



Your Business Security Toolkit

**VENTURE
SECURITY
MANAGEMENT**



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For any company operating today, security is a top concern. Threats can come in many different shapes and forms – from the fast-growing area of cybercrime, to burglary and vandalism - and the potential cost to business can be substantial.

A study by the FSB reveals the average cost to UK businesses of physical crimes, such as burglary and criminal damage, comes in at £3,340 per incident, with 3.8 million crimes of this nature taking place each year. Not to mention the stress, inconvenience and time wasted dealing with such events.

That means it's never been more vital to have comprehensive security plans and measures in place, and to ensure the money you are investing is being spent in all the right places.

In this guide, we'll be covering the key questions and considerations that need to be made when it comes to workplace security and the procurement of external security services. We'll be examining issues of best practice, as well as providing a handy checklist, so you can ensure you are asking all the right questions of any prospective security provider.

We'll be offering top tips and advice on:

1. Business security – threats and responsibilities
2. Security technology – do you really need people in the digital age?
3. Should you use an external security company?
4. Choosing a national versus a local security provider
5. Different types of security services explained
6. How to define your security needs
7. Checklist: What you need to ask when choosing a security provider
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1

Business security – threats and responsibilities

When it comes to physical assets, there are three key areas of operation that need protection:

People

Property

Premises

The reality is it can take just seconds for a crime to be committed and while you will never be able to completely eradicate all risk, it's vital you don't make it easy for any would-be criminal.

Duty of care and compliance

As an employer, protecting your premises and equipment isn't the only issue you have to be concerned about. You also need to ensure you are compliant with all legal obligations and duties of care you have towards employees and site visitors.

For example, if employees work alone on the premises out of hours or hold keys and are tasked with attending were an alarm to go off, then you are legally responsible for them.

It is common for the responsibility of locking and unlocking a building to fall to an employee, who will often be alone. Your 'lone worker' requirements include the need to assess any risk and provide help or backup as required, such as by having a professional security officer attend with them.

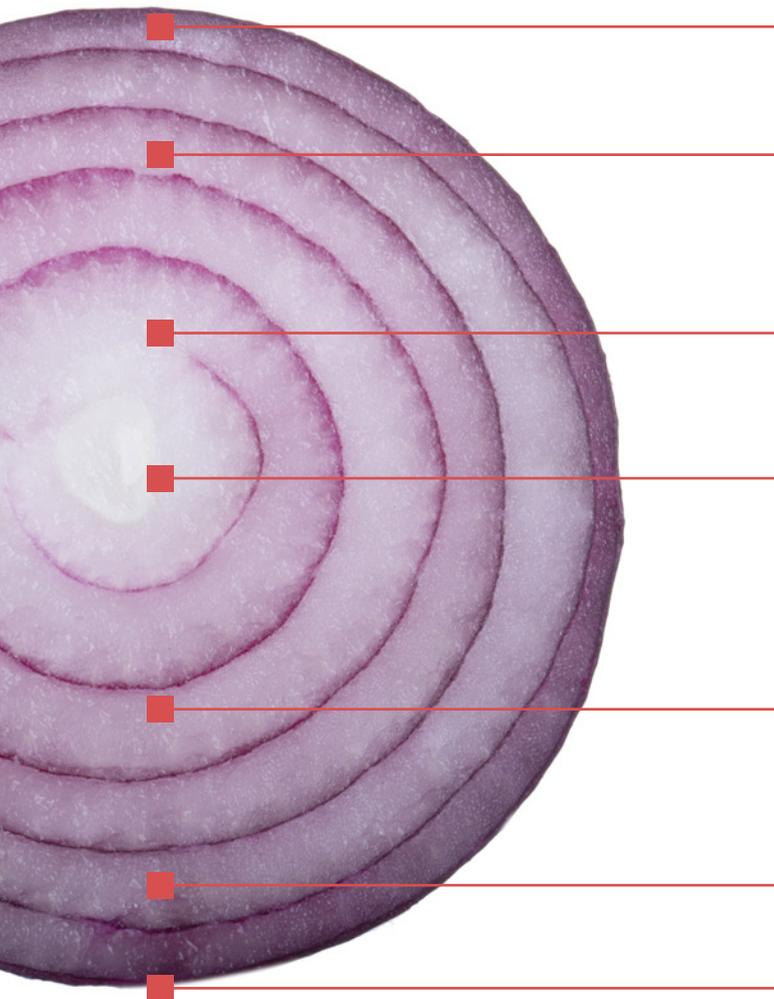


The security 'onion'

One analogy that's often used when talking about security, is to think of it like an onion with layers. You should aim to put in place layers of protection that together combine to stop, or as a minimum slow, a would-be criminal in their tracks.

