vacant property

protection
– code of practice

This is a voluntary Code of Practice pending publication of a British Standard

Issue 1.1
January 2014

For other information please contact:

British Security Industry Association

t: 0845 389 3889
f: 0845 389 0761
e: info@bsia.co.uk
www.bsia.co.uk
Contents

1 SCOPE 5
2 REFERENCED DOCUMENTS 5
2.1 Referenced Standards 5
2.2 Regulations 5
3 DEFINITIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS 6
3.1 Terms and Definitions 6
3.2 Abbreviations 6
4 GENERAL COMPANY OPERATIONS 7
4.1 General 7
4.2 Quality Accreditation 7
4.3 Staff Employment Vetting 7
4.4 Use of Contractors 7
4.5 Licensing 7
4.6 Identity cards 8
4.7 Health and Safety 8
  4.7.1 General 8
  4.7.2 Safety Training 8
  4.7.3 Safety equipment and personal protective equipment 8
  4.7.4 Ladders 9
  4.7.5 Loneworker operations 9
  4.7.6 Employee Health 9
4.8 Plant and equipment 9
  4.8.1 General 9
  4.8.2 Plant and equipment owned by the client 10
  4.8.3 Plant and equipment owned by the company 10
4.9 Training 10
4.10 Insurance 10
4.11 Security of the company records and documentation 12
5 PROPERTY PROTECTION PROCEDURES 12
5.1 General 12
5.2 Risk Assessment 12
  5.2.1 Process 12
  5.2.2 Risk Management Procedures 13
  5.2.3 Documentation and agreement with client 13
5.3 Commencing Protection 13
  5.3.1 General 13
  5.3.2 Informing interested parties 14
  5.3.3 Commence access management 14
  5.3.4 Utilities 14
  5.3.5 Other 15
5.4 **Inspections**  
5.4.1 Frequency of Inspections  
5.4.2 Checks  
5.4.3 Documentation  

5.5 **Access Management**  

5.6 **Site Activities**  
5.6.1 Tools and Utilities on-site  
5.6.2 Vermin infestations  
5.6.3 Discharged syringes/human excreta/hazardous material  
5.6.4 Cleaning (prior to handing back)  
5.6.5 Disposal of waste  
5.6.6 Maintenance of Site  
5.6.7 Maintenance of Installed Protection / Security Measures  
5.6.8 Response to security breaches  

5.7 **Actions at the end of protection (Handover / Handback)**  

---

**DOCUMENT CHANGE HISTORY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>01/04/2013</td>
<td>First publication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>21/01/2014</td>
<td>Correction of referenced standards and regulations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

© BSIA 2014  
The material in this guide is for general information purposes only and does not and is not intended to constitute professional advice. No liability is accepted for reliance upon this guide.

Issue 1.1 | January 2014
Introduction

These guidelines are for security measures and services introduced when a property is at increased risk of criminal attack because of a change of circumstances in its occupancy.

A typical vacant property is a building that has been occupied but is temporarily not in use prior to a new owner or tenant moving in. Many other reasons exist for the need to protect a property. It is assumed that the type of vacant property considered by these guidelines is intended to be vacant for a limited period of time (although this period may in practice be a number of years).

Although the property may already have security equipment or devices (e.g. high security doors) when it is temporarily unoccupied there may be greater risk of arson, burglary, vandalism, etc simply because criminals are aware that the building is not being protected in the usual way.

Another example could be when construction work is being undertaken. For example if an extension is being constructed the fabric of the original building may be removed thereby creating an easy access point for burglars or squatters.

These guidelines could apply to many types of property including:
- Public & Government (e.g. Police, NHS, Military Barracks, Nursing Homes)
- Commercial (Warehousing, Factories, Retail)
- Residential (Private & Social)
- Construction Work
- Open Land (at risk from travellers)

The guidelines also apply for many types of vacancy including:
- Prior to first occupancy
- Refurbishment / Development
- Following damage (e.g. fire / flood / criminal activity)
- Temporary Unoccupancy (e.g. up to 60 – 90 days)
- Long Term Unoccupancy
- Derelict / Awaiting Demolition
1. Scope

These guidelines cover the provision of security for vacant property. The nature of this provision may vary considerably according to the type and condition of property. This provision might include manned guarding, monitoring or patrols, physical barriers, materials or structures, electronic devices.

These guidelines are intended to cover additional security measures not those intended to be applied on a permanent basis.

