
Code of Practice for **Security Searches**

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Introduction

This Code of Practice is for the conducting of searches by persons employed to ensure the security of property and persons. It is a voluntary Code that companies can choose to comply with as an indication of their quality of service and conduct.

Searches can be performed in a variety of situations and by a variety of employees and contracted staff. This Code cannot take into account all such situations. The intention is that companies base their own procedures and guidelines on this Code.

This document is structured so that it can apply to both companies (defined here as organizations) that offer a search service to customers (and would in appropriate cases be subject to the provisions of the Private Security Industry Act) and to businesses or other bodies that directly employ “in-house” searchers. It also includes recommendations for employees of both types of employer.

This document was developed by the Police & Public Services Section of the British Security Industry Association.

1 Scope

This document gives good practice recommendations for the conducting of searches by personnel employed to ensure the security and safety of property and persons, to prevent the entry into an area of restricted items and to locate prohibited or dangerous items.

This Code of Practice includes searching for unauthorized persons and persons representing a threat but does not include searching for lost persons.

Although some principles of this code may be adapted for the searching of small boats on inland waterways this code is not to be used for searching of commercial aircraft or maritime vessels.

This Code of Practice includes many subjects for which consideration is recommended. That consideration should be aimed at ensuring that the search methods and thoroughness are commensurate with the risk and are proportionate to each situation.

This Code includes recommendations for searchers to address concerns of safety and respect of individuals (e.g. avoidance of discrimination and consideration of cultural and religious sensitivities).

NOTE: *There will be cases in which some employees may undertake searches but only rarely and in particular circumstances (an example could be when an employee is suspected of pilfering and is subject to a search by a line manager in accordance with their terms and conditions of employment). This Code is not intended for such circumstances but could contain useful information to assist in the drawing up of guidelines to cover such eventualities.*

2 Referenced Documents

2.1 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:

BS 7499	Static Site guarding and mobile patrol service – Code of Practice
BS 7858	Security screening of individuals employed in a security environment. Code of practice
BS 8517-2	Code of practice for the use of detection dogs

2.2 National Occupational Standards

The following National Occupational Standards (NOS) may be relevant to searching.

SFSSSH1	Confirm clients' Security Search aims and objectives
SFSSSH2	Carry out systematic Security Search procedures
SFSSSH3	Operate equipment to support Security Search
SFSSSH4	Complete and maintain search documentation
SFSSSH5	Conducting dynamic risk assessments during Security Search
SFSPCP4	Establish and maintain secure environments
SFSPSO4	Prevent through search unauthorised items entering a Restricted Area of a Port
SFSEVS8	Conduct searches of people and their property before entering an event
SFJFC2	Maintain security at entry and exit points
SFJCK3	Search Vehicles
SFJCK4	Conduct Searches
SFJZJ4	Complete searches using dogs

2.3 Other References

'HOME OFFICE SCIENTIFIC DEVELOPMENT BRANCH, *UK Police Requirements for Digital CCTV Systems*
London: Home Office, 2005'

'In the picture: A data protection code of practice for surveillance cameras and personal information'
Information Commissioner's Office, 2014

'Surveillance Camera Code of Practice'
London, Home Office, 2013

2.4 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.

- Equality Act, 2010
- Private Security Industry Act, 2001
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act, 1974
- Confined Spaces Regulations, 1997
- Work at Height Regulations, 2005

3 Definitions and Abbreviations

3.1 Terms and Definitions

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

3.1.1 Customer

Individual or body retaining the services of the organization

3.1.2 Individual

The person being searched

3.1.3 Item of concern

Something that is discovered during a search that results in an action.

NOTE: An item of concern may be something that the search is intending to find (see Target) or something that is coincidentally found.

3.1.4 Organization

The employer of searchers providing a search service for customers.

NOTE: The term Employer is used as a generic term when the employer is either an organization or a business employing searchers to provide an in-house search provision.

3.1.5 Search

The act of seeking something by visual, physical or electronic means.

3.1.6 Searcher

The person that is conducting the search.

3.1.7 Target

A defined item or items of concern that the search is intended to locate.

NOTE: For example searchers could be deployed at the entrance of art gallery to check for weapons or materials likely to be used for vandalism (i.e. items of concern) but their assignment might change to search departing visitors after a theft to find a stolen artwork (i.e. a target).

3.2 Abbreviations

CCTV Closed Circuit Television (for surveillance purposes)

NOS National Occupational Standard

SSB Sector Skills Body

UKAS United Kingdom Accreditation Service

4 Recommendations for Organizations

4.1 General

Searches may be undertaken by in-house searchers, contract security personnel, and others who are not employed by a security company, or others whose primary function within the company is not concerned with searching or security and who undertake such tasks on an ad hoc basis.

In this Code of Practice requirements specific to Organizations are given in clause 4, requirements for all employers are in clause 5. That is, Clause 4 only applies to companies that directly employ contract security personnel and provide a search service to customers.