You need to be very clear about what the individual threats to your business may be, so you can then decide what will be the most appropriate layers of security you can add, to protect against them.

Depending on the size and nature of your business, there are some key policies, plans and technologies to might consider:



Technological deterrents – such as CCTV and alarm systems

Building enhancements - such as security doors, grills and shutters

Access control system – to limit free movement around the premises

Professional security services – such as mobile patrols out of hours

Employee screening policy and procedures

Staff training - raising awareness for potential risks

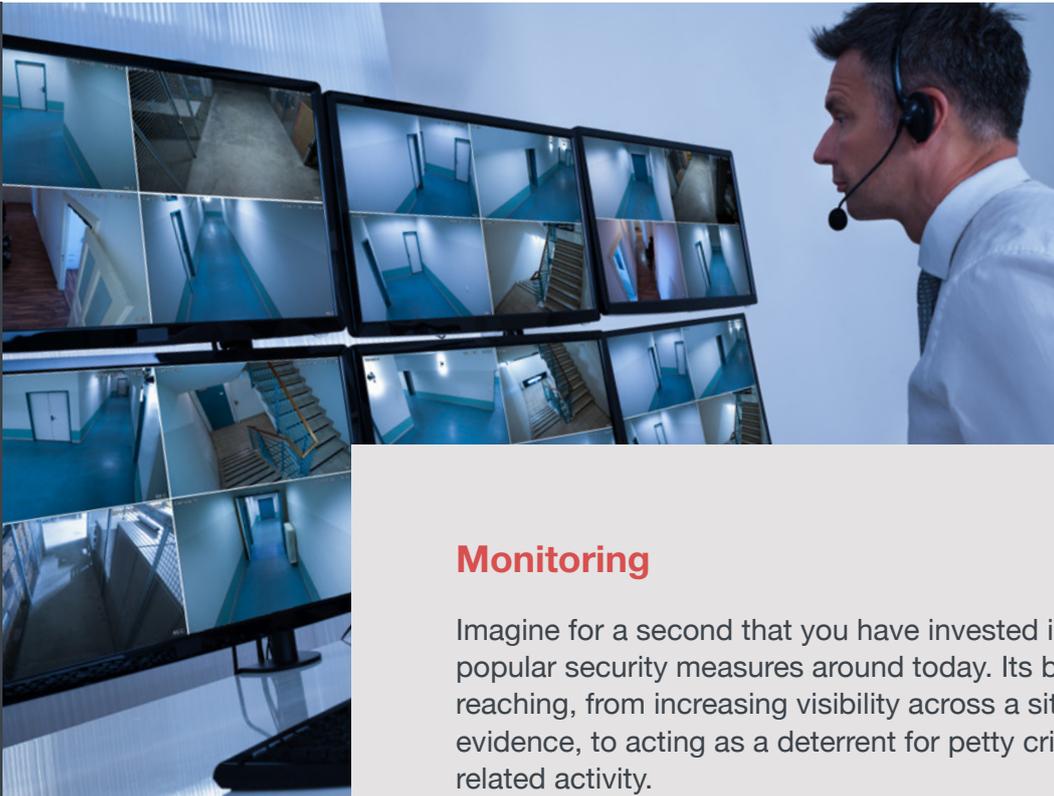
Perimeter Protection - to slow the progress of criminals in gaining access to a site and its assets

2

Technology versus people power

With all the technological advances being made, a common question that businesses often raise is whether it's better to invest in technology or people.

The short answer is - you need both.



