

Code of practice for

Remote centres receiving signals from security systems

ICS 13.320

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- Association of Burglary Insurance Survey
- Association of Chief Police Officers of England, Wales and Northern Ireland
- Association of Metropolitan Authorities
- Association of Security Consultants
- Association of Social and Community Alarms Providers
- British Fire Protection Systems Association
- British Security Industry Association
- British Telecommunications PLC
- Chief and Assistant Chief Fire Officers
- Electrical Contractors Association
- Low Power Radio Association
- Metropolitan Police
- National Approval Council for Security Systems
- Security Facilities Executive
- Security Industry Training Organization
- Security Systems and Alarms Inspection Board

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Foreword

This British Standard has been prepared by Technical Committee GW/1, and supersedes BS 5979:1993, which is withdrawn.

This edition of the standard now includes recommendations on the application of alarm filtering and the use of audible, visual and sequential confirmation techniques to minimize the incidence of false alarms passed to the emergency services or other response agencies.

As a code of practice, this British Standard takes the form of guidance and recommendations. It should not be quoted as if it were a specification and particular care should be taken to ensure that claims of compliance are not misleading.

Annexes A and B are informative. Annexes C and D are normative.

A British Standard does not purport to include all the provisions of a contract. Users of British Standards are responsible for their correct application.

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Summary of pages

This document comprises a front cover, an inside front cover, pages i and ii, pages 1 to 25 and a back cover.

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1 Scope

This British Standard gives recommendations for the planning, construction and facilities of manned and unmanned remote centres, and for the operation of alarm receiving centres (ARCs) receiving signals from security systems, e.g. intruder, fire, social and closed circuit television (CCTV).

2 Normative references

The following normative documents contain provisions which, through reference in this text, constitute provisions of this British Standard. For dated references, subsequent amendments to, or revisions of, any of these publications do not apply. For undated references, the latest edition of the publication referred to applies.

BS 405:1987, *Specification for uncoated expanded metal carbon steel sheets for general purposes*.

BS 476 (all parts), *Fire tests on building materials and structures*.

BS 4737-1:1986, *Intruder alarm systems — Part 1: Specification for installed systems with local audible and/or remote signalling*.

BS 4737-2:1987, *Intruder alarm systems — Part 2: Specification for installed systems for deliberate operation*.

BS 5051-1:1988, *Bullet resistant glazing — Part 1: Specification for glazing for interior use*.

BS 5306-3:1985, *Fire extinguishing installations and equipment on premises — Part 3: Code of practice for selection, installation and maintenance of portable fire extinguishers*.

BS 5839-1:1988, *Fire detection and alarm systems for buildings — Part 1: Code of practice for system design, installation and servicing*.

BS 6132:1983, *Code of practice for safe operation of alkaline secondary cells and batteries*.

BS 6133:1995, *Code of practice for safe operation of lead-acid stationary batteries*.

BS 7042:1988, *Specification for high security intruder alarm systems in buildings*.

BS 7858:1996, *Code of practice for security screening of personnel employed in a security environment*.

BS EN 3-1, *Portable fire extinguishers — Part 1: Description, duration of operation, class A and B fire test*.

BS EN 50131-1, *Alarm systems — Intrusion systems — Part 1: General requirements*.

3 Terms, definitions and abbreviations

3.1 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this British Standard, the terms and definitions given in BS 4737-1:1986 and the following apply.

3.1.1

activity monitor

equipment that automatically monitors the ARC staff for periods of inactivity, automatically creates an audible signal within the ARC in the event of failure to detect activity within a predefined period. If the signal is not acknowledged by the ARC staff within a short, predefined timescale, the equipment automatically raises an alert to a separate, manned location

NOTE The period of inactivity could be due to attack or catastrophe.

3.1.2

alarm company

organization that provides services for alarm systems

NOTE This definition is taken from BS EN 50131-1:1997.

3.1.3

alarm condition

condition of an alarm system, or part thereof, that results from the response of the system to the presence of a hazard

NOTE This definition is taken from BS EN 50131-1:1997.