Organizations 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 undertaking of searches.

NOTE: SIA licensing requirements apply if working in licensable security activity. A person falling within the definition of providing licensable conduct under the Private Security Industry Act 2001 is required to be licensed in accordance with that Act.

4.2 Structure

The organization should possess a clearly defined management structure showing control and accountability at each level of operation.

The organization should operate a complaints management system.

NOTE 1: Guidance is given in BS ISO 10002.

Details of the ownership of the organization should be established and the principals' curricula vitae made available. Any unspent criminal convictions or undischarged bankruptcy of a principal should be disclosed on request.

NOTE 2: Attention is drawn to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 [1], whose provisions govern such disclosure.

4.3 Finances and Insurance

Organizations should comply with the requirements of BS 7499 clauses covering Finances and Insurance.

NOTE 1: In BS 7499: 2013 these are clauses 4.2 and 4.3 respectively. Refer to Annex A for further information.

NOTE 2: Legislation and contracts may impose minimum insurance requirements.

4.4 Resources and Security of Records and Customer Property

Organizations should have one or more administrative offices. Documents necessary for conducting the business including records, certificates, correspondence, etc should be retained in a secure manner. The location of all necessary documents should be clearly defined by the organization.

Steps should be taken to ensure the safe custody of all keys, documentation and equipment relating to the customer's property.

The maintenance of confidentiality is of paramount importance. Employees should be required to enter into an undertaking to keep confidential any information relating to the organization's business and their clients' businesses as part of their employment contract.

4.5 Personnel

4.5.1 General

The organization should ensure that it has employed sufficient searchers to fulfil its contractual obligations and sufficient supervisory staff to manage day and night assignments.

Searches may be carried out by a variety of different types of personnel some of whom may need to be licensed in accordance with the Private Security Industry Act 2001 and others, such as stewards, may not need to be licensed.

NOTE: SIA licensing requirements apply if working in a licensable security activity. A person falling within the definition of licensable conduct under the Private Security Industry Act 2001 is required to be licensed in accordance with that Act. This includes contract security personnel.

4.5.2 Terms and Conditions of Employment and Disciplinary Code

Organizations should comply with the requirements of the clause in BS 7499 covering Terms and Conditions of Employment and the clause covering Disciplinary Code.

NOTE: In BS 7499: 2013 these are clauses 5.3.4 and 5.3.5 respectively. Refer to Annex A for further information.

4.6 Customer Agreements

When it is necessary to involve customers in the compliance with this code of practice there should be a written agreement clearly stating responsibility and indicating the decision maker. For example if a recommendation of this code of practice cannot be carried out because the customer refuses to allow it (e.g. display of warning signs) then this should be documented.

Searching of the customer's employees should be by consent and in accordance with their terms and conditions of employment.

The procedures to be followed and associated techniques should be included in assignment instructions given to searchers.

5 Recommendations for Employers of Searchers

5.1 General

Searches may be undertaken by in-house searchers, security personnel and others who are not employed by a security company, or others whose primary function within the company is not concerned with searching or security and who undertake such tasks on an ad hoc basis..

This section applies to all employers but is not relevant to employees performing searches on an infrequent ad-hoc basis. An in-house searcher is a person whose primary duty is to perform searches or who is typically and regularly expected to perform searches.

NOTE: SIA licensing requirements apply if working in licensable security activity. A person falling within the definition of providing licensable conduct under the Private Security Industry Act 2001 is required to be licensed in accordance with that Act.

5.1.1 Selection and screening

Employers should comply with the requirements of the BS 7499 clause covering Selection and Screening.

NOTE 1: In BS 7499: 2013 this is clause 5.3.2. Refer to Annex A for further information.

When applying this recommendation employers should comply with requirements for organizations in BS 7499.

5.1.2 Health

When given an offer of employment, prospective employees should be sent an employment medical questionnaire with questions that relate to, or are intrinsic to, the job function.

Offers of employment should be conditional on the results of the medical questionnaire supplied, which might fundamentally inhibit the employee from carrying out the job.”

NOTE 1: *Attention is drawn to the Equality Act 2010*

Documented procedures should be in place for performing routine health checks and reports to ensure that the physical condition of searchers remains compatible with the duties. A reassessment should be made to ensure suitability if the physical demands of a searcher’s duties change.

NOTE 2: *Where health and safety risk or medical concerns of personnel are raised, it is reasonable for an organization to ask that person to undergo a medical examination to ensure fitness for duty.*

5.1.3 Identification

Searchers, irrespective of whether they are operating in uniform or not, should be issued with identity cards and be required to carry these at all times when on duty.

The identity card should incorporate the following information:

- a. The name, address and telephone number of the employer
- b. The name of the employee, employee number and employee’s signature
- c. The expiry date of the card (not more than three years from the date of issue)
- d. A current photograph of the employee.

When employees leave employment and when replacement cards are issued their cards should be returned to the employer and destroyed in a secure manner.