Monitoring

Imagine for a second that you have invested in CCTV, one of the most popular security measures around today. Its benefits can be broad reaching, from increasing visibility across a site and providing vital evidence, to acting as a deterrent for petty criminals and employee-related activity.

But for the system to be effective in crime prevention, it needs to be monitored and reacted to. That's where the people element comes in. If there's no one managing the system, looking out for issues and responding in a timely manner, then there's little point having it in place.

Another popular security tool is a monitored intruder alarm. Again, without having someone monitor and respond to the alarm, its potential effectiveness will be very limited.



Bypassing

Another issue to consider around investing in security technology, is that you need to see the bigger picture. Where are the weaknesses in the system? How easy would it be to bypass a security measure?

Would-be criminals, especially sophisticated gangs, will always look for the easy route to get past any such security system. They'll look for any blackspot in a surveillance system. If the entrance to a building is highly secure but windows, fire exits and other entry points located around the site remain untouched, then that's where they'll focus their attention.

The other thing to bear in mind is that even the most comprehensive access system will be vulnerable at certain times. For example, if employees are often on site alone, such as first thing in the morning or at the end of the day, to unlock or secure doors. Overpowering them would be a far easier option than to attempt a break in during the night.





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Should you use an external security company?

Inhouse security

Employing security personnel in-house is one route you can go down. Many organisations believe this is the best way to maintain full control and to shape employee behaviour in line with the existing company culture. It also offers direct control over training provision and customer service-related issues, ensuring individuals fully understand the company and what is expected.



Pros

- Freedom to manage the recruitment and selection process
- Ability to shape employee behaviour in line with the existing company culture
- Consistency – the same person/team remains in place
- More control
- Loyalty



Cons

- Can prove expensive - particularly if you operate from a large site, work across multiple sites, or need 24hour cover
- Security personnel should really be managed by someone with security expertise
- Entails employment issues – it requires you to go through the recruitment process and manage all associated admin and expenses involved in employing someone
- You need to dedicate time to supervision and training
- Getting rid of an employee who underperforms takes time



External security provision

Using the services of a reputable external security provider can prove a very cost effective alternative. Cover can be flexible and used to match and evolve with the changing needs of the business. You also have the ability to define exactly what you want and it will reduce any admin that would naturally be generated around the hiring and employment of team members.



Pros

- Spreads risk and liability
- Guards have already been background checked and trained
- They will be up-to-date on the latest security rules, developments and strategies
- Flexible cover that can be shaped to fit around the business
- The company will deal with holiday and sickness cover, supervision and training



Cons

- Quality can vary greatly - ensure you find and work with an experienced and reputable provider
- Reliability – you need to check what contingency planning and processes are in place to deal with the unexpected
- Any conflicts and unhappiness with security operatives needs to be dealt with through the provider, not directly (although for some, this could also be a pro!)

There is of course the option to have a combination of the two – for example, an inhouse guard based on reception during office hours and a security company providing services out of hours and for adhoc additional needs as required.

Ultimately, whichever route you go down, whether using an inhouse team or external provider, the same core principles will apply. You need highly trained and professional security operatives, who uphold the values the company and behave in a way that is appropriate for the role they are fulfilling.

It is about finding the best fit for your organisation’s needs and budget, delivered by someone you can trust and feel confident in.

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Should you use a national or local security provider

If you decide to use an external security provider, then you will be faced with the choice of going with a national company or using a smaller local firm.

While a national company may provide you with the confidence that comes from using a larger, well-known name who could scale up with your growing business, it doesn't guarantee quality of service.

You also risk becoming just another number within the system – and sometimes it's not so good being a small fish in a big pond.

In contrast, using a reputable local company can lead to a more personalised and flexible service, delivered by a team that has a greater understanding of the local area. This may have a positive impact on potential response times and you may also find, if growth is high on your agenda, that a quality provider will be able to grow with you and your evolving needs.

Again, what it comes down to is the service you will receive. There are some key signs to look out for when choosing a provider (which we cover in detail in our Checklist at the end of this document).



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Different types of security services explained

There are many different options that can be used to meet a variety of business needs and budgets. Here is a run through of some of the most popular:

Mobile Patrols

How does it work: A security operative will visit your site and walk round the property to look out for any signs of a break in, or other criminal activity. These patrols will be carried out at random times and at an agreed frequency.

