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NSI Technical Bulletin 0017

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To: All NSI approved companies and applicants for NSI approval where the provisions of BS 8484 are to be implemented

TECHNICAL BULLETIN No. 0017

Guidance on the implementation of BS 8484:2009, the British Standard Code of Practice for the Provision of Lone Worker Device (LWD) Services

Overview

BS 8484:2009 is the British Standard Code of Practice for the provision of lone worker device (LWD) services.

BS 8484 gives recommendations for the provision of lone worker device services, including recommendations for:

- a) “suppliers” of the lone worker device services to customers (who are usually the employers of the lone workers)
- b) “lone worker devices” (LWDs) which are carried by lone workers
- c) “alarm receiving centres” (ARCs) monitoring activations from LWDs.

A brief explanation is that lone workers can use electronic devices to transmit an activation message to an ARC if there is a threat of immediate danger and a controller at the ARC can listen-in to determine the circumstances. Controllers verify these requests for assistance and pass on all relevant information to the appropriate response service (for example the emergency services).

A response agreement between the customer and the supplier defines the response requirements.

NSI offers two approvals in relation to BS 8484 as follows:

- **NSI Guarding Gold (or Silver) approval for the provision of lone worker device services.** In this case, all clauses of BS 8484 apply as well as BS 7858 and, in the case of Gold approval, BS EN ISO 9001:2008.
- **NSI ARC Gold approval for the monitoring of lone worker devices.** In this case, Clause 6 of BS 8484:2009 applies as well as BS 7858, BS EN ISO 9001:2008, NSI Quality Schedule SSQS 102 and BS 5979.

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Note regarding the status of BS 8484:2009

Compliance with the recommendations given in BS 8484 is mandatory for all organisations wishing to obtain and maintain NSI Guarding Gold or Silver approval for the provision of lone worker device services and/or NSI ARC Gold approval for the monitoring of lone worker devices.

The recommendations given in BS 8484 are therefore requirements of the relevant NSI approval schemes.

Details about the content of the standard

Details about the content of the standard are given below according the relevant clauses of BS 8484. Actual text from BS 8484:2009 is reproduced in **bold text**. Further guidance or comment about the content of BS 8484 is given in *italics*.

1 Scope

The standard “**gives recommendations for the provision of lone worker device (LWD) services. The standard is applicable to suppliers of LWD services, either for their own operations or to customers.**”

The standard “**gives the principles and operational procedures to be implemented by an ARC so that controllers can verify activation messages received from LWDs and assist response services when reacting to requests for assistance from lone workers.**”

“The standard is also intended to minimize the number of false alarms received by response services.” *This is assisted through the use of audio technology.*

2 Normative References

The standard lists one normative reference, which is BS 5979:2007.

3 Terms and definitions

The terms and definitions given in BS 8484:2009 and are included here to assist readers of this Technical Bulletin.

3.1 accurate position

location, typically to within ten metres of the LWD, in the horizontal and vertical plane

NOTE This might be obtained by using information contained within a pre-activation message, or from cross-referencing position information, mapping and/or other location data.

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3.2 activation

operation of an LWD resulting in the generation of an activation message

3.3 activation message

information transmitted by an LWD to an ARC requesting assistance

3.4 alarm call

information communicated from an ARC to a relevant response service relating to a verified alarm

3.5 alarm receiving centre (ARC)

continuously manned remote centre which receives activations and engages in communications with lone workers and response services

3.6 communications

transmission of voice and data between an LWD and an ARC

3.7 controller

individual in an ARC who manages activation messages and communicates with response services

3.8 customer

organization that contracts with a supplier to provide lone workers under its employment with access to the LWD service

NOTE A customer that sub-contracts LWDs and ARCs separately to provide the LWD service for its own lone workers takes on the role of supplier, as defined in **3.21**.

3.9 false alarm

alarm call that is not a genuine request for assistance

3.10 false alert

activation message that does not require an alarm call to be made and is subsequently cancelled by the controller

3.11 incident

situation or event leading to an activation

NOTE Incidents might fall into one or more of the following categories: abuse, accident, injury, illness or violence.

