance with the standards, codes of practice and published documents in criterion number 18.	None.

## 10 Level of trading

Criterion	Guideline
You must maintain a level of trading activity in monitoring intruder and hold-up alarms and/or in monitoring signals from other types of electronic security system (for example CCTV, lone worker devices, after theft systems with vehicle immobilisation for vehicle recovery) 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.	None.

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## 11 Contracts (general)

Criterion	Guideline
You must not try to get customers to accept contract conditions that are un-reasonable.	We draw your attention to consumer protection law and good practice.

## 12 Monitoring contracts

Criterion	Guideline
You need to provide monitoring contracts that are consistent with the relevant industry standards (for example BS 5979 or BS 8591 (including the BS EN 50518 series)) and with the policies of the relevant emergency services (for example Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) and Police Scotland, Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA)).	None.

## 13 Staff

Criterion	Guideline
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 or BS EN 50518 in relation to such matters as staffing levels and alarm handling performance.	None.

## 14 Security screening of personnel

Criterion	Guideline
You must keep to the recommendations given in the relevant standards for security screening of individuals employed in a security environment.	None.

## 15 Management of sub-contracting (outsourcing)

Criterion	Guideline
You must keep to the requirements for sub-contracting in NSI quality schedule SSQS 102 for the application of BS EN ISO 9001 to ARC Gold approval.	None.

## 16 Management of complaints

Criterion	Guideline
You must keep to the requirements for management of complaints in NSI quality schedule SSQS 102 for the application of BS EN ISO 9001 to ARC Gold approval.	None.

## 17 Compliance with statutory and legal requirements

Criterion	Guideline
You must keep to statutory and legal requirements that are relevant to the service provided, for example Security Industry Authority (SIA) licensing, Private Security Authority (PSA) licensing and working time regulations.	None.

## 18 Compliance with standards, codes of practice and so on

Criterion	Guideline
You must make sure that all your monitoring of fire and/or 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.	None.

## 19 Documented quality management system

Criterion	Guideline
You must have a documented quality management system to BS EN ISO 9001 and the NSI quality schedule SSQS 102.	None.

## 20 Police policies

You must adhere to the relevant policies and provisions of the emergency services including ACPO, Police Scotland and the individual police forces and the individual fire and rescue services.

## 21 Agreed deviations

ARC Gold approval 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.

However, we recognise that there are particular circumstances where fully meeting the standards, technical codes and published documents may not be necessary (or may not be 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	Guideline
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.  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	None.

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Criterion	Guideline
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.	