**NOTE:** For example an intruder alarm system installed for permanent use will have different characteristics to a temporary system used in a vacant property.

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 Referenced Standards

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:

- Safety Equipment BS 5426:1993
- Security Screening of Personnel BS 7858
- Keyholding and Response Services BS 7984

2.2 Regulations

The following regulations are mentioned by this document. Be aware that regulations may be changed at any time and that relevant laws may vary. This list is indicative and regulations will vary between countries.

- Management of Health & Safety Regulations of 1999
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Construction (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1996
- Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 2002
- Environmental Protection Act
- Defective Premises Act
- Occupiers Liability Act
- Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012
3. Definitions and Abbreviations

3.1 Terms and Definitions
For the purposes of these guidelines, the following terms and definitions apply:

3.1.1 Agreement
That part of the contractual arrangement between the Company and the Client describing the services and equipment provided for the vacant property protection of their property.

3.1.2 Client
Any organisation or individual purchasing services within the scope of these guidelines.

3.1.3 Company
Any organisation providing services within the scope of these guidelines.

3.1.1 Equipment
Tools, security devices, signage and similar apparatus used by or provided by the Company in connection with the vacant property protection.

3.1.3 Vacant Property Protection
The provision of services and equipment at a defined building or site to maintain the integrity of that place against human, environmental and natural threats in lieu of normal occupation or use.

NOTE: The intention of vacant property protection is not necessarily to maintain the value of the property and does not include maintenance and physical up-keep of a building. It is intended to replace the monitoring of the property that would be performed by those when the property is not vacant. The level of security provided may be higher than that of an occupied building to compensate for increased threats because of its vacant status.

3.2 Abbreviations
CCTV  Closed Circuit Television (for surveillance purposes)
UKAS  United Kingdom Accreditation Service
VPP   Vacant Property Protection
4. General Company Operations

4.1 General
This clause gives practice applicable to the company but not specific to the protection of individual properties.

4.2 Quality Accreditation
Companies should hold a valid Certificate of Accreditation under ISO 9001 issued by a Certification Body accredited by UKAS. The scope of certification should include activities appropriate to the protection of vacant properties.

4.3 Staff Employment Vetting
Companies should employ fit and proper persons.

All staff with access to protected properties should be vetted in accordance with BS 7858 or equivalent. The following variations to BS 7858 are acceptable:

a. The screening period will cover the previous 5 years.
b. The conditions for commencement of provisional employment (e.g. that it cannot commence until 5 years of satisfactorily screening has been carried out) need not be applied.

NOTE: All staff undertaking activities covered by BS 7984 should be selected and screened in accordance with BS 7858 (see 4.11).

All members of staff should complete a screening form, which should be checked for information supplied by the employee. If an alternative equivalent vetting procedure to BS 7858 is used then as a minimum the screening should encompass:

a. A traceable historical record of residence within the UK
b. Details of formal documentation issued e.g. passport, driving licence etc.
c. Financial background
d. Efficacy declaration
e. Medical history

4.4 Use of Contractors
The use of contractors to carry out work within the scope of these guidelines is acceptable. Contractors should be reputable businesses that understand the implications of vacant properties and should comply with these guidelines. It is the employing company’s responsibility to ensure this compliance.

4.5 Licensing
In some cases it is a requirement for operatives and/or companies to be appropriately licensed. It is the responsibility of the company to ensure that such licences are held.

NOTE: In accordance with the Private Security Act licenses issued by the Security Industry Authority are required for keyholding services, monitoring of CCTV (for public space surveillance), security guarding and some other services. Refer to www.sia.homeoffice.gov.uk for details.
4.6 Identity cards
All employees operating in public or at the vacant property should be issued with, and instructed to carry at all times whilst on duty, a photographic card confirming their position with the company. The company should ensure the periodic renewal of identity cards for each employee. Each identity card should include the following information:

a. Company name, address and telephone number(s)
b. Employee’s name, photograph, and signature
c. Expiry date, not more than 3 years from date of issue

*NOTE: Legislation or standards may impose additional requirements.*

4.7 Health and Safety
4.7.1 General
Companies should have a written health and safety policy, which complies with the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (supplemented by the Management of Health & Safety Regulations of 1999). Companies should also document health and safety policy/procedures directly relating to the VPP business and should be able to demonstrate that monitoring of compliance is regularly undertaken.