3.12 lone worker

person working on their own without close or direct supervision

NOTE See INDG 73 (REV)

To download INDG 73 go to: www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg73.pdf

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3.13 lone worker device (LWD)

electronic device able to transmit LWD identity, position information and provide communications

3.14 lone worker device (LWD) service

combination of an LWD and an ARC, provided by a supplier to a customer, enabling a response to a lone worker's request for assistance

3.15 mapping

geo-referenced computer representation of an area that shows position information received from an LWD

3.16 pre-activation

operation of an LWD resulting in the generation of a pre-activation message

3.17 pre-activation message

information sent from an LWD to an ARC providing the controller with details about an incident that might occur

NOTE Examples of other terms used within the security industry for "pre-activation message" include "memo", "amber alert" and "pre-alert".

3.18 position information

information sent from the LWD that assists a controller to establish its accurate position

3.19 response agreement

set of instructions within the contract agreed between a supplier and a customer regarding the actions to be taken by an ARC when an activation message or a pre-activation message is received

3.20 response service

response to an alarm call provided by the emergency services, a private security company or other service providers

3.21 supplier

provider of an LWD service to a customer

NOTE A supplier provides an LWD service either for a customer or its own lone workers (see **3.8**).

3.22 verified alarm

activation message that has been confirmed as a genuine request for assistance by a controller who has interpreted audio information transmitted from an LWD in conjunction with risk information about the individual

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4 Supplier framework

The standard draws attention to the Data Protection Act and the need for suppliers to register with the Information Commissioner's Office if they hold data about individuals (lone workers) who are required to give their consent to be located.

This of course applies to all organizations holding data about individuals.

The standard gives recommendations for the supplier's management structure, finances, insurance cover and premises. For full details of these, refer to clause 4 of the standard.

5 Lone worker device (LWD)

Clause 5 of the standard is divided into three main sub-clauses:

- 5.1 Communications network
- 5.2 Operational functions (of LWDs)
- 5.3 LWD training

5.1 Communications network

The standard states that **"The supplier should recommend the most suitable communications network to meet the needs of the customer"**.

Network coverage is clearly an important issue. The supplier should be able to provide a range of lone worker device solutions using different networks so as to be best able to meet the needs of the customer.

The supplier should be able to provide the customer with details of the capabilities and limitations of the recommended communications network including details of geographical areas with poor reception or no reception at all. Sometimes feedback from individual lone workers can assist in the selection of the best network.

A key factor in providing lone worker device services is the management of lone worker expectations. Lone workers can (and should) transmit pre-activation messages to the ARC if they know they will be going into areas of poor reception and think that they may need assistance.

5.2 Operational functions (of LWDs)

5.2.1 Essential LWD functionality

The standard lists eleven MANDATORY functions that all LWDs supplied to customers need to have in order to comply with BS 8484. For full details of these functions, refer to sub-clause 5.2.1 of the standard.

Suppliers must demonstrate that each LWD complying with BS 8484 possesses all the mandatory functions.

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As a result of discussions in the industry, a supplier must hold a declaration of conformity (or statement of compliance) for each type of LWD supported by a technical file (or report) giving justification or explanation as to how the LWD complies with each of the functions listed in sub-clause 5.2.1 of the standard. Both documents must be signed by a person in relevant authority.

LWDs that do not comply with BS 8484 are not permitted to be on police response under the provisions of the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) policy on police response to security systems.

If a supplier provides devices that do not comply with BS 8484 (as well as devices that do comply), the documentation provided by the supplier to the customer and to the ARC must clearly identify which devices do not comply.

The mandatory functions are:

a) communications to transmit position information and LWD identity

b) audio facility to aid the controller when determining the nature of the lone worker's situation

The standard permits LWDs to have either two-way voice communication or one-way voice communication. Where an LWD with one-way voice communication is used, the standard advises that some form of two-way voice communication, such as a mobile phone, is supplied to the lone worker.

c) signal strength indicator

d) capability to communicate a pre-activation message

See definition 3.17.

e) capability to communicate an activation message

See definition 3.3.

f) capability to initiate an audio connection to the ARC, and retry until acknowledged by the controller

As a result of discussions in the industry, it is acceptable to apply item f) to read "capability to initiate an audio connection to the ARC, and retry until connected".

g) ability to receive a discreet signal from the controller to indicate to the lone worker that the audio connection has been acknowledged

NOTE 2 Examples of discreet signals are vibration, an indicating light or dual tone multi-frequency (DTMF) tones.