What's the benefit: Having uniformed officers on patrol at your business premises can be an incredibly effective deterrent for criminals, while limiting any window of opportunity there may be for a break-in, burglary or destruction of property. They can be a highly successful and cost-effective option, especially when compared to the cost of having a static guard on site – particularly if the site is large, or you need around the clock cover.

Some security companies will provide additional value here. During their mobile patrols, security operatives will check for and report back on any maintenance-related issues they may spot. For example, leaks. This means businesses can be alerted and take immediate action if it is required.





Key holding & alarm response

How does it work: The security company will hold a set of keys to your property. They will be held in either a secure device on your premises, or externally, depending on your preferences and budget. The company will then be listed as the primary key holder with your Alarm Receiving Centre (ARC) and can support you in an emergency situation, such as by responding to an alarm or patrolling your premises.

What's the benefit: The alternative is to have a member of staff respond in an alarm situation and visit the property to check it and ensure it is secure. However, there are several risks and challenges associated with having a member of staff act as a key holder. For example, you need to consider:

- Can your key holders be on site and have addressed the alarm within 20 minutes of the call?
- Are your key holders trained in crime scene management, including the preservation of evidence?
- Do you have an effective health and safety lone worker system in use?
- Who will support them if they are confronted or even attacked by an offender?
- Does your employee have the confidence to go into a situation where they may have to deal with an offender and have they received satisfactory conflict management training?
- What happens when your key holder is away, sick or has been drinking alcohol?

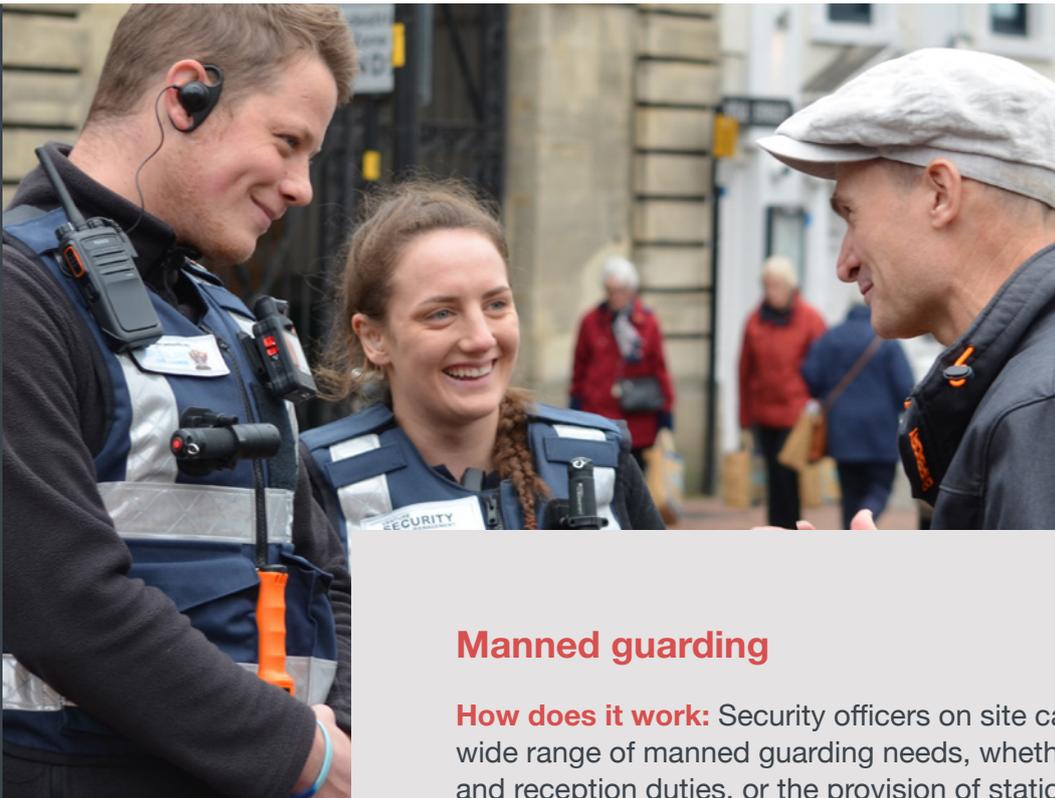
By using a key holding and alarm response service, you can reduce these risks, while taking the pressure and added responsibility off your employees. Trained and accredited security personnel will be on call for you 24 hours a day. This includes responding quickly to an alarm or patrolling your premises – at Venture we boast an average alarm response time of just 22 minutes.