Companies should have carried out a full assessment of their obligations as a contractor in the vacant property marketplace and should have provided, or agreed, a written description of the work to be undertaken, together with associated terms and conditions.

Where appropriate (e.g. where building construction is being carried out) companies should comply with the Construction (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1996.

4.7.2 Safety Training
Each employee of a company should receive appropriate training to enable them to carry out a risk assessment for their personal safety at site locations as may be deemed necessary and commensurate with good working practice.

Companies should give employees full written guidance and training into aspects of the Manual Handling Operation Regulations and should provide a method statement to monitor compliance.

Where appropriate staff should receive basic training in first aid and the use of fire extinguishers.

4.7.3 Safety equipment and personal protective equipment
Operatives should be provided with, and should wear when appropriate, the following protective BS 5426 approved equipment.

a. Sturdy boots / shoes with reinforced toes
b. Hard hat / bumper cap
c. High visibility jacket
d. Other equipment depending on risk assessment
Representatives of companies should be given the appropriate information and training concerning the health and safety risks that such equipment should avoid or limit.

**NOTE**: Attention is drawn to the Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 2002 (S.I. 2002 No 1144).

### 4.7.4 Ladders

Ladders should comply with the requirements of the Construction (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1996 and only ladders classified as Class 1 should be used. A register of ladders should be maintained and made available for inspection on demand.

Ladders should not be left on site to avoid their use by burglars and general misuse.

**NOTE**: All screens require a hoisting method irrespective of size and weight.

### 4.7.5 Loneworker operations

Employers have a duty of care to lone workers.

A lone worker is defined by the HSE as “an employee who performs an activity that is intended to be carried out in isolation without close or direct supervision”. When looking to reduce the risk to lone workers it is important to decrease lone working to a minimum or if this is not possible then put in place risk mitigation techniques. Monitoring of lone workers can be undertaken by many methods, e.g. CCTV monitoring, but if a lone worker device is used then it is recommended that the lone worker service meets the requirements of BS 8484 and the Police Response to Security Systems policy.

### 4.7.6 Employee Health

The company should have a procedure to ensure that employees are in a suitable physical condition to perform their work.

### 4.8 Plant and equipment

#### 4.8.1 General

There are three categories of plant and equipment:

i) That owned by the client as part of the property to be protected but which is not in use during the period of protection (e.g. manufacturing machinery, air conditioning systems).

ii) That owned by the client as part of the property but which is used either to maintain the building and services or as part of the security (e.g. existing alarm system, sprinkler system).

iii) That owned by the company and used as part of the vacant property protection or in readiness as part of threat mitigation plans (e.g. temporary alarm system, portable generator, and emergency pumps).

Only staff trained, and where applicable, with necessary licenses or permits, in the operation, adjustment, installation or removal of the plant and equipment shall carry out these actions.

For any equipment incorporating timed operation the time should be checked for correctness at regular intervals. For equipment using automated switching (e.g. a dusk to dawn sensor) the operation of the control device should be checked at regular intervals.
4.8.2 Plant and equipment owned by the client

Property owned by the client should only be operated, adjusted, installed, removed or switched on/off by the company as stated in the agreement.

The company should ensure that the client provides proof that plant and equipment has been checked and serviced at regular intervals in accordance with manufacturer recommendations and legislation before the equipment is used.

Plant and equipment owned by the client should not be removed from site without the client’s permission.

4.8.3 Plant and equipment owned by the company

All plant and equipment should be checked and serviced at regular intervals in accordance with manufacturer recommendations and legislation. Records should be kept of checks and services.

4.9 Training

On joining a company, all employees should be given basic job training. This should be vocational and appropriate to their role. Training should include:

a. An understanding of the vacant property protective business
b. Health and safety requirements (see above)
c. Installation and removal techniques (as appropriate)
d. Guarding / patrol techniques
e. Risk assessment
f. Awareness of company procedures (with reference to ISO 9001)
g. Client care
h. An awareness of continuous business improvement (e.g. by providing feedback based on experience to improve procedures)

In-house training should provide a specific understanding of how to fulfil the job function. Where more specialised training is required such training should be provided by an approved supplier (e.g. fork lift truck training).

Training records and future training plans should be maintained for all members of staff. Refresher training for existing members of staff should be considered.

4.10 Insurance

Companies should have sufficient insurance including cover. Example forms of insurance to be considered are public liability, contractual, efficacy, employer’s liability, third party indemnity, vehicle and fidelity guarantee insurance.