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The purpose of the discreet signal at the LWD is to reassure the lone worker that the controller is listening to the audio without alerting an aggressor. The acknowledgement needs to occur from an action by the controller, not from the connection to the ARC as in 5.2.1 f) above, so as to confirm that the controller is listening to the audio and therefore dealing with the incident.

h) capability to be remotely accessed by a controller (see 6.7.2)

There are tight restrictions (see 6.7.2) on the use of this facility.

i) battery life as stipulated in the contract between supplier and customer to meet the customer's requirements, sufficient to allow for one activation of fifteen minutes and a minimum of seven pre-activations of two minutes, working in an ambient temperature of -5 °C to +40 °C

The battery life of each type of LWD needs to be stated for the circumstances described in 5.2.1 i). A statement of compliance from the manufacturer of the LWD is acceptable, though other suitable evidence of compliance will be considered.

The standard does not specify the minimum battery life. Therefore, there should be agreement between the supplier and the customer about the required battery life and any re-charging arrangements that are necessary during the periods of use.

We will not normally query a battery life of 12 hours or more given that 12 hours should cater for a normal working day plus travelling time. If battery life is less than 12 hours we will usually wish to check that this has been agreed in writing with the customer.

j) low battery warning

k) means to minimize accidental activation

The standard gives the following examples of ways this can be achieved:

- the application of two simultaneous forces to separate operating elements;*
- the application of two consecutive forces to separate operating elements;*
- the enclosure of the operating element behind a shielding element.*

However, other ways can be considered and for example applying a force for a period of time (say more than 3 seconds) could also be acceptable if it is successful as a means to minimize accidental activation.

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5.2.2 Considerations for LWD selection

The standard lists four OPTIONAL functions that should be considered when selecting an LWD. For full details of these optional functions, refer to sub-clause 5.2.2 of the standard.

The functions listed in 5.2.2 are OPTIONAL for individual LWDs, but a supplier should be able to provide a range of LWD types so that customers can be offered the optional functions according to their needs and expectations.

The optional functions are:

- a) **capability to be discreetly activated (i.e. so that there are no obvious signs of activation to an aggressor)**
- b) **quality of the audio facility to meet the customer's needs**
- c) **initiation of an activation message when a "man-down" sensor is fitted**
NOTE 1 A man-down sensor causes an activation message to be transmitted if the LWD is subjected to sufficient force, for example if the lone worker is assaulted and collapses or is involved in a car crash.
- d) **initiation by the LWD of a timer in the ARC on specific occasions where restrictions on position or the communications network are expected, or times when the lone worker is unable to activate the LWD**

NOTE 2 Unless the timer is cancelled, an activation message is generated at the ARC when the timer expires. Such activation messages might include last known location. This guards against LWDs being immobilized or out of range of the communications network.

5.2.3 LWDs with two-way voice communication

The standard calls for LWDs with two-way voice communication to **"have the capability for the lone worker to hear controller comments, enabling controllers to provide reassurance and updates on response progress and orally request information from the lone worker where appropriate"**.

5.3 LWD training

The supplier needs to provide the customer with:

- **a user manual**
- **training on the use of the LWD provided**

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The training needs to include:

- a) **how to operate the LWD to transmit pre-activations, activations and other relevant information to the controller;**
- b) **discreet methods of conveying relevant information to the controller when faced with an incident requiring caution and secrecy; and**
- c) **how to minimize erroneous activations and pre-activations resulting in false alerts and false alarms.**

The training should include the following and any other training requirements specified by the customer:

- i) correct operation of the LWD to transmit position information and LWD identity to the ARC*
- ii) correct use of the audio facility to aid the controller when determining the nature of the lone worker's situation*
- iii) correct operation of the LWD to communicate a pre-activation message to the ARC*
- iv) correct operation of the LWD to communicate an activation message to the ARC*
- v) correct operation of the LWD to initiate an audio connection to the ARC and to retry the audio connection until acknowledged by the controller*
- vi) knowledge of how a lone worker receives a discreet signal (such as vibration, an indicating light or dual tone multi-frequency (DTMF) tones) from the controller so that the lone worker knows that the audio connection with the controller has been established*
- vii) how to recognize a low battery warning from the LWD and what steps to take if such a warning is given*
- viii) ways of minimizing accidental activation of the LWD.*

6 ALARM RECEIVING CENTRE (ARC)

Clause 6 of the standard is divided into nine main sub-clauses:

- 6.1 General
- 6.2 Service
- 6.3 Operational functions
- 6.4 Working environment
- 6.5 Oral communication

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- 6.6 ARC operations
- 6.7 Access to information
- 6.8 Performance criteria
- 6.9 Management of activation messages and alarm calls

6.1 General

The standard states that **“The supplier should supply the customer with an ARC conforming to BS 5979:2007”** and to the remaining sub-clauses of clause 6.

