

BRITISH STANDARD

Intruder and hold-up alarm systems – Management of false alarms – Code of practice

ICS 13.310



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Published by BSI Standards Limited 2013

ISBN 978 0 580 82875 1

The following BSI references relate to the work on this standard:
Committee reference GW/1/2

Publication history

First published as DD 245, 15 January 1998

Second edition, 26 March 2002

First published as BS 8473, 29 September 2006

Amendments issued since publication

Amd. no.	Date	Text affected
16761 Corrigendum No. 1	October 2006	Figure B.1 and Figure B.2 corrected
A1	July 2008	First sentence of 10.7 amended
A2	November 2013	See Foreword

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Foreword

Publishing information

This British Standard was published by The BSI Standards Limited, under licence from The British Standards Institution on 29 September 2006 and came into effect on 31 March 2007. It was prepared by Subcommittee GW/1/2, Installed alarm systems, under the authority of Technical Committee GW/1, Electronic security systems. A list of organizations represented on this committee can be obtained on request to its secretary.

Supersession

BS 8473:2006+A2:2013 supersedes BS 8473:2006+A1:2008, which is withdrawn.

Information about this document

BS 8473 has been drawn up to assist all parties in the management of false alarms.

False alarms are responsible for absorbing a disproportionate level of resources of the police, the alarm industry, clients and users, and it is in the interests of those concerned that all parties seek to reduce their false alarms to a minimum.

Text introduced or altered by Amendment No. 2 is indicated in the text by tags **A2** **A2**. Text introduced or altered by Amendment No. 1 is not tagged. Minor editorial changes are not tagged.

Use of this document

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.

Any user claiming compliance with this British Standard is expected to be able to justify any course of action that deviates from its recommendations.

BSI permits the reproduction of Annex D, Annex E, Figure F.1 and Figure G.2, on pages 17, 18, 19 and 22 of BS 8473. This reproduction is only permitted where it is necessary for the user to comply with the recommendations in **5.3** and **6.2** during each application of the standard.

Presentational conventions

The word “should” is used to express recommendations of this standard. The word “may” is used in the text to express permissibility, e.g. as an alternative to the primary recommendation of the clause. The word “can” is used to express possibility, e.g. a consequence of an action or an event.

Notes and commentaries are provided throughout the text of this standard. Notes give references and additional information that are important but do not form part of the recommendations. Commentaries give background information.

Contractual and legal considerations

This publication does not purport to include all the necessary provisions of a contract. Users are responsible for its correct application.

Compliance with a British Standard cannot confer immunity from legal obligations.

1 Scope

This British Standard gives guidance on the management of intruder and hold-up alarm systems (I&HAS), and the management of alarm conditions when they occur in order to reduce the nuisance factor and waste of resources in responding to false alarms.

This document applies to all remotely notified intruder and hold-up alarm systems and also applies to audible only intruder and hold-up alarm systems, except where otherwise stated.

2 Normative references

The following referenced documents are indispensable for the application of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

BS 5979, *Code of practice for remote centres receiving signals from security systems*

BS 8243:2010, *Installation and configuration of intruder and hold-up alarm systems designed to generate confirmed alarm conditions – Code of Practice*

BS EN 50131-1:2006, *Alarm systems – Intrusion systems – Part 1: System requirements*

BS EN 50518, *Monitoring and alarm receiving centre (all parts)*

PD 6662, *Scheme for the application of European Standards for intruder and hold-up alarm systems*

DD 243:2004, *Installation and configuration of intruder alarm systems designed to generate confirmed alarm conditions – Code of practice*

DD 263: 2010, *Intruder and hold-up systems – Commissioning, maintenance and remote support – Code of Practice*

DD CLC/TS 50131-7, *Alarm systems – Intrusion systems – Part 7: Application guidelines*

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this British Standard, the terms and definitions given in BS EN 50131-1, PD 6662 and the following apply.

NOTE Annex A illustrates use of a number of the terms defined. Explanatory diagrams illustrating the relationship between some of the terms defined are shown in Annex B.

3.1 alarm company

organization which provides services for I&HAS

3.2 alarm condition

condition of an I&HAS, or part thereof, which results from the response of the system to the presence of a hazard

3.3 alarm filtering

procedure whereby remotely notified alarm conditions are intentionally delayed at an ARC and their status reviewed for the purpose of

cancelling certain remotely notified alarm conditions, where such cancellation is authorized by the $\langle A_2 \rangle$ user $\langle A_2 \rangle$ of the I&HAS

3.4 alarm receiving centre

ARC

continuously manned centre to which information concerning the status of one or more I&HAS is reported

[BS EN 50131-1:2006, definition **3.1.6**]

3.5 alarm receiving centre-related false alarm

NOTE Examples of ARC-related false alarms are given in Annex C.

false alarm attributable to a fault, failure, error, or omission on the part of the ARC responsible for monitoring the I&HAS

3.6 client

person or organization utilizing the services of an alarm company for the installation and/or maintenance of an I&HAS

3.7 company-related false alarm

NOTE Examples of company-related false alarms are given in Annex C.

false alarm attributable to a fault, failure, error, or omission on the part of the alarm company which installed or maintains the I&HAS or in the equipment supplied by such alarm company