NOTE: Legislation and contracts may impose minimum requirements.

4.11 Security of the company records and documentation

Steps should be taken to ensure the safe custody of all keys, documentation and equipment relating to installations. For example, information about locks, safes and other security measures at the client’s site should be protected and secure.
Companies holding keys to vacant property should comply with the requirements of BS 7984.

**NOTE**: BS 7984 requires that “all persons undertaking, or having access to details of an assignment, keyholding and response duties should be selected and screened in accordance with BS 7858.

The maintenance of confidentiality and secure storage of data is of paramount importance. Steps should be taken to ensure the safe custody of all documentation relating to the vacant property, equipment and personnel records. It is recommended that records be kept for a minimum of 6 years.

**NOTE**: As a minimum companies should fulfil all requirements of the Data Protection Act.

In particular companies should ensure that access to electronic media (e.g. data back-ups, CDs) and remote access to electronic storage is adequately controlled and protected.

Employees should be required to enter into an undertaking to keep confidential any information relating to the company’s business and their clients’ businesses as part of their employment contract.
5. Property Protection Procedures

5.1 General

This clause gives practices for operations relevant to protection of properties to be applied on a site-by-site basis.

A survey or inspection should be made of each site. On the basis of this survey an assessment of the risks and threats should be made and a risk management approach used to determine appropriate risk mitigation measures. These should be agreed with the client.

NOTE: Protection characteristics may vary according to the stage of “life” of the property:

a. Construction Site
b. New build awaiting occupancy
c. Occupied
d. Refurbishment (whilst part occupied)
e. End of Tenancy
f. Vacant refurbishment
g. Vacant Property
h. New Tenancy
i. Closure and demolition
j. Vacant brown-field site

The survey should include a check on the presence of existing security features (e.g. perimeter fences, gates, and other relevant equipment (e.g. fire detection and sprinkler systems). It is the client’s responsibility to ensure that existing measures are in a suitable condition.

The results of the survey or inspection should be recorded in a document. If possible this document should form part of the proposal to the client.

Before commencing protection of the vacant property there should be clear understanding regarding who has responsibility for the assessment of the risks. This should be documented in the agreement. If the company is not responsible for the risk assessment the agreement should clearly state the nature of the security provisions requested by the client.

5.2 Risk Assessment

5.2.1 Process

When responsible for the risk assessment, the company should assess the threats related to the property to be protected to meet the client and/or their insurer’s requirements.

Threats to be considered include:

a. Theft (particularly metal theft)
b. Damage / Vandalism (including damage to heritage, i.e. difficult to repair architectural features, artwork and memorials)
c. Fire / Arson

d. Squatting in a building

e. Travellers occupying a site

f. Misuse (trading, parties, drug related)

g. Fly-tipping

h. Environmental Damage (including flooding, wind, spillages)

i. Health and safety related problems (e.g. possible risk to employees)

j. Liability to third parties (e.g. injuries to people entering site)

k. Animal Infestation

l. Threats to adjacent property

m. Threats to occupied parts of a site

5.2.2 Risk Management Procedures

The company should determine the security measures (methods of mitigation) to be provided by analysis of the risks. These measures should be agreed with the client and the agreed measures clearly documented. Risks are analysed by considering the likelihood of the threat occurring and the impact of the threat. Methods of protection relevant to each threat should then be considered so that the risk can be reduced to an acceptable level. (A possible method is described in Annex A)

5.2.3 Documentation and agreement with client

5.2.3.1 General

Companies should ensure that clients receive terms and conditions, which clearly state:

a. The frequency of visits.

b. That surveys, when required, meet the client and insurers requirement or conditions.

c. Any special requirements.

d. Actions to be taken in the event of issues being found as a result of an inspection.

e. Where, under the terms of the agreement, a client hires equipment from the company the ownership of this equipment should be clearly identified together with the conditions relating to its return. Any necessary insurance arrangements should be specified.

The client should be advised to seek specific guidance from their insurer and to submit the written proposals to the insurer for prior approval.