The standard includes a NOTE that draws attention to the requirements of the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) of England, Wales and Northern Ireland and the Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland (ACPOS) regarding police response to security systems that call for the ARC to conform to BS 5979:2007, Category II.

NSI offers NSI ARC Gold approval for the monitoring of lone worker devices at either Category I or Category II of BS 5979:2007. However, NSI ARC Gold approval at Category II (attack resistant) of BS 5979:2007 is necessary for the ARC to call the police.

An NSI Guarding Gold or Silver approved supplier of lone worker device services should use an ARC that holds NSI ARC Gold approval for the monitoring of lone worker devices (or other ARCs approved by an independent third-party approvals organisation acceptable to NSI and complying with BS EN ISO 9001, BS 5979 and BS 8484, Clause 6).

6.2 Service

The standard states that the ARC should:

- a) **provide a service in accordance with the response agreement;**
- b) **record activation messages that have been cancelled or judged to be false alerts by a controller;**
- c) **receive and process information to evaluate incidents accurately and in accordance with Table 1 (see 6.8);**
- d) **direct the relevant response service to the location of the LWD with the relevant information about the lone worker requesting assistance.**

The response agreement is a set of instructions within the contract agreed between a supplier and a customer regarding the actions to be taken by an ARC when an activation message or a pre-activation message is received.

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6.3 Operational functions

Sub-clause 6.3 a) of the standard states that the ARC should “**operate 24 hours a day, every day of the year, with sufficient controllers to respond in accordance with Table 1 (see 6.8)**”.

The ARC should keep separate statistics for response times to activations from lone worker devices so that they can be analysed separately from other types of alarms (for example intruder alarms, fire alarms).

Sub-clause 6.3 b) of the standard states that the ARC should “**have a full business continuity plan to enable continued monitoring of activation messages from alternative premises within 120 minutes, followed by reinstatement or transferral of the service in accordance with BS 5979**”.

The ARC needs to be able to monitor activation messages from alternative premises within 120 minutes of loss of monitoring.

If monitoring cannot be reinstated at the ARC due to a major disaster then in accordance with sub-clause 8.3 of BS 5979:2007 monitoring must be transferred to another site complying substantially with BS 5979 within a maximum of 28 days.

BS 8484 does not specify the construction of the alternative premises where monitoring is to be carried out within 120 minutes. Therefore, the alternative premises do not need to substantially comply with BS 5979. However, the premises should at least be of normal commercial standard.

Sub-clause 6.3 c) of the standard states that the ARC should “**establish the accurate position where possible**”.

“Accurate position” is typically to within ten metres of the LWD, in the horizontal and vertical plane (see definition 3.1).

The LWD must transmit “position information (see definition 3.18)”. However, “position information” is not the same as “accurate position”.

The controller needs to use all of the available information to establish the position of the LWD to the best possible accuracy. This includes the use of information contained within pre-activation messages, or from cross-referencing position information with mapping and/or other location data (see the NOTE in definition 3.1).

Sub-clause 6.3 d) of the standard states that the ARC should “**be operated by controllers dedicated to LWD services only, during their duty period**”.

Controllers monitoring lone worker devices must not monitor any other types of alarm (for example intruder, fire, CCTV) during their period(s) of duty. This is for the reasons given in 6.3 d) of the standard.

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6.4 Working environment

The standard states that the ARC should “**maintain an environment in its operations area that is free from unnecessary distractions to:**

- a) **limit the amount of ambient noise transmitted to an LWD;**
- b) **enable the controller to listen to, and therefore quickly verify, an incident, even through unclear received audio”.**

Clear reception of audio by the controller from the lone worker’s situation, and vice versa, is important for the provision of the monitoring service.