Locks & unlocks

How does it work: Mobile security operatives can open and secure your premises for you, as dictated by your business' needs. This may include unlocking the building for a lone worker, or taking a delivery at short notice on weekends and bank holidays.

What's the benefit: This service can help reduce static security staffing needs, when your main requirement may only be at specific times. Another key benefit is that it removes the need to place added pressure and responsibility on individuals within the organisation.

As added value, the security officers may also be able to support you by switching off lights or equipment that has been left on and carrying out other agreed checks and tasks. (At Venture, this kind of additional support can be included within the assignment at no additional cost.)



Manned guarding

How does it work: Security officers on site can support you with a wide range of manned guarding needs, whether it's front-of-house and reception duties, or the provision of static checkpoints, access control or control room duties.

What's the benefit: The physical presence of a security professional on the premises could benefit your business in many ways. It acts as an effective deterrent, while offering protection for staff against the threat of assault or injury and helping prevent unauthorised access, so reducing the risk of theft, destruction or damage being caused to your property.

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Defining your security requirements

If you decide to call on the services of an external agency, for all or part of your security needs, then before going any further it's important you work on defining what your requirements may be.

This will help you be specific and ensure you have everything covered and also work as a catalyst for a review of your current provision and needs.

If your budget allows, then consider calling on the services of a qualified, independent, physical security consultant. They are trained in assessing all risk and can effectively model different scenarios to recommend the type of measures and manned guarding that may be most effective at counteracting security threats.





14 questions to help you define your need

1. What are your core security requirements? (e.g. patrols, static guarding, checkpoints)
2. What are the adhoc security needs you may have, from time to time?
3. What training will security officers need to be able to perform the core tasks? (e.g. health & safety, conflict management, fire & evacuation)
4. What additional skills may they need? (ability to operate a switchboard and/or other IT-related skills)
5. Will security guards need special equipment or uniforms? Will it be provided?
6. How many levels of management may be required? (supervisors, managers)
7. What number of checkpoints/access areas/other security points need to be covered?
8. How many officers may be required at each point, at any one time?
9. What hours of coverage will be needed?
10. Who will guards report to, how often, and in what format?
11. What other security measures and technologies are already in place? (CCTV, access control, alarms)
12. What budget do you have available?
13. What length of contract are you looking for?
14. Who internally is going to manage your security services?





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What to ask a prospective security provider

When using an external security provider, you need to feel confident in their experience and the services being delivered. Here is checklist of everything you need to know, to help you make an informed decision and find the best fit for your business.

Your Security Provider Checklist

How do they operate?



Do they operate 24hours day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year?

You need a provider who can be flexible to meet the changing needs and requirements of your business. How quickly can they adjust if you need to change your requirements or have an unexpected need?



Are they SIA licensed?

All security personnel need to be licensed by the Security Industry Authority (SIA). You can check using a registration number or other personal details, by searching on the SIA website.



Have they shown a commitment to strong operational standards, such as by pursuing ISO certifications?

You want to see evidence that they are a company which actively strives for excellence and best practice. For example, are they part of The Approved Contract Scheme or better still, ACS Pacesetters which highlights them as among the top 3% in the industry? Are they ISO certified for the relevant service? Are they a member of any industry bodies? Are they compliant with data protection legislation? Then there are health and safety accreditations – can they prove that they are serious about health and safety?



How do they recruit, screen and train their staff?

Security personnel should be fully vetted and trained. This should include checking that an employee is physically fit enough and capable of doing the job required. They should receive assignment-specific training for each contract and have the support of an experienced management team behind them. Ask what opportunities staff have for ongoing training and career development, as being a good employer can be a great indicator of a good provider.



Can you see up-to-date case studies and speak to current clients for their feedback?

