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**National Security Inspectorate**

Sentinel House  
5 Reform Road  
Maidenhead  
SL6 8BY UK

**T** +44 (0)1628 637512  
**F** +44 (0)1628 773367  
**E** [nsi@nsi.org.uk](mailto:nsi@nsi.org.uk)  
**W** [nsi.org.uk](http://nsi.org.uk)

AWEW/mjc/NSI007/12

28 November 2012

**To: All NSI ARC Gold approved companies and all applicants for NSI ARC Gold approval**

Dear Colleague

**NSI APPROVAL OF ALARM RECEIVING CENTRES (ARCs)**

I am writing to you about two matters relating to the NSI scheme for approving Alarm Receiving Centres (ARCs), which as you know is called NSI ARC Gold approval.

**NSI approval for the monitoring that is carried out**

By way of introduction NSI ARC Gold approval is presently based on the application of BS EN ISO 9001, NSI Quality Schedule SSQS 102, British Standard Codes of Practice BS 7858 and BS 5979, NSI ARC Gold Codes of Practice, and other standards and codes of practice according to the kinds of monitoring being carried out (for example BS 8418 in the case of remote monitored detector activated CCTV systems).

For information and for ease of reference a listing of the present scopes of NSI ARC Gold approval is given in the **Annex** attached to this letter.

Most ARCs hold approval for all of their monitoring that falls within the present scopes of NSI ARC Gold approval. For example, an ARC that monitors fire and intruder alarms correspondingly holds NSI ARC Gold approval for the monitoring of fire and intruder alarms. However it has come to our attention that this may not always be the case.

There would, for example, be an obvious inconsistency if one NSI approved ARC held approval for the monitoring of fire alarms when another NSI approved ARC monitored fire alarms but did not hold NSI approval for this kind of monitoring. The same can be said for other scopes of approval.

We have given this matter careful thought and, in order to minimise inconsistency between ARCs and to promote high standards, we now require all ARCs to hold NSI approval for all of their monitoring that falls within the present scopes of NSI ARC Gold approval.





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There is, however, an exception in relation to the monitoring of social alarms. The exception is that ARCs do not need to hold NSI ARC Gold approval for the monitoring of social alarms if they hold approval for such monitoring from the Telecare Services Association (TSA). As you may know, we presently audit organisations to the TSA requirements on behalf of the TSA.

To apply for a new scope (or scopes) of NSI ARC Gold approval please complete NSI Form NSF 202 and NSI Form NSF 200 Annex F (copies of which are enclosed with this letter) and contact [deborah.hollingsworth@nsi.org.uk](mailto:deborah.hollingsworth@nsi.org.uk) for a quotation.

Please note that ARCs receive two surveillance visits per year if they are approved for the monitoring of intruder alarms and also as RVRCs monitoring BS 8418 detector activated CCTV systems and other CCTV systems used in security applications. This relates to the amount of auditing time that is required.

ARCs may also receive two surveillance visits per year in other circumstances where several scopes of NSI ARC Gold approval are held. This will be clarified in your quotation.

### **New European Standard for ARCs**

The European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardization (CENELEC) has published EN 50518, which is a new European standard for ARCs and is in three Parts:-

- Part 1 covers location and construction requirements
- Part 2 covers technical requirements (such as equipment at the ARC)
- Part 3 covers procedures and requirements for operation.

Our understanding from discussions that have taken place in British Standards Institution (BSI) is that the scope of EN 50518 is for the monitoring of intruder and hold-up alarms only and that there is a partial conflict with the scope of BS 5979. If nothing is done, BSI will withdraw BS 5979 (in January 2014 we understand) leaving EN 50518 standing on its own.

To remedy this, BSI is creating a new British Standard (new BS) to cover all of the monitoring except for intruder and hold-up alarms. This is being achieved by taking BS 5979 as the baseline and then removing text relating to intruder and hold-up alarms so as to create a new BS (with a new number) that covers monitoring other than intruder and hold-up (for example fire, social, CCTV). Then in due course the intention is that the new BS will operate alongside EN 50518.

BS 5979 itself will remain unchanged.



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Based on our understanding our position in relation to the approval of ARCs is as follows:

- a) From a future date, which is yet to be decided, all new ARCs will need to comply with EN 50518 (all three Parts), irrespective of the type of monitoring carried out, in order to gain approval. We expect this date will be some time after January 2014. In addition, the new BS will be applied alongside EN 50518 (as well as the other standards and codes of practice applicable to the type of monitoring).
- b) ARCs approved to BS 5979 will be permitted to remain at BS 5979 without having to upgrade to EN 50518 (though they can upgrade to EN 50518 if they wish to).  

Note: EN 50518 contains certain provisions that an existing ARC (already built and fitted out) might find difficult to comply with, for example matters relating to the construction and facilities of an ARC and so on.
- c) The Association of Chief Police Officers of England, Wales and Northern Ireland (ACPO) has indicated that they will continue to accept ARCs complying with BS 5979, under their policy for police response to security systems, beyond the introduction of EN 50518.
- d) For those ARCs remaining at BS 5979 approval we will continue to use BS 5979 for auditing purposes beyond its withdrawal by BSI.
- e) We continue to accept new ARC applications to BS 5979 and we have not yet declared a deadline for ceasing to accept such applications (see also in relation to a) above).
- f) Applicant companies now have the choice of applying for NSI ARC Gold approval against either BS 5979 or EN 50518 (and BS EN ISO 9001, NSI Quality Schedule SSQS 102 and the other standards and codes of practice applicable to the type of monitoring).

At this stage it is difficult to be more precise about the details involving the adoption of EN 50518 and it is possible that circumstances may change. Therefore we intend to communicate with you again once the position has been clarified further.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions or queries at this stage.

Yours sincerely

**Tony Weeks**

Head of Technical Services

Enc. Annex  
NSI Form NSF 202  
NSI Form NSF 200 Annex F

## ANNEX

### Scopes of approval within NSI ARC Gold approval

The present scopes of monitoring within NSI ARC Gold approval are as follows:

- a) High integrity monitoring of intruder alarms (including BS 8243 and BS 8473)  
*The expression "high integrity monitoring" is used as a description of monitoring that is fully in accordance with BS 7042 and the relevant recommendations set out in sub-clause 8.3 of BS 5979:2007. This includes the need to be able to sustain monitoring at a wholly independent centre meeting BS 5979 Category II without interruption of service following an incident at the main ARC.*
- b) Monitoring of intruder alarms (including BS 8243 and BS 8473)
- c) Monitoring of fire alarms
- d) Monitoring of social alarms (including DD CLC/TS 50134-7)
- e) Monitoring of CCTV systems for which there are three options and where an ARC can only be approved for one option:
  - i) RVRC monitoring BS 8418 detector activated CCTV systems and other CCTV systems used in security applications (including BS 8418)
  - ii) Monitoring of CCTV systems used in security applications
  - iii) Monitoring of CCTV systems used in non-security applications
- f) Monitoring of lone worker devices (including BS 8484)
- g) SOC monitoring Thatcham Category 5 after theft systems with vehicle immobilisation for vehicle recovery (including Thatcham's SOC criteria)

*Category 5 is an after theft system with vehicle immobilisation for vehicle recovery that holds approval from the Motor Insurance Repair Research Centre located in Thatcham in Berkshire. Monitoring usually involves the SOC (Systems Operating Centre) having commercial contracts/agreements with specific vendors of equipment that meets Category 5. Therefore monitoring is not so easily switched from one SOC to another.*

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Note: There are two surveillance visits per year when scopes b) and e) i) are held and also in other circumstances when several scopes of NSI ARC Gold approval are held.