3.1.4

alarm filtering

procedure whereby signalled alarm conditions are intentionally delayed at the ARC and their status reviewed for the purpose of preventing unnecessary calls to the relevant emergency service by cancelling certain alarm conditions, where such cancellation is authorized by the customer

3.1.5

alarm message

message conveyed from an ARC to the relevant emergency service that indicates that an alarm condition has occurred at a protected premises, or which provides supplementary information concerning a previously reported alarm message

3.1.6

alarm receiving centre (ARC)

continuously manned remote centre to which information concerning the status of one or more alarm systems is reported

3.1.7

alarm receiving centre intruder alarm system

intruder alarm system (IAS) meeting the requirements of BS 4737-1:1986; BS 7042, or at least grade 3 of BS EN 50131-1

3.1.8

alarm signal

signal which, upon being received at an ARC or other remote location, identifies a signalled alarm condition

3.1.9

audibly confirmed

status in which an incident has been confirmed by a human being at a remote location (normally an ARC) and in which the human being, after having interpreted audio information transmitted from the protected premises, has made a decision that there is a high probability that a genuine intrusion, or a genuine attempted intrusion, has occurred

3.1.10

client

person or organization with whom the remote centre has entered into a contract to provide alarm monitoring services

3.1.11

confirmed

see **audibly confirmed (3.1.9)**, **visually confirmed (3.1.34)**, or **sequentially confirmed (3.1.28)**

3.1.12

control equipment

equipment necessary for the setting, unsetting and testing of an IAS and for sending an alarm condition to warning devices and/or signalling equipment

3.1.13

customer

person or organization utilizing the services of an alarm company

3.1.14

detector

device designed to generate an intruder signal in response to the sensing of an abnormal condition indicating the presence of a hazard

NOTE This definition is taken from BS EN 50131-1:1997.

3.1.15**false alert**

signalled alarm condition that (without having been extended to the relevant emergency service) is regarded by the ARC as cancelled, such cancellation having been authorized by the customer

NOTE 1 Such authorization can be either:

- a) on a case-by-case basis by use of suitable code words or numbers in accordance with a defined alarm filtering routine; or
- b) by prior written agreement.

NOTE 2 Communication whereby the customer/user causes (i) a misoperation signal, or (ii) an unset signal, to be sent to the ARC affirming that the signalled alarm condition is to be filtered out and not extended to the relevant emergency service are examples of cancellation authorized by the customer [see option a) of NOTE 1].

NOTE 3 "False alerts" are not regarded as "false alarms". False alarms are events that have not been successfully identified and filtered out, and have therefore been notified to the relevant emergency service.

3.1.16**fire resistance**

ability of an element of building construction, component or structure to fulfil, for a stated period of time, the required stability, fire integrity and/or thermal insulation and/or other expected duty in a standard fire resistance test

NOTE The designation "fire resistant" given to an element implies that this element fulfils the requirements of the relevant standard fire test.

3.1.17**mis-operation signal**

signal that is definitely and unambiguously identifiable at the ARC as indicating to the ARC that the alarm system has mis-operated and therefore that the alarm signal is to be filtered out and not extended to the relevant emergency service

NOTE The designation of a particular type of signal as a mis-operation signal is therefore a matter for agreement between the alarm company and ARC, with the concurrence of the customer.

3.1.18**non-combustible**

not capable of undergoing combustion under specified test conditions

3.1.19**operations area**

that part of an ARC concerned directly with the display of information from the alarm and/or CCTV systems served by the ARC and with the onward transmission of relevant aspects of this information to an emergency service

3.1.20**processor**

device that processes the output from one or more sensors to determine whether an alarm condition should be generated

NOTE The processor may be integral with the control equipment.

3.1.21**protected premises**

part of a building to which protection is afforded by an alarm system

3.1.22**remote access**

restricted facility to view/edit data and/or to create new records from outside the shell of the remote centre

3.1.23**remote centre**

location remote from the protected premises, in which the information concerned with the state of one or more alarm systems is collected either for reporting (e.g. an ARC) or for onward transmission

3.1.24

response agreement

set of instructions agreed between the remote centre and the client as to the actions to be taken in the event of an alarm signal being received

3.1.25

satellite

remote centre, normally unmanned, in which the information concerning the state of alarm and/or CCTV systems is collected and processed for onward transmission either direct, or via a further satellite, to an ARC

NOTE 1 The junction point of a number of alarm system signalling circuits is not regarded as a satellite.

NOTE 2 An ARC is classified as a satellite if, during periods without manning, alarms are transmitted through it to another ARC.

