

## A guide for suppliers

**The view of the British Security Industry Association is that the use of e-auctions is not best suited for sourcing security guarding solutions. Security guarding provides a service rather than a product and is therefore subject to variables that an e-auction may not cover.**

**The provision of security guarding has many different component parts, unlike for instance the procurement of 'nuts and bolts', and so the use of an e-auction may not be appropriate for such a purchase.**

### Advice to security suppliers

If you are a provider of security guarding services and are about to enter an e-bid, it is important that you create a dialogue with the customers before you enter into this process.

As the supply of people is very complex with respect to their employment terms and conditions, it is imperative that you get some agreement on identifying a fixed framework that will be used by all those entering the e-auction process. Try and get the customer to fix elements of the bid to include, hours of work by position, pay rates, holiday provision, training, sick pay provision. All equipment should be clearly identified. What follows is a table highlighting some of the costs you should ensure are being included in all competing bids.

Subject	Criteria	Breakdown	Remarks
Staffing levels	Numbers by position and total hours.	Cost per hour by position.	Separate all the different ranks, hours and pay rates.
N.I. contributions			Can differ slightly, so set rate for cost exercise.
Holiday pay			Dictate minimum requirements.
Training costs	Show all included training.	Breakdown each element by a fixed costs (it matters not if correct for the tender exercise).	The will include first aid, fire, conflict management etc.
Equipment	Be prescriptive on equipment to be supplied for the supplier.		Will include such things as vehicles, PCs, first aid, patrol tools and office equipment and importantly uniform.

If you can reach this position and cover all the variables before the auction commences then you will be bidding on a level playing field with other prospective suppliers and avoid hidden costs and/or requirements being negotiated at a later date.

It is important that as a supplier you ensure that the potential customer has taken time to understand the qualitative elements of your business, e.g. how you look after your staff in relation to welfare, training, development, recognition and

terms and conditions, including additional benefits that other suppliers may not give such as paying for licences and free uniform. Also, highlight any accreditations you may have such as BSIA membership to demonstrate your commitment to quality. If you run a company that prides itself on its infrastructure, then try and get the customer into your premises so they can gain an understanding and feeling for your organisation. Operational management support and your 24-hour control room provision could be a significant factor in how the customer views your business.

Once the e-bid has taken place and if you are unfortunate enough not to be successful, try and get a de-brief from the customer in order that you can understand the shortfalls for next time. If you lost the bid on price alone then again, try and identify where your organisation is too expensive as it may be the way you are presenting your costings.

Always ensure before you enter an e-bid situation that you have confirmed that the final bid will be subject to TUPE and that other hidden costs may be identified at this stage.