
Alarm Receiving Centre Standards and Lone Worker Alarms – a guide

February 2019

For other information please contact:
British Security Industry Association
t: 01905 342 020
e: info@bsia.co.uk
www.bsia.co.uk

1. Brief

The aim of this document is to provide clarity to providers and specifiers of Lone Worker Services (LWS) and end user organisations with respect to the current status of the Alarm Receiving Centre (ARC) standards and the implications for handling LWS alarms and escalation through to the Police.

This document is written by industry stakeholders namely the British Security Industry Association (BSIA), National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC), and the UKAS inspectorates National Security Inspectorate (NSI) and Security Systems & Alarms Inspection Board (SSAIB).

2. Background

In the UK, security companies wishing to escalate alarms generated by security systems to the Police to generate a Police response, must have security systems and associated policies and procedures that comply with the NPCC Police Requirements & Response to Security Systems document 2018.

From a LWS perspective, LWS suppliers can escalate lone worker alarms to the Police to obtain a Level 1 Police response (the highest priority) via the use of Lone Worker Unique Reference Numbers (URNs), provided the LWS comply with NPCC requirements (and the severity of the alarm incident itself warrants such a response).

The Police (NPCC) require that the ARC handling the LWS alarm must be certified via the NSI or SSAIB to:

- **BS 8484** - Provision of Lone Worker Services – Code of Practice

- AND one of the following:
 - BS 5979** Category II Remote Centres Receiving Signals from Fire and Security Systems – Code of Practice;

 - OR

 - BS EN 50518** Monitoring and Alarm Receiving Centres

 - OR

 - BS 8591** Category II Remote Centres Receiving Signals From Alarm Systems – Code of Practice.

What is the relevance of these standards? **BS 8484** is the key standard for LWS suppliers, it covers the devices and smartphone apps, the ARC and alarm handling process and general supplier criteria.

BS 5979, **BS EN 50518** and **BS 8591** standards relate to the ARC service and require a little more explanation.

BS 5979 has been the standard for UK ARCs for many years, giving recommendations for the planning, construction and facilities of manned and unmanned remote centres and for the operation of ARCs which receive signals from security systems e.g. intruder, fire, social and CCTV. The last revision of this standard was **BS 5979:2007** and has 2 categories of certification: Category I and Category II. Category II being the higher standard of the 2 categories of certification.

Over the last few years a new series of European alarm monitoring standards have been developed and is known as **BS EN 50518**.

Following publication of **BS EN 50518 in 2010**, parts of **BS 5979:2007** standard was withdrawn. The British Standards Institute, in its role as the UK National Standards Body, is obliged to withdraw any national standard or parts of, that conflicts with a European Norm.

So what's the relevance of **BS EN 50518**? **BS EN 50518** did not cover the breadth of monitoring services that BS 5979 did (**BS EN 50518** only covered Monitoring of Intruder and Hold-up alarms), therefore, elements that were covered in **BS 5979** but were not covered in **BS EN 50518** were developed into the new standard **BS 8591:2014** 'Remote centres receiving signals from alarm systems' to deal with a monitoring centre receiving signals from CCTV, Fire, Social, lone worker and vehicle tracking systems. This allowed the use of the European standard **EN 50518** in the UK without the void left by the withdrawal of **BS 5979**.

Note: It is important to remember that the term "withdrawal" only means it is not the newest standard in this area but can still be used.

3. What does this mean in terms of escalating LWS alarms to the Police?

The Police allow LWS suppliers to make use of ARCs certified to either **BS 5979** Category II or **BS EN 50518** or **BS 8591** and therefore escalate alarms, where the incident warrants such escalation, through to Police and receive a Level 1 response.

The Police currently have no requirement for ARCs that are already certified to **BS 5979** to migrate to **BS EN 50518** or **BS 8591**.

As such, **BS 5979** continues to be recognised by the UK security inspectorates (NSI / SSAIB) and should be viewed as an equivalent to **BS EN 50518** and **BS 8591** when it comes to escalating LWS alarms to the Police.

4. Documented History

Date	Issue	Comment
26/02/2019	Issue 1	First issue

This document was created by the Lone Worker Section of the British Security Industry Association (BSIA).

The British Security Industry Association is the trade association for the private security industry in the UK. Our members provide over 70% of UK security products and services and adhere to strict quality standards.

The application of lone worker solutions is wide-ranging, for example petrol stations, kiosks, shops, cleaners, security, agricultural workers, forestry workers, postal staff, social and medical workers, engineers, estate agents and sales/service/maintenance representatives.

In order to provide guidance and simplification in the area of lone worker solutions, the BSIA is very active in the standards arena and also develops its own guides and codes of practice where currently standards do not exist.

The lone worker section encourages debate on new developments and concerns, in doing so it seeks to ensure that all stakeholder interests are represented including: lone worker solution providers, users, the police (or other responders), inspectorates and insurers. The section also works with government on these issues.

Using a lone worker solution provider is not compulsory, but it could assist employers to manage their lone worker risks as part of an overall safety programme to comply with their legal duties towards lone workers under:

- The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

As a lone worker solution provider or security company, BSIA membership will raise your company profile and ensure that your business is at the heart of influencing the future your industry. You will become part of a unique group of high quality and professional companies which are well-respected and well-represented to government, end users, specifiers, standards and legislative bodies. For more information contact the BSIA.

BSIA Ltd
Anbrian House
1 The Tything
Worcester
WR1 1HD

t: 01905 342 020
e: info@bsia.co.uk
www.bsia.co.uk