A record of all identity cards should be maintained and should identify the card status and location of all cards. The record should include whether the card has been lost, destroyed, damaged and whether in the possession of the employer or employee.

NOTE: *Where a searcher is required to display a SIA licence this does not negate the need for employer identification.*

5.2 Training

5.2.1 General

The employer should have a clearly defined and documented training policy.

Training should be provided by competent, qualified training persons. Employers that do not have their own training provision should only use competent training providers. Persons providing training for searching should be aware of National Occupational Standards (see 2.2).

Training should be provided in an environment suitable for the purpose. Training rooms should be adequately equipped and conducive to effective learning.

Prior to commencement of search duties, searchers shall be provided with induction training and basic job training. This requirement applies to full-time, part-time, seasonal and casual employees.

New employees who possess an appropriate qualification in a security discipline comparable with that issued by the Sector Skills Body (SSB) and who have appropriate industry experience should receive induction training but need not receive basic job training. Exemption from basic job training is at the discretion of the employer. It is recommended that exemption is only given for employees transferring from Organizations (i.e. searchers previously employed to provide in-house searching should receive basic job training).

It is recommended that regardless of their qualifications, employees new to the employer should not be exempted from basic job training following a break from employment in the security industry of six months or more.

5.2.2 Induction training

The employer should provide induction training in matters related to conditions of employment and organization/company procedures.

NOTE: *The content, timing and duration of induction training are left to the discretion of the employer.*

5.2.3 Basic job training

Training should cover the following subjects and include appropriate methods of assessment:

- a. Introduction to the security industry role and responsibilities of searchers
- b. Searching
- c. Security and emergency systems
- d. Fire safety
- e. Health and safety at work
- f. The law
- g. Emergencies
- h. Customer care and social skills
- i. Communications and reporting
- j. Equality and diversity
- k. Communication skills and conflict management.

When the training period is complete, the searcher should take a written examination with a national recognized qualification that meets the minimum core competency as set by the Sector Skills Body (SSB).

The training should also include additional training hours for subject-specific modules that relate to the role to be undertaken, for example:

- a. Search of individuals
- b. Search of areas
- c. Search of buildings
- d. Search of vehicles
- e. Use of equipment.

5.2.4 Assignment-specific training

New searchers or employees transferring between assignments and employed for searching of individuals or vehicles at checkpoints on a first assignment should be given on-the-job training appropriate to the assignment and to the needs of the trainee and the customer. For a period that reflects the complexity of the assignment a newly appointed searcher should be supernumerary whilst becoming familiar with procedures, techniques and the work location.

During the first three months of employment the competence of the searcher should be assessed by a suitably qualified or experienced supervisor or manager against performance criteria comparable with the core competencies as defined by the SSB.

5.2.5 Supervisory training

Security searchers and those supervising them should be able to demonstrate that they have undergone appropriate training for the specific search required.

5.2.6 Specialist training

Searchers engaged to perform specialist duties should be trained to a proficient standard by suitably qualified persons. Training should be provided in the use of specialized equipment.

5.2.7 Takeovers

If employees are acquired through a takeover, the employer should identify their training needs and address them with a specific training policy. This policy should take practical work-related experience as well as qualifications into account.

Employees acquired through takeover should not be exempt from the induction training given in 5.2.2.

5.2.8 Training during employment

The effectiveness of all searchers should be monitored and, if necessary, refresher or remedial training should be provided as soon as practicable.

Employers should provide training to cover changes in methods, procedures or legislation. If practicable, training should take place before any change is implemented.

5.2.9 Training records

A record should be kept of all training provided to searchers. Training provided online should be recorded electronically. All other training should be signed by the trainee and countersigned by the trainer.

Where a certificate of training is provided by a recognized and relative sector competent training body, a copy should be retained.

5.3 Supervision

Employers should have a defined organisation structure and all searchers should have an identified supervisor. Where necessary, supervisors may need authorisation to perform their functions at customer's sites.

Supervisors should ensure that searchers are working in accordance with procedures. Checks should be conducted at defined regular time intervals.

5.4 Employer Procedures

The Employer should have procedures describing their specific methods of conducting searches and associated activities (e.g. documentation). These procedures should be reviewed at regular periods and updated with information from searchers as appropriate.

NOTE: These procedures may be known as "Standard Operating Procedures" (typically for long-term operations), "Assignment Instructions" or "Operational Plans" (typically for short-term events).

Employer procedures should include contingency actions to be taken in the event of reasonably foreseeable situations. Such events may include:

- a. Fire / Need to evacuate
- b. Power-cuts (disabling equipment or lack of light)

6 General Recommendations

6.1 Compliance with Legal Requirements

All searches should be conducted in accordance with current legal requirements, government and other regulations. It is the duty of the employer to ensure that searchers comply with such regulations.

Where necessary, searchers should hold Private Security Industry Act licenses issued by the Security Industry Authority.