5.3 Commencing Protection

5.3.1 General

This section includes a list of recommended actions. Not all of these will be appropriate in all cases. It is further recommended that if these actions are not carried out then a reason is recorded in case the failure to perform the action results in claims against the company.
5.3.2 Informing interested parties
Several parties may wish or need to know that a property is vacant. In some cases the knowledge of another party can assist in the protection. The company should advise the client to inform these interested parties. Ultimately this is the client’s responsibility although the company may offer this as a service. The example parties to be considered are:

a. The insurer of the property (together with a check on their policies and conditions). It is important that adequate records of correspondence with the insurer are maintained.
b. The owners of adjacent properties (providing contact details of the company or other client representative). It is also useful for the company to have contact details for the owners or tenants of adjacent properties. Neighbours can be very useful in reporting unauthorised entry.
c. The local fire services - Ensure fire services are aware of water supply locations, sprinkler systems, etc. Ensure fire service has details of keyholders.
d. The local police service - Ensure the police have details of keyholders (if the local police retain this information).
e. Inform local authorities, if applicable.

5.3.3 Commence access management
Management of access to the site should begin as soon as possible (see 5.5)

a. All keys to the property should be accounted for. If this is not possible then consideration should be given to changing locks or adding new locks.
b. When other systems are used to control access (e.g. an electronic access control system) then appropriate measures should be taken (e.g. temporary or permanent removal of permissions to individuals).

5.3.4 Utilities
In accordance with the agreement utilities should be turned off or maintained. The following actions should be taken as appropriate.

a. Turn off gas supplies (if possible the gas supply should be locked off to prevent use of the gas by squatters and reduce potential or leaks, etc). Ensure that the gas supply is not required for facilities on site. Record meter reading if applicable.
b. Turn off electricity supplies (if possible the electricity supply should be locked off to prevent use of the power by squatters). Ensure that the electricity supply is not needed for facilities on site (e.g. alarm systems). Record meter reading if applicable.
c. Turn off water supplies. To prevent accidental leaks, where possible, the water supply should be turned off outside of the property but additionally internal stopcocks should be turned off (and locked off where possible). Ensure that the water supply is not needed for sprinkler systems, etc. Record meter reading if applicable.
d. In some cases the use of water flow detectors may help with identification of leaks or misuse.
e. Where applicable and possible drain water systems, storage tanks, etc.
f. Remove stores of fuel (coal, timber, oil, gas cylinders, etc)
g. Cease / redirect postal deliveries. Close letterboxes, letter plates, etc.
NOTE: Letterboxes are frequently used by arsonists using the unsolicited mail as tinder. Uncollected mail advertises that the property is not in regular use.

5.3.5 Other
As appropriate and taking into account the future use of the property the client should be advised that some actions may assist in reducing threats to the property. Examples are:

a. Remove all combustible materials and hazardous items.
b. Remove any building contents that might attract thieves.
c. Consider the visual appearance of the property.

5.4 Inspections
5.4.1 Frequency of Inspections
The company should agree a periodic programme of inspection with the client that is in accordance with insurer requirements.

Scheduled inspections should be recorded and provided as a method of confirmation that the protection agreed is maintained. Note: Depending upon the number of items involved, this may include an agreed sampling procedure (e.g. in the case of window shuttering or grilles).

A risk assessment should be conducted for the safety of the inspector.

The client’s representative should check whether there are personal effects or belongings on site and a list should be provided to the company. The company representative should confirm this list by site inspection and report to the client any other items that should possibly have been listed and agree the actions to be taken.

Additional visits to properties following bad weather conditions such as heavy snow or rain and flooding should be considered. Actions to be taken if such conditions prevent visits or access should be agreed in advance. A contingency plan should be in place for actions required if bad weather or other environmental hazards (e.g. from neighbouring properties) affect the property.

When applicable, appropriate steps should be taken to ensure that the client’s premises are not left in a hazardous condition. The client should be informed of any hazards identified during the inspection.

5.4.2 Checks
5.4.2.1 Equipment checks:

a. Damage to equipment and graffiti should be noted and reported.
b. Door locking mechanisms should be checked.
c. Regular checks should be carried out to identify equipment that has been tampered with. When discovered, replacement of faulty or damaged equipment must be carried out within a period agreed with the client.
d. Breaches or unauthorised entries, giving details of apparent method of entry and damage caused.
e. Heating systems (by agreement with clients).
f. Alarm systems (if applicable) should be working. The availability of mains electricity to mains powered alarm systems should be checked.
5.4.2.2 Property checks:

a. Site perimeter: check suitability of perimeter fencing; check the security of gates; whether any squatters or travellers are on site and any waste material is on site.

b. External building: check that the building is secure, free from breach or attempted breach and for any vandalism.

c. Internal building: check for combustible materials, rubbish, and vandalism; check that internal doors, fixtures, fittings and chattel assets, are present and intact.

d. Services: check gas, electric and water have been disconnected or isolated (where applicable); obtain gas / electric meter reading where applicable. (See 5.3.4)

e. Structure: check the building appears structurally sound and safe to walk around on all floors.