Make sure you're not just being fobbed off with the one and only client they want you to speak with. See how open and transparent they are about who they work with and what they provide for them. If you're at all unsure, call a client and ask for an honest opinion.



Do they have adequate insurance and conduct their business as they need to?

Most firms are likely to tell you they have insurance in place and not to worry, but you need to be sure they are operating in such a way that means the insurance will be valid in the case of any issues. Ask to see the insurance documentation and level of cover provided; they should be able to provide a list of cover such as professional indemnity, efficacy and loss of keys, as well as just employers and public liability. Also ask for a description of their processes and how they ensure they are operating as their insurer requires.



Is the company and its practices financially sound?

Can they provide you with accounts for at least the last 3 years? Who is behind the company and what is their background and experience? What are their aims for the next 5-10 years? Try and build up a picture of the company you may be dealing with.



Contract agreements and targets



Do they set Service Level Agreements (SLA's) and use Key Performance Indicators (KPI's)?

Both are great indicators that a service provider is professional, experienced and committed to performance and quality. They can also be useful for defining your expectations from the outset.



Do they always attend every alarm activation?

Reliability is a key requirement of any security provider. How many alarm activations have they missed in the last 6 / 12 months and why.



Can they respond to an alarm activation within 20 minutes, in accordance with ACPO guidelines?

What is their average response time and how do they record and prove the service they are delivering? What is the record keeping process?



What contingency planning and processes are in place?

What contingency planning do they do, to prepare for the unexpected



Will they send you detailed incident reports? How quickly and in what format?

You need to know about an incident in good time so you can react quickly if you need to. With all the technology now available, this process should be smooth and easy. What are personnel provided with? How do they record and share incident reports?



Account management

→ Will you have a dedicated account manager who you can contact when needed?

What are the channels of communication that are available to you? Will you be provided with full contact details for the team? Who can you reach in an emergency out of hours?

→ Will the security provider maintain regular contact with you throughout the contract?

What performance reviews and reports are included. How often and on what terms. What information will they provide at these reviews.

→ Is their pricing reasonable and do they provide value for money?

The old saying is often true, you get what you pay for. What you want to know is that the value of the service you receive will match up with the cost of the contract. Know what you can expect for the price you are paying. What added value do they offer? Why should you choose them over a competitor?

→ What happens if you're not happy about any aspect of the service provided?

What is the complaints procedure and how fast can you expect action?



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About Venture Security

This guide was brought to you by the team at Venture Security.

For more than a decade, we have been providing professional security services to private and commercial clients across the south of England.

All Venture security personnel are fully vetted, trained and licensed by the SIA (Security Industry Authority). Employees are carefully handpicked and screened in line with British quality standard BS7858:2019.

“Venture is genuinely the first security company that has always delivered on its promises. I have never once had to ask why something hasn’t happened – as it always does!”

(Rhiannah Townley, Senior Facilities Manager, Aster Group)

“When it comes to working with Venture, we value their honesty and integrity. They are flexible and can adapt to meet our requirements, including acting on short notice requests.”

(Shaun Evans, Facilities Manager, James Hay Partnership)



“The Venture team does an amazing job. They listen, they’re professional, polite, know what they’re doing and always go the extra mile. If you’re considering using Venture, I would have no hesitation in saying I recommend them 110%.”

(Simon Potter, Company Director, The Commercial Centre)

We are proud to be accredited under both the Security Industry Authority’s Approved Contractor Scheme (ACS) and ISO9001:2015, which looks at quality management. We are also an ACS Pacesetter and one of only a small number of companies to have achieved NSI Guarding Gold accreditation.

Venture is approved under SafeContractor and the Contractors Health and Safety Assessment Scheme (CHAS), for our excellent health and safety record. We were the first company in both Hampshire and Wiltshire to be accredited under the Police Community Safety Accreditation Scheme (CSAS), giving our officers low level police powers. We are also approved by Hampshire Trading Standards’ Buy with Confidence scheme and accredited as a Living Wage employer.

For more information and a no obligation chat about your security requirements, please call our friendly team on **01264 391538 or email us using **office@venturesec.co.uk** and we’d be happy to help you.**