6.2 Evidential Considerations

Searches may result in the discovery of something that could lead to a prosecution (or employee disciplinary action) of some kind. Procedures should be in place to ensure that any evidence obtained by way of the search is dealt with in an appropriate way and an audit trail should exist relating to both the search and the evidence as appropriate.

6.3 Workplace Investigations

Specific procedures should be created to describe the conducting of searches for workplace investigations.

6.4 Consent to Search

Prior consent to search is always required except in circumstances where statutes or regulations provide otherwise.

There are serious implications for any person or organization enforcing a search without explicit consent. There should be clarity regarding the consent, for example by signatures to confirm understanding of contracts or obvious signage. "Implied consent" should not be used.

6.5 Respect and conflict avoidance

Those being searched may consider the search to be invasive. This does not apply solely to searching of individuals but also to searching of bags and vehicles. Such searches may lead to revealing of personal information or belongings. Persons being subject to a search will often object to the impact the search has on them and searchers should understand, respect this and operate in a manner that reduces the likelihood that misunderstandings or disrespect will result in a confrontation.

See 7.5 for further information.

In particular searchers should avoid discrimination and show respect for privacy, cultural differences and religious sensitivities.

Where an alternative action may be taken by the individual that removes the need for the search or changes the method or nature of the search the individual should be advised of this and be allowed to take such actions.

6.6 Warning of Search

When appropriate, signs should be in place indicating that individuals or vehicles may or will be searched and any conditions that apply (e.g. on entry to or exit from an area). Signs should be positioned such that individuals can choose not to be searched by avoiding those conditions (e.g. by not approaching the area). Signs should be appropriate to the expected individuals and take into account language. Consideration should be given to the need for other forms of warning for example audible warnings or spoken advice by other staff (e.g. check-in operatives).

As appropriate, information signs or hand-outs should be used to inform individuals about the search. Appropriate information might include:

- a. Actions individuals should take in advance (e.g. removal of coats)
- b. The nature or reason for the search
- c. Requests individuals may make regarding the search (e.g. privacy)

6.7 Definition of Search Intent

There should be a clear definition, understood by all parties, of the object of the search. Additionally there should be a clear definition of when a search is complete or has been carried out to a sufficient degree of thoroughness.

According to the type of search it may be necessary to report that the search is complete. The recipient of the report should be defined.

6.8 Threat Levels

In some cases the methods employed for the search, the search intent, the proportion of random searches conducted and other procedures may vary from time to time because of a perceived level of threat. This should be considered in advance and the variations documented. Levels of threat should be clearly defined (e.g. by name, colour or number).

Searchers should be made aware of the level of threat currently perceived. It is not necessary to warn individuals of the perceived level of threat but consideration should be given to this in agreement with customers.

The increased risk to searchers during heightened threat levels should be considered and clear instructions given in procedures. This may include consequential risks such as individuals becoming violent because of delays in entry to an area.

6.9 Responsibility

Responsibility for decisions during searches should be clearly defined and included in procedures. Searchers should be aware of the limits of their responsibility and authority.

6.10 Safety

6.10.1 General

Risk assessments should be conducted as appropriate to the type of searching. In some cases risk assessments may be necessary prior to particular searches (e.g. when a search is to be carried out on a previously unsearched building or vehicle). If possible a rehearsal of the search should be carried out to assist with risk assessment.

The risk assessment should be aligned with those of the customer or, in the case of in-house provision, with the business in general. It should take into account general factors concerning the industry sector and factors appropriate to the nature and activities of the customer.

Risks should be identified that may impact on:

- a. Searchers
- b. Individuals being searched
- c. Other individuals in the vicinity
- d. Buildings and property
- e. Vehicles being searched
- f. Other Vehicles in the vicinity
- g. The Environment

The risk assessments should be updated as circumstances change and should be reviewed regularly. Feedback gained during searches should be used to inform risk assessments.

6.10.2 Potential Threats

Risk assessments should include consideration of:

- a. Violence (Dealing with violent individuals)
- b. Dangerous items (needles, knives, sharps, broken glass)
- c. Use of expert assistance
- d. Hazardous areas / heights / confined spaces / slopes (for area and building searches)
- e. Chemicals
- f. Explosive devices
- g. Fire and the need to evacuate or invacuate
- h. Machinery / Noise (for building searches)
- i. Drugs
- j. Vegetation (for area searches)

6.10.3 First Aid Facilities

Consideration should be given to the provision of first aid facilities (first aiders and equipment). First aid may be needed for searchers, individuals, and others.

6.11 Use of Equipment

Searchers should not use any tools, devices or other equipment to assist in the conducting of a search unless such equipment is stated in any agreement with the customer.

Searchers should receive appropriate training in the use of the equipment to include the restrictions on its use in the conducting of a search and the training records of individuals annotated accordingly.

Equipment should be used in a correct and safe manner and in accordance with manufacturer's instructions.

Equipment should be properly maintained and, if appropriate, a record of maintenance kept.