$\langle A_2 \rangle$ 3.8 duty officer

operator(s) on duty at the RMC responsible for authorizing resets and/or restores of remotely notified I&HAS $\langle A_2 \rangle$

3.9 false alarm

policed alarm condition other than a genuine alarm

3.10 false alert

remotely notified alarm condition, which is regarded by the ARC as cancelled, such cancellation having been authorized by the $\langle A_2 \rangle$ user $\langle A_2 \rangle$ of the I&HAS

NOTE 1 The following types of communication are examples of cancellation authorized by the $\langle A_2 \rangle$ user $\langle A_2 \rangle$, whereby the $\langle A_2 \rangle$ user $\langle A_2 \rangle$ causes:

- a) a “mis-operation signal” to be sent to the ARC affirming that the remotely notified alarm condition is to be filtered out and not extended to police; or*
- b) an “unset signal” to be sent to the ARC affirming that the remotely notified alarm condition is to be filtered out and not extended to police.*

NOTE 2 This does not preclude the client giving general or specific standing authority, by prior written agreement, that the alarm company’s ARC may designate some alarm signals as void (i.e. cancelled).

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 police.

3.11 genuine alarm

policed alarm condition which has resulted from:

- a) a criminal attack, damage, or attempt at such, upon/to the supervised premises, the alarm equipment or the transmission path carrying the alarm signal; or
- b) actions by emergency services in the execution of their duties; or
- c) a call emanating from a hold-up alarm system made to summon urgent assistance when an assailant enters a previously defined

area with the obvious intention of harming or threatening any person within that defined area

NOTE Attention is drawn to Table E.1 for guidelines to avoid false activations with hold-up alarms.

3.12 mis-operation signal

signal that is identifiable at the ARC as indicating that the I&HAS has mis-operated and therefore that the remotely notified alarm condition is to be cancelled and regarded as a false alert

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 the ARC, with the concurrence of the client.

3.13 A_2 user A_2

authorized individual using an I&HAS for its intended purpose

3.14 A_2 user A_2 -related false alarm

false alarm attributable to a fault, failure, error or omission on the part of the A_2 user A_2 of the I&HAS

NOTE Examples of A_2 user A_2 -related false alarms are given in Annex C.

3.15 policed alarm condition

remotely notified alarm condition which (after any defined time delay for completion of alarm filtering, if applicable) has not been classified as a false alert and which therefore has been duly extended to the police

3.16 prime cause

first event in the series of events which has led directly to the alarm condition

3.17 remotely notified alarm condition

state of monitoring equipment at an ARC (or other remote location) which indicates an alarm condition

NOTE This does not preclude other signals (e.g. unset, set, mis-operation, fault) being received at an ARC.

3.18 restore

procedure of cancelling an alarm, tamper, fault or other condition and returning the I&HAS to a previous condition

NOTE This was previously known as “reset”.

3.19 restore management centre

premises where the authorization of the restoring of a remotely notified I&HAS is permitted (see 10.2)

3.20 satellite

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

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

3.21 transmission path fault-related false alarm

false alarm directly attributable to a failure of the alarm transmission path(s) between the supervised premises and the ARC

3.22 unconfirmed alarm

signal that has not been designated as audibly confirmed, visually confirmed or sequentially confirmed

3.23 unset signal

signal from an I&HAS indicating that the system has been unset

4 System design

NOTE DD CLC/TS 50131-7 gives guidance for good system design practice.

System design has a substantial bearing on false alarms; therefore all specifiers should take into account the false alarm aspect of system design proposals. Further guidance to assist in designing systems for minimization of false alarms is given in [A2](#) and BS 8243 [A2](#).

5 Administration

5.1 General

Each alarm company should appoint a person within the company who is responsible for the performance of intruder and hold-up alarm systems (I&HAS). The appointed person should have a right of direct access to the Chief Executive/Managing Director and have sufficient experience and authority within the company to achieve the objectives of monitoring, analysing and reducing false alarms. In the case of a small company, the Chief Executive/Managing Director may personally undertake this role.

NOTE 1 In this Code of Practice the appointed person is referred to as the Systems Performance Manager (SPM).

NOTE 2 Depending upon the size and regional distribution of the company, it might be necessary to appoint regional managers having corresponding responsibility for the performance of I&HASs within particular regions and reporting to the SPM.

Functional responsibilities for an SPM are given in **5.2**.

5.2 Functions of systems performance manager

The SPM should ensure that the following tasks are carried out effectively in the alarm company.

- a) Monitoring of the standards of surveying and installation to ensure that:
 - 1) industry standards and codes of practice are complied with;
 - 2) system design proposals meet the requirements of the alarm company's policies;
 - 3) system design proposals do not result in systems which are likely to generate false alarms;
 - 4) client documentation is provided in accordance with DD CLC/TS 50131-7 and DD 243 [A2](#) and/or BS 8243 [A2](#);
 - 5) comprehensive training for alarm company staff is maintained;
 - 6) training for [A2](#) users [A2](#) is provided in accordance with DD CLC/TS 50131-7.
- b) Maintenance of all contracted systems at intervals in accordance with [A2](#) DD 263 [A2](#). Training for [A2](#) users [A2](#) should be offered at each site service interval.

[A2](#) *NOTE This includes systems installed in accordance with BS 4757. [A2](#)*