

FAQs for NSI Approved Companies

In Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

Guarding Services

Issue 1, 3rd April 2020

NSI recognises approved companies in the security and fire sector are working hard to navigate the COVID-19 pandemic crisis, prioritising the health and wellbeing of staff and taking necessary steps to support their customers and maintain business continuity.

In order to best support industry and the approved company community in these unprecedented circumstances, NSI has suspended all audit and assessment activity from 6th April until at least 31st May 2020 inclusive. Audit activities will resume when, in due course, Government restrictions are relaxed.

When audits resume all evidence of non-compliances that are COVID-19 related will be reported in "Auditor Notes" without recourse to raising Improvement Needs and Observations.

1. Are SIA license holders classed as "Key Workers"?

On the 26th March 2020, Ian Todd Chief Executive of the SIA confirmed: "the current definition of critical worker DOES include regulated (licence holding) security professionals, essential to national infrastructure, operating in roles under the [8 broad headings listed](#). This status is only directly relevant to the ability to access the school and childcare systems at this time. This critical worker definition does not affect whether or not you can travel to work - if you are not a critical worker, you may still travel to work where this absolutely cannot be done from home.

"This definition covers, amongst other areas, security provision in hospitals; schools; social care; courts; government estate; supermarkets and the food supply chain; the transport network; national infrastructure and utilities. If you are providing essential security to a service which itself remains critical and functioning, which attracts critical worker status, then you are likely to be covered. If in doubt, check with whoever contracts for your services."

This information is being updated when circumstances change. Please check regularly for updates



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The Government list is role dependent and may change.

Government advice is to stay at home where possible and to keep your children at home whenever possible. If you are undertaking an essential role as a Key Worker, in support of the COVID-19 response, which requires you to access the school or childcare systems, only then should you do so.

Keep up to date with SIA announcements at:

<https://www.sia.homeoffice.gov.uk/Pages/Coronavirus.aspx>

2. Are you able to provide any further clarity for workers securing other non-public owned assets/valuable buildings?

It is NSI's view that staff in approved companies working in a wide variety of guarding services are Key Workers.

Ensure you regularly check the websites and other channels of NSI, SIA, BSIA and Government to keep up to date with the latest information:

<https://www.nsi.org.uk/information-centre/updates-on-covid-19/>

<https://www.sia.homeoffice.gov.uk/Pages/Coronavirus.aspx>

<https://www.bsia.co.uk>

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

3. How can I cover the Right To Work document requirements as required by BS 7858 for preliminary screening when we cannot travel and we cannot see the original RTW documents during the interview stage?

The Government has issued revised guidance during the current COVID-19 crisis and information can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-right-to-work-checks>

4. How should I cover ID checks when the public cannot travel and in some cases there are delays in receiving physical documents?

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) has announced temporary changes to the standard and enhanced ID checking guidelines, effective from 19 March 2020, to ensure necessary checks can still be conducted in light of current measures in place as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak.

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The temporary changes will permit:

- ID documents to be viewed over video link
- scanned images to be used in advance of the DBS check being submitted
- The applicant will be required to present the original versions of these documents when they first attend their employment or volunteering role.

The change will assist those companies screening personnel to BS 7858 when conducting identity checks.

Full details are available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/covid-19-changes-to-dbs-id-checking-guidelines>

5. *Is the SIA responding to Business Account queries from ACS companies?*

Yes, it is business as usual for the SIA for business account queries.

6. *I have questions regarding the SIA's Approved Contractor Scheme. What help is the SIA providing?*

The SIA has a dedicated page on its website:

<https://www.sia.homeoffice.gov.uk/Pages/Coronavirus.aspx> and have produced FAQs which are being regularly updated. Download the FAQs:

<https://www.sia.homeoffice.gov.uk/Documents/sia-covid-19-faq.pdf>

7. *Can I still get in touch with the SIA?*

Yes. However, the SIA are urging people to avoid all unnecessary contact. If contact is necessary, please do so via your online account. They will prioritise all incoming correspondence and respond as quickly as possible, and currently within their normal timescales.

8. *Where can I find the latest Government advice about Coronavirus?*

You can keep up to date with the latest Government advice at:

www.gov.uk/coronavirus

This includes information on symptoms and what to do if you have them, how to protect yourself and guidance for employees and businesses.

This information is being updated when circumstances change. Please check regularly for updates