Procedures should describe actions to be taken if equipment failure prevents its use during a search.

6.12 Dealing with Unauthorized / Seized Items

6.12.1 General

There should be a clear definition so that the employer, or customer and organization, and the searcher are aware of the types of item that are relevant to the search. These items of concern may include:

- a. Items being searched for
- b. Incidental discoveries
- c. Dangerous items (e.g. explosives, knives, weapons, chemicals)

6.12.2 Actions

Procedures should describe actions to be taken if items of concern are discovered during a search. These actions may include:

- a. Response to discovery of dangerous chemicals or explosives (e.g. Confirm / Clear / Cordon / Control / Check)
- b. Securing the area whilst discovery dealt with
- c. Storage of items discovered
- d. Handling of evidence
- e. Recording information about the find (What / Where / When / Why /Who)
- f. How to return items or give information to individuals about the procedures applicable to them

Note that detention of individuals is not normally permitted and that this could potentially lead to claims of false imprisonment.

6.13 Record Keeping

Records should be kept of search activities and also of non-search related incidents that affect searchers. Procedures should describe the method of keeping records, what information is to be recorded and who is responsible for the record keeping.

Records should be made in a timely manner.

Records may be kept in electronic, paper or other suitable form. At the earliest opportunity records should be protected against loss and damage.

Where appropriate, by agreement with the customer and described in procedures, records should be protected to maintain confidentiality. Procedures should describe how this is to be achieved, who has access to the records and how other interested parties may make requests for information from the records.

Records should be kept for a period that satisfies the prevailing statute of limitations.

Records should also be made of training provided to searchers and the time and date of any changes to procedures.

7 Searching of Individuals

7.1 Introduction (Informative)

The circumstances under which individuals are expected to be searched vary considerably. Typically searches are conducted to:

- a. Find security threats (e.g. by individuals entering a restricted area such as an airport departure area)
- b. Prevent movement of forbidden items (e.g. smuggling or taking of banned goods into a prison)
- c. Prevent theft (e.g. shoplifters, thieves amongst factory workers)
- d. Locate items for which possession is a criminal offence (e.g. drugs).

In some cases a search may be conducted for more than one reason. Searches are often conducted at a boundary or perimeter but may happen within a defined area.

7.2 Identify Individuals to Be Searched

Procedures should define the principles under which an individual is searched. The principles chosen should not be discriminatory. Consideration should be given to the following criteria:

- a. Individuals entering a defined area
- b. Individuals leaving a defined area
- c. Individuals within a defined area
- d. Search of all individuals
- e. Search of all individuals carrying bags or wearing clothing that could hide items of concern
- f. Search of individuals chosen on a random basis preferably where the decision making is not controlled by the searcher (e.g. using a random search selector). The proportion of individuals searched may vary according to the perceived threat.
- g. Search of individuals not in possession of clearance (e.g. a card giving identification as an employee of an organization)
- h. Search of individuals where there is suspicion (e.g. following indications from sniffer dogs)

Where the search is to be conducted on individuals entering an area their authorisation to enter the area should be verified prior to the search to avoid unnecessary searching.

7.3 Communication Difficulties

Communication difficulties may be the result of an inability to speak a common language, disability or other misunderstanding. Searchers should receive training in interpersonal skills, how to recognise and manage communication difficulties.

Preparations should be made to overcome foreseeable communication difficulties (e.g. use of pictorial representation to avoid language restrictions).

When instances of communication difficulty occur that have not been previously encountered these should be reported to enable improvement in training, updating of preparation and procedures.

7.4 Request Individuals Declare Items Before Search

Individuals about to be searched should be requested to declare in advance anything relevant to the search such as:

- a. Unauthorized Items
- b. Dangerous Items (to the searcher, the individual or other)
- c. Factors or items that will affect the search (e.g. by causing false readings on equipment)
- d. Factors that will be injurious to the individual during the search (e.g. equipment might affect pacemakers, medical conditions, embarrassing situations requiring privacy).

7.5 Respect for Individuals Being Searched

7.5.1 General

Individuals being searched should be treated with respect.

Where an alternative action may be taken by the individual that removes the need for the search or changes the method or nature of the search the individual should be advised of this and be allowed to take such actions.

To ensure respect is given at all times consideration should be given to the following:

- a. Precautions about additional needs (e.g. medical conditions)
- b. Facilities to prevent discrimination
- c. Searching of children
- d. Dealing with uncooperative individuals
- e. Advising individuals about the search – answering questions
- f. Advising individuals of their rights
- g. Confirmation that individuals understand the search process
- h. Respect of individuals
- i. Respect for privacy and confidentiality
- j. Respect for differing cultural expectations
- k. Respect for religious sensitivities
- l. Distance from other persons
- m. Information to be given to individuals following search.

7.5.2 Possibility of Claims against Responsible Persons

Procedures should be carefully developed to avoid possible claims against the employer. Searchers should be aware that their actions might result in claims of harassment or violence.