One way of achieving a) above is to place the controllers in a separate area of the ARC, preferably partitioned from the main operations area.

One way of achieving b) above is through the use of noise cancelling headphones.

6.5 Oral communication

The standard states that “**oral communication between a lone worker and a controller should be one-way initially (lone worker to controller) until the controller has established through the audio facility that it is safe to speak”.**

The controller needs to listen to audio received from the lone worker’s situation and determine whether it is safe to speak before initiating two-way communication with the lone worker. This is to assess the lone worker’s situation and to avoid communicating with the lone worker if the controller considers that this could make the lone worker’s situation worse.

6.6 ARC operations

Sub-clause 6.6 of the standard is divided into three further sub-clauses:

- 6.6.1 The controller
- 6.6.2 Procedures and documentation
- 6.6.3 Response agreement

6.6.1 The controller

6.6.1.1 Controller training

Sub-clause 6.6.1.1 of the standard calls for effective controller training plans in accordance with BS 5979 and the requirements of the customer. The standard states that:

No controller should be permitted to manage a response to an activation message until:

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- a) initial training has been completed and tested; and
- b) their manager has certified them to be competent to work unsupervised.

All training should be recorded.

The standard is not specific about the training that should be provided to controllers. However, the actions taken by controllers could be critical to the health and/or safety of lone workers and therefore training should at least include the following:

- *Employer and employee responsibilities for Health & Safety*
- *What defines a lone worker*
- *Potential risks to lone workers*
- *Reasons why lone workers request assistance*
- *Common causes of conflict*
- *Common causes of communication breakdown*
- *Importance of effective listening*
- *Interpreting the audio information to identify when danger is present*
- *Escalation of incidents to a third party*
- *Keeping accurate records of details of incidents*

6.6.1.2 Verification

Sub-clause 6.6.1.2 of the standard calls for an activation message to be verified by the controller from:

- a) **position information;**
- b) **pre-activation message(s) (where relevant);**
- c) **personal information about the lone worker held at the ARC; and**
- d) **audio information.**

Verification of an activation message is where a controller has interpreted audio information transmitted from an LWD, in conjunction with risk information about the individual held at the ARC, and has determined that the activation message is a genuine request for assistance from the lone worker.

6.6.1.3 Lone worker information

The standard states that “**Relevant lone worker information (see 6.6.1.4) is essential to help response services resolve the incident and this information should be made available to a controller immediately after an activation message has been received**”.

This means that the information is already held at the ARC and must be immediately available to the controller handling the incident. Typically, this will be achieved

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through the software used for monitoring linking the activation message with the data about the lone worker.

The standard states that the controller should have access to information about the lone worker to help them to establish the nature of the incident (see **6.6.1.4**), to decide upon the appropriate response to an activation message, and to assist the response services to decide upon an appropriate level of response.

The standard suggests the following as examples of lone worker information:

- Employment information such as a job title
- Risk factors linked to the work and/or location
- Personal details such as their sex, age, ethnicity, physical description and photograph which might aid police in identifying the lone worker in a crowd
- Medical information such as details of medical conditions, allergies and treatment.

6.6.1.4 Establishing the nature of the incident

The standard states that following verification (see **6.6.1.3**) the controller should establish the nature of the incident and the appropriate response.

Having relevant information about the lone worker is important for determining the type of incident and the appropriate kind of response.

For further details on information held at the ARC about the lone worker, refer to sub-clause 6.6.1.3 and 6.6.1.4 of the standard.

6.6.1.5 False alerts

A false alert is an activation message that does not require an alarm call to be made and is subsequently cancelled by the controller (see definition 3.10).

The standard states that **“False alerts should be terminated by the controller. The controller should inform the lone worker or a nominated contact when this action [of cancelling an activation message] has been taken”**. The standard also states that **“False alerts should be recorded by the controller”**.

The standard states that **“The supplier should ensure that the customer is made aware of false alerts and offer extra training on use of the LWD if necessary (see 5.3).”**

The ARC must inform the supplier of troublesome levels of false alerts so that the supplier can offer extra training to the customer on the use of the LWD.

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6.6.2 Procedures and documentation

6.6.2.1 Audit trails and records

The standard calls for a complete audit trail of all activities carried out by controllers in response to pre-activation messages and activation messages.