5.4.3 Documentation

Clients should be notified in writing of any breaches or unauthorised entries, giving details of apparent method of entry and damage caused.

The inspections are to be recorded on a suitable report that is available to the client within 24h of the inspection. This should record the above checks, the defects found and the risks to the client or their property. It should also record agreed actions.

It is recommended that photographic records should be made to substantiate or refute any future claims.

5.5 Access Management

Management of people entering a vacant property is important because without controls any liability is impossible to assign. There are a large number of people who could wish to access a property including the client, plumbers, electricians, surveyors and potential purchasers. The agreement should confirm the procedures to be used. It is recommended that the company manage all access to the vacant property including that by the client and their contractors. An audit trail should be kept detailing who allowed access and to whom it was given.

5.6 Site Activities

5.6.1 Tools and Utilities on-site

Permission to use any on-site utilities including water and mains-powered electrical equipment should be in accordance with the agreement and only used when appropriate and necessary. (See 4.8)

It is recommended that the agreement also covers the use of battery, rechargeable or generator powered equipment. Generators should only be used in suitable locations with adequate ventilation.

5.6.2 Vermin infestations

The presence of rats, mice, cockroaches, fleas and other vermin infestation, or the remains of such vermin or animal excreta in any work place, must be reported immediately to a manager of the company. Care should be taken to avoid the presence of materials that could attract vermin, such as food. A manager of the company should be alerted to the presence of such materials.

The company should have an agreed procedure for dealing with infestations. The procedure should clearly state which employees have the authority to permit work to be carried out in the area of infestation. If
necessary and according to the type of infestation, as documented in the procedure, employees lacking this authority should withdraw from the area concerned and no work may commence or continue until suitable arrangements have been made for the elimination and safe removal of the infestation, and any necessary fumigation has taken place or a safe method of work, including the provision of suitable protective clothing and equipment, has been determined.

5.6.3 Discharged syringes/human excreta/hazardous material
No attempt should be made to handle or remove objects contaminated with body fluids, such as discarded syringes, needles, broken glass and/or other items that might penetrate the skin or be hazardous to health. Any such incident must be immediately reported to a manager of the company. Employees should withdraw from the area concerned and no work may commence or continue until suitable arrangements have been made for the elimination and safe removal of potentially infected objects or material or a safe method of work, including the provision of suitable protective clothing and equipment, has been determined.

Staff who have not received “sharps training” or do not have appropriate handling kits should not handle or remove “sharps”. This includes objects contaminated with body fluids, such as discarded syringes, needles, broken glass and/or other items that might penetrate the skin or be hazardous to health. Any such material should be reported immediately to a manager of the company. Employees should conduct a Risk Assessment and withdraw from the area concerned if deemed necessary and no work may commence or continue until suitable arrangements have been made for the minimisation of the effect.

5.6.4 Cleaning (prior to handing back)
Site cleaning should be conducted as agreed with the client and recorded in the agreement.

5.6.5 Disposal of waste
Any waste on site should be disposed of in accordance with legislation and as agreed with the client and recorded in the agreement.

5.6.6 Maintenance of Site
5.6.6.1 General
Inspections should be carried out as per 5.4.

All fire and security equipment should be in good working order and tested regularly. Care should be taken to ensure that any work carried out on site is adequately controlled to prevent fires.

5.6.6.2 Emergency Property Maintenance (e.g. glass repair/boarding, storm damage)
The agreement should state the procedure for authorisation of repairs especially where third parties are required.

It is important to note that emergency repairs could be a cause of increased risk to the property and full repairs should be organised as quickly as possible. For example boarding-up of windows increases the risk of fire and because of increased hazard to fire-fighters may result in refusal of fire and rescue services to enter a vacant property.
**NOTE 1:** Emergency property maintenance is not a typical service of VPP companies.