Whilst in many cases claims may be prevented by the searches being conducted in public with potential witnesses this should not be relied on. If procedures call for witnesses to be present then it may be necessary to ensure that independent witnesses are in the area. The conducting of searches in public places may be in contradiction to other recommendations.

Individuals should be encouraged to assist the process so as to reduce the need for physical contact. Parents or guardians and carers should be encouraged to assist children and persons with disabilities during their search.

It may be appropriate to use CCTV surveillance recording of the search as evidence of the way the individual was treated. CCTV surveillance may be provided using vehicle mounted or other portable camera systems for temporary search locations (e.g. at events). Body worn video cameras may be used when appropriate. Appropriate signage should indicate when recordings are possible. When video recording is used the individual should be aware of this and confirm that they understand how it is being used.

It is recommended that searching of individuals is not carried out by searchers working alone although team workers need not be searchers nor employed by the same organization (or employer). CCTV may be used in lieu of team working in some circumstances. For this purpose live CCTV images could be additionally monitored at a location away from the search or the search could be monitored by sight from an observation point.

The use of searches involving physical contact may be required in appropriate circumstances but should be subject to careful consideration and should only be conducted by searchers of the same gender as the individual following specific training.

NOTE: Your attention is drawn to the "Surveillance Camera Code of Practice" issued by the Surveillance Camera Commissioner and the code of practice ("In the picture: A data protection code of practice for surveillance cameras and personal information") issued by the Information Commissioner's Office. One or both of these may apply depending on the circumstances of the use of CCTV.

7.6 Search Technique

Consideration should be given to which search techniques are reasonable and appropriate and the searcher should choose from those given in employer procedures according to the circumstances.

Search techniques may include:

- a. Sniffer dogs
- b. Use of fixed electronic equipment (metal detectors, detection arches, full body scanners)
- c. Search using hand-held electronic devices (e.g. wands).

In some situations, following further assessment of the risks and implications and when reasonable and proportionate, it may be appropriate to use other methods.

The use of each technique will be limited by circumstances and must always be carried out by appropriately trained personnel.

The choice of technique should be made without discrimination against the individual but should include consideration of the gender of the individual and cultural and religious sensitivities.

7.7 Location of Search

Consideration should be given by the organization and the customer (or employer in the case of in-house searching) as to the locations where searches should be conducted. In some cases it may be necessary for the individual to go to a different location to perform the search. The procedures should advise the searcher about conditions where it is appropriate for the individual to request that a search be carried out in a different location or when the searcher may decide on the use of a different location. Inconvenience to the individual will be reduced when the search is carried out close to the first point of contact.

Consideration should be given to the use and location of CCTV cameras to record search procedures or ensuring that witnesses are present.

When searches are conducted at fixed points (e.g. entry to or exit from a building) consideration should be given to the provision of adjacent facilities to conduct searches in private or within a secure location.

7.8 Dealing with Unauthorized Individuals

Consideration should be given to the need to manage individuals following discovery of items of concern during a search and those individuals who refuse to submit to a search.

The required actions to be taken by searchers in these events should be clearly defined to avoid confusion, delay or liability on the part of the searcher or the organization/employer.

Methods by which individuals are to be prevented from entering an area, or expelled from an area should be described in procedures. Note that detention of individuals is not normally permitted and that this could potentially lead to claims of false imprisonment.

7.9 Searching of Bags

Searching of luggage, bags, packages, etc in the possession of an individual might be searched during the search of the individual or may constitute the whole of the search (for example if the items the search is intended to find cannot be hidden about the person).

Those whose bags are being searched may consider the search to be invasive. Such searches may lead to revealing of personal information or belongings. Consideration should be given to the degree of privacy afforded.

Consideration should be given to the method of bag searches. Example methods include:

- a. Electronic equipment
- b. The searcher, searching by hand
- c. Removal of the contents to enable visual inspection.

The individual should be asked to assist with the search (e.g. by removing some or all of the contents). Searchers should consider the risks of manually probing bags and should limit searching by hand to situations when they can see what is being handled.

The technique chosen should be appropriate to the situation and level of threat. Considerations of safety, respect, confidentiality and privacy applicable to search of the individual should apply to the searching of their possessions.

Consideration should be given to the use and location of CCTV surveillance cameras to record search procedures or ensuring that witnesses are present.

8 Searching of Areas

8.1 General

This section gives recommendations for the searching of areas. Areas may include industrial or utility locations and buildings.

The recommendations here may also be applied, when appropriate, to the searching of buildings in combination with the recommendations given in section 9.

The boundary of the search area and any parts of that area which are not to be covered by the search should be defined clearly before the search begins.

The target of the search should be clearly defined together with a definition of when the search is considered complete (see 6.7).

Consideration should be given to the safety of searchers and others during an area search.

When necessary, consideration should be given to the securing of the area during search to prevent entry to and/or leaving the area. Other persons entering the area may invalidate the search by interfering with the search or moving the target to a previously searched part of the area.

Consideration should be given to whether mandatory requirements or legislation affect the ability to perform a search or the way in which a search is conducted. Some areas may include dangerous operational areas (e.g. vehicle movements).

The customer (or employer of in-house searchers) may wish searchers to take into account other factors. For example they may not wish a search to interfere with operations or affect business effectiveness. This could imply a need to negotiate with the customer (or other managers) with regard to the search (e.g. the time of the search or if urgent the ceasing of operations).

8.2 Protection of Search Area

Searchers should ensure that they have authorisation to enter the search area before doing so.

Respect should be shown for property within the area being searched and also for the privacy and confidentiality of those associated with the area. Information incidentally gathered by searchers during the course of the search should not be divulged to others without permission.

Searchers should take care to minimise damage to the area. Precautions should be taken to avoid impact to the environment, wildlife, livestock, flora and cultural heritage within the area. Security and safety measures within the area should not be affected as a result of the search (e.g. gates and barriers opened during the search should be closed).

8.3 Application of procedures

An assessment, including risk assessment, should be made prior to the conducting of the search. The level of detail applied to this assessment should be greater when more time is available for planning. On the basis of the assessment applicable procedures should be chosen.

The organization should agree with the customer the nature of the search and the methods to be used.

When the target of the search can be anticipated then the assessment should take this into account.

Information available before the search begins should include an estimate of the time taken to complete the search. This should be used to predict the onset of night and measures that should be taken to mitigate problems this may introduce.

Instructions given to searchers that are not part of standard organizational procedures should be recorded.

8.4 Choice of Technique

The assessment of the area should be used to determine the appropriate techniques, equipment and order of searching. Consideration should also be given to the resources available, in particular the number of searchers.

Consideration should also be given to factors hindering the ability to search areas such as lack of light, poor weather, outside influences (e.g. people expected to enter the area), water (tidal or flooding), etc.

Consideration should be given to:

- a. Traffic safety (e.g. when vehicle movement is delayed)
- b. Safety issues and public dissatisfaction caused by delays in entering, re-entering or leaving an area being searched
- c. Effect on scheduled events and transport disruption
- d. Financial impact on the customer and associated activities
- e. Presence of children and disabled persons.

8.5 Particular threats to be considered

8.5.1 General

This clause should also be applied to the searching of buildings.

Threats should be considered during the risk assessment that could reduce the safety of searchers.

Consideration should be given to the need for searchers to operate in pairs or teams and, according to the threat, a recommended minimum or maximum distance of separation and remaining within line of sight. Consideration should also be given to the benefits of mixed gender search teams.

8.5.2 Environmental dangers

Searchers should wear personal protective equipment (PPE) to protect against dangers that may be anticipated in the area or building. Such dangers may include:

- a. Chemicals
- b. Extreme temperatures
- c. Falls (e.g. by use of safety harnesses).

Searchers should take care and include consideration during risk assessments for working at height or in confined spaces.

8.5.3 Threats from criminals, terrorists, single issue activists and animals

When it may be anticipated that searchers are at potential threat of violence from criminals or danger from animals, precautions should be taken to reduce the likelihood and impact of this. For example searchers should be conscious of the need not to be isolated in locations with only one point of exit or may need protective clothing or devices.

Consideration should be given to searchers being accompanied by security officers or specialist personnel (e.g. medical staff, bomb disposal experts) with training or experience to counter the potential threat.

9 Searching of Buildings

9.1 General

Recommendations applicable to search of areas should be followed together with the additional requirements given here.

9.2 Other Considerations

Consideration should be given to whether mandatory requirements or legislation affect the ability to perform a search or the way in which a search is conducted. Some buildings may include dangerous operational areas (including vehicle movements).

Consideration should be given to the effect that a search may have on business operations in the building or the effect of such operations on the ability to perform the search. The time at which a search is conducted may have a bearing on this.

Searchers should take care and include consideration during risk assessments for:

- a. Working at height
- b. Working in confined spaces
- c. Environmental dangers (e.g. asbestos, sources of heat, power, electricity).

9.3 Emergency procedures and evacuation

Searching of buildings should not start without a satisfactory arrangement for monitoring for emergency situations, including fire. The reason why the search is being conducted should be a contributory factor to the assessment of when the arrangements are satisfactory (e.g. searching for explosives would indicate the need for better precautions). The content, use and type of building should also be considered.

A risk assessment should determine the need for part of the search team to remain outside the building and the necessary methods of communication between searchers and those outside.

There should be an appropriate method for raising the alarm such that persons within the building can be alerted.

A responsible person at the search site should be aware of the information needed to obtain emergency response (e.g. location details).

At all times whilst within the building searchers should be aware of the route for evacuation. The assembly point and any secondary assembly points for the evacuation process should be identified and/or determined prior to the search and all persons should be made aware of this. Care should be taken to avoid problems if an assembly point is shared with other businesses or groups.

10 Searching of Vehicles

10.1 General

This section gives recommendations for the searching of vehicles including cars, commercial vehicles, trailers, caravans, motorcycles.

The recommendations may also be applied to searching of trains as appropriate. Whilst some aspects of this Code of Practice can be employed with other types of vehicle the searching of aircraft and ships are not specifically covered.

Searching of vehicles is typically carried out:

- a. At the point of entry to a facility to prevent items from being carried in (e.g. a port, prison, embassy)
- b. Exit from a facility to prevent smuggling or theft.

In some circumstances searching might be conducted:

- a. At a temporary location on a road for specific and unusual purposes
- b. Of stationary vehicles (e.g. looking for suspicious items or evidence in a cordoned off area).

If necessary the drivers and passengers in a vehicle may need to be searched as individuals (see 7).

Consideration should be given to the privacy of vehicle drivers and passengers during a search.

10.2 Safety

When it may be expected that vehicles might contain explosives or dangerous chemicals searchers should avoid making contact with the vehicle.

Note: *It may be expected that vehicles could be rigged to explode when contact is made.*

10.3 Vehicle checkpoints

Drivers approaching a checkpoint should be warned using prominent signs that a search is possible or mandatory. When queues are likely, signs explaining that delays may be caused by searches should be placed on the route of the queue.

Care should be taken to avoid queues of traffic blocking public highways, causing safety problems or hindering the passage of emergency vehicles. Contingency plans should exist to avoid such problems (e.g. reducing the level of search, increasing resource, closing the entrance).

The customer (or employer of in-house searchers) may wish searchers to take into account other factors. For example they may not wish a search to interfere with operations or affect business effectiveness. Searches should be in accordance with the prevailing operational requirements in that area.

When vehicles may be expected to be stationary in a queue, signs advising drivers to turn off engines are recommended.

When checks are not to be carried out on all vehicles then, as far as is possible, vehicles being searched should be sorted into a separate queue or moved to a designated search location to avoid queues.

10.4 Identify Vehicles to Be Searched

Procedures should define the principles under which a vehicle is searched. The principles chosen should not be discriminatory. Consideration should be given to the following criteria:

- a. Vehicles entering a defined area
- b. Vehicles leaving a defined area
- c. Vehicles within a defined area
- d. Search of all vehicles
- e. Search of all vehicles that could hide items of concern
- f. Search of vehicles chosen on a random basis preferably where the decision making is not controlled by the searcher (e.g. use of a random search selector). The proportion of vehicles searched may vary according to the perceived threat.
- g. Search of vehicles when the driver or a passenger is not in possession of clearance (e.g. a card giving identification as an employee of an organization)
- h. Search of vehicles where there is suspicion.

Where the search is to be conducted of vehicles entering an area the authorisation of the driver to enter the area with the vehicle should be verified prior to the search to avoid unnecessary searching.

10.5 Drivers and Passengers

10.5.1 Search of Drivers and Passengers

If necessary the drivers and passengers in a vehicle may need to be searched as individuals (see 7). In these cases the individuals should be asked to leave the vehicle and the search conducted in a suitable and safe location.

10.5.2 Dealing with Drivers and Passengers

Before the search of the vehicle begins drivers and passengers should be informed about the search. The following clauses relating to individuals should be applied in respect of drivers and passengers:

- a. Clause 7.3 Communication Difficulties
- b. Clause 7.4 Request Individuals Declare Items Before Search.

Drivers and passengers should be treated with respect.

Where an alternative action may be taken by the vehicle occupants that removes the need for the search or changes the method or nature of the search the driver should be advised of this and be allowed to take such actions.

To ensure respect is given at all times consideration should be given to the following:

- a. Precautions about additional needs (e.g. disabled drivers)
- b. Prevention of discrimination or harassment
- c. If the vehicle has child or elderly occupants
- d. Dealing with uncooperative drivers and passengers
- e. Advising drivers about the search – answering questions
- f. Advise drivers and passengers of their rights
- g. Confirm drivers and passengers understand the procedures
- h. Respect of drivers and passengers including consideration of gender, culture and religious sensitivities.
- i. Respect for privacy and confidentiality (e.g. regarding vehicle contents, destination and origin of the vehicle)
- j. Distance from other persons
- k. Information to be given to drivers following search.

The need to conduct a search and the thoroughness of the search together with recording of the search may require the searcher to ask and/or record information about the driver or vehicle. Consideration should be given to the method of obtaining and recording the information (e.g. the driver might complete a questionnaire, the searcher could use an electronic device).

Such information may include:

- a. Purpose of visit / travel
- b. Whether the driver or passenger is the vehicle owner
- c. Whether the passengers are known to the driver
- d. Whether the vehicle is carrying anything of concern.

10.6 Search Technique

Organization procedures, agreed with the customer, or employer procedures (in the case of in-house search provision) should describe the techniques available to searchers. The techniques used may vary