For further details about audit trails and records, refer to sub-clause 6.6.2.1 of the standard.

6.6.2.2 Operating procedures

The standard calls for documented procedures to be in place to support the services provided by the ARC.

For further details about documented operating procedures, refer to sub-clause 6.6.2.2 of the standard.

6.6.3 Response agreement

The standard states that **“The response agreement should contain instructions regarding the response requirements and relevant information (see 6.6.1.3) of each individual lone worker. Such instructions should immediately be available to controllers when the ARC receives an activation message”**.

This means that the instructions are already held at the ARC and must be available immediately to the controller handling the incident. Typically, this will be achieved through the software used for monitoring lone worker devices linking the activation message with the data about the lone worker.

6.7 Access to information

6.7.1 Confidentiality and LWD user protection

The standard states that **“Written procedures in the ARC should be in place to detect and prevent the use of LWDs for unauthorized surveillance”**.

Controllers must not monitor LWDs in inappropriate circumstances. Examples may include:

- The LWD has not been activated
- The lone worker is known to be off-duty
- Listening-in is contrary to particulars given in the written response agreement

6.7.2 Position information request

The standard states that **“The ARC should have the ability to remotely request position information from the LWD under circumstances in which the lone worker might be unable to activate the LWD”**.

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The standard goes on to state **“An LWD should only be remotely activated when necessary (e.g. where the lone worker is missing or has been kidnapped) as stated in the response agreement”**.

The ARC must not remotely request position information unless this is expressly permitted in the response agreement (or unless there are exceptional circumstances to warrant such a request).

“Procedures at the ARC should ensure that the correct LWD is activated and also that third parties at the incident are not alerted”.

Alerting third parties at the site of the incident might adversely affect a lone worker situation.

The standard also states that **“Position information requests should include the capability to track the lone worker through discreet listening via the LWD. Initiating such a procedure should be controlled with an audit trail to show ARC managers whenever the procedure is used”**.

Requests for position information and use of the tracking and listening via the LWD always need to be accompanied by an audit trail.

6.8 Performance criteria

Table 1 gives response times for accepting activation messages and carrying out verification (see 6.6.1.2).

Unless otherwise agreed in writing with the customer, activation messages need to be accepted and verification needs to be started within 15 seconds in 80 % of cases, and within 30 seconds in 98.5 % of cases.

Unless otherwise agreed in writing with the customer, verification needs to be completed within 120 seconds in 80 % of cases, and within 180 seconds in 90 % of cases.

These responses times need to be validated over a rolling 12 month period.

The ARC should keep monthly statistics as a minimum and then use these monthly statistics to create a rolling figure over 12 months.

The standard states that **“The 10% of cases where verification cannot be completed for an activation message within 180 seconds allows for the occurrence of unforeseen circumstances, for example, insufficient audio to allow for verification or pre-alert time-out [see 5.2.2d)] without confirmation that the user is safe. In these circumstances, the controller should escalate the alarm as stated in the response agreement”**.

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Pre-alert time-out [see 5.2.2 d)] is one of the optional considerations for LWD selection and relates to initiation by the LWD of a timer in the ARC on specific occasions where restrictions on position or the communications network are expected, or times when the lone worker is unable to activate the LWD.

6.9 Management of activation messages and alarm calls

The standard states that:

“The ARC should have sufficient resources to manage activation messages and alarm calls until the relevant response service has dealt with the incident”.

“Management of activation messages should include monitoring of audio and position information so that the response service can be informed of any changes to the lone worker’s circumstances”.

7 Response services

The standard states that:

“Response requirements should be stated in the response agreement between the customer and supplier (see 6.6.3).

“The supplier should ensure that the stated response requirements are consistent with the policies of the response services (e.g. emergency services)”.

The standard does not address the competency of individuals employed by a private security company to respond to requests for assistance from lone workers.

British Standards Institution has been asked to develop provisions for response services to lone workers that could be provided by private security companies, for example by making an amendment to BS 8484 or BS 7984.

In the meantime, in the absence of such provisions, if the supplier (or the ARC) enters into a contract to use a private security company to provide response to lone workers NSI will seek to establish that the response officers are competent to carry out their duties in relation to the lone worker situations that they may encounter and will consider each case on its merits.