**NOTE 2:** Scheduled maintenance would be covered by Access Management agreements (see 5.5).

### 5.6.7 Maintenance of Installed Protection / Security Measures

a. On installation, equipment should be free of all graffiti and be of a uniform colour.
b. Door locking mechanisms should be regularly maintained by the company. They should be kept clean and lubricated at regular intervals whilst ensuring that residue will not stain clothing.
c. Regular checks should be carried out to identify equipment that has been tampered with. When discovered, replacement of faulty or damaged equipment must be carried out within a period agreed with the client (e.g. within one working day).
d. The client should be made aware that any interference to the protective system by a third party would invalidate the integrity of the system.
e. Where necessary (e.g. following attempted entry to the premises) it may be necessary to re-fit or re-secure the protection. The company should maintain records giving the reasons for any refit or re-secure.

### 5.6.8 Response to security breaches

The procedure to be followed following a breach should be agreed with the client and included in the agreement. This agreement should include the need of the client to inform the company in cases where the client is aware of the breach before the company.

Breaches to the security can take a variety of forms and can be identified by a variety of means. The client should be notified of any breaches of the security or any incident whereby the property has been affected without breaching the protection provided (e.g. using a previously unforeseen method of attack).

The agreement should state what service is available, its hours of operation, and maximum expected time to complete work, for the repair, replacement or refit of the protection provided under the agreement.

**NOTE:** The company may offer out-of-hours services at extra cost.

The response procedure should detail:

a. Who to contact according to the type or degree of breach
b. Differing actions according to time of day / day of week / holiday periods
c. The sequence of response escalation
d. Under what conditions the police or fire service are to be called
e. When should other services (e.g. plumbers, glaziers) be called

Any graffiti applied should be reported to the client and agreed actions taken at the earliest opportunity.

**NOTE:** The presence of graffiti is an indication that a building is not being cared for and may encourage further attacks. The presence of offensive graffiti is a greater indication that the property is not in use. Even an attempt to remove graffiti will demonstrate that it has been noticed. Anti-social and racial graffiti should be removed as soon as possible.
5.7 Actions at the end of protection (Handover / Handback)

Prior to the handing back of the property to the client or their tenant advice should be given to them regarding expected actions at this time. They should also be advised about the heightened level of risk that can occur in the time immediately surrounding the time of handing back. These increased risks will occur because of the reinstatement of normal conditions and the removal of protection (i.e. a property where utilities have been reinstated and perimeter protection removed is at greater risk). The client should be advised about care required when advertising the change of state of the property.

On completion of work to remove security measures any resulting dangerous materials, such as broken glass, should be cleared away and disposed of.

All company equipment should be removed from the site. The client should be informed of any damage or deficiencies and given the opportunity to carry out an inspection.
Annex A

**Summary of a possible process for risk management**

The risk (R) exists prior to the introduction of the vacant property security measure and should be defined in terms of the product of the impact of each threat entering the protected area (T) and the likelihood of that threat (L) given the circumstances. i.e. $R = T \times L$

Factors increasing T are the value of assets inside the protected area or the resulting potential damage to critical infrastructure.

Factors decreasing L are other security measures (e.g. CCTV, strength of barriers), the presence of people (whether security or not), restrictions (e.g. building characteristics that prevent access by vehicles), threat of retribution (e.g. criminal prosecution).

The purpose of the vacant property protection is to reduce R to an acceptable level (i.e. mitigation). This can be achieved by introducing deterrence, delay, detection of entry, etc. in combination with a security response.

For each threat the client will have a risk appetite. This is the level of risk they are willing to accept in the knowledge that it is impossible to completely remove every risk.

For every threat three possible actions can be taken. These actions are:

- **Ignore / Accept:** This action implies that the client’s risk appetite is greater than the risk and that any action taken to reduce the risk would be unacceptable (e.g. too costly).

- **Export / Transfer:** The client has chosen to handle the risk in an alternative way (e.g. they accept that arson is a possibility but have insured against losses).

- **Address:** People, processes or technology are used to reduce the risk. This is usually known as mitigation and refers here to the security provided by the vacant property protection.

The purpose of the risk management is to change the T and L values so that the risk (R) is less than the risk appetite.

Over time the factors in the equation may vary and it is important to revisit the threats and confirm that the protection provided is still adequate (e.g. adding one security measure may increase the likelihood of another threat or threats may vary by season).

In determining the likelihood of a threat the frequency of incidents and breaches of security together with the likelihood of repeated incidents.

**NOTE:** It is frequently observed that, having chosen a target, criminals will return to the same target repeatedly thereby distorting assessments of frequency.