3.1.26

satellite intruder alarm system

IAS meeting the requirements of BS 4737-1:1986, or at least grade 2 of BS EN 50131-1

3.1.27

set

status of an alarm system or part thereof, in which an alarm condition can be notified

NOTE This definition is taken from BS EN 50131-1:1997.

3.1.28

sequentially confirmed

status in which confirmation emanates from two or more independent sensors, detectors and/or processors, which are so configured that there is a high probability that a genuine intrusion, or a genuine attempted intrusion, has occurred

3.1.29

shell

all parts of the boundary of a remote centre including walls, floors, roof or ceiling and including any openings therein

3.1.30

signalled alarm condition

state of monitoring equipment at an ARC (or other remote location) that indicates that intrusion, attempted intrusion or unauthorized interference has occurred at the protected premises, or is likely to occur

NOTE Once signalled at the remote location as an alarm condition, the event is regarded as a signalled alarm condition even if subsequently filtered out by the ARC personnel as being a false alert not requiring relevant emergency service response.

3.1.31

signalling

initiation of the transmission of an alarm condition from the protected premises to a remote location

3.1.32

unset

status of an IAS or part thereof in which an alarm condition cannot be notified

NOTE This definition is taken from BS EN 50131-1:1997.

3.1.33

user

person authorized by the customer to operate an alarm system

3.1.34

visually confirmed

status in which confirmation is confirmed by a human being at a remote location (normally an ARC) and in which the human being, after having interpreted a visual image transmitted from the protected premises, has made a decision that there is a high probability that a genuine intrusion, or a genuine attempted intrusion, has occurred

3.2 Abbreviations

For the purposes of this British Standard, the following abbreviations apply.

ARC	Alarm receiving centre
IAS	Intruder alarm system
CCTV	Closed circuit television

4 Planning

4.1 Categorization

The planning for the construction, and for the routing of communications services, of a remote centre should be determined by the intended categorization of the remote centre, taking into account any foreseeable need for change.

Remote centres are categorized according to the type(s) of alarm and CCTV signals handled and the consequent needs for integrity and security of construction, communications, operation and information. The two types of category are as follows.

- a) *Category I* is a remote centre handling signals from fire alarm systems and/or from social alarm systems, and/or from CCTV systems in non-security applications (e.g. traffic flow).
- b) *Category II* is a remote centre handling signals from IASs and/or from CCTV systems in security applications that require an emergency response (e.g. loss prevention) and/or from fire alarm systems and/or social alarm systems.

4.2 Site selection

4.2.1 Remote centres

A remote centre should be located in a building with low risk of fire, explosion, flooding, vandalism and exposure hazards from other buildings.

The building housing the remote centre should be protected against the effects of lightning strike.

NOTE 1 Appropriate recommendations for the protection of buildings and electronic equipment are contained in BS 6651:1992.

NOTE 2 As an alternative, a remote centre may adopt the recommendations of 8.4 to sustain monitoring facilities.

The possibility of gas seepage around cables or pipes below ground level should be given consideration.

4.2.2 Alarm receiving centres

4.2.2.1 Category I

Displayed information should not be visible from outside the shell of the ARC.

4.2.2.2 Category II

Preference should be given to locating an ARC in a basement or on an upper floor. Where the ARC is located on a ground floor, access by the general public to the shell of the ARC should be restricted, e.g. by a physical barrier.

The interior of the operations area or equipment room(s) should not be directly visible from outside the shell.

4.2.3 Satellites

A satellite should be located inside a permanent building. Access to the building (or part of the building) in which the satellite is located should be under the exclusive control of the company operating the ARC to which the satellite is associated.

4.3 Consultation

Appropriate consultation should be undertaken with any other relevant interested parties.

4.3.1 Telecommunications service

4.3.1.1 General

The telecommunications service provider should be consulted and issues that could jeopardize communication between the telephone exchange(s) and the remote centre should be identified.

Where telecommunications services offering the required levels of availability and security cannot be provided, either an alternative location for the remote centre should be considered or alternative means of providing the required levels of availability and security should be implemented, e.g. diverse routing of services using common technologies such as cables or duplicated services using differing technologies such as cables and RF techniques.

4.3.1.2 Category II ARC

The telecommunications service provider should be consulted with regard to providing physical and electronic detection and physical protection to equipment and access points to cables located in the immediate vicinity of an ARC which, if damaged, could interfere with ARC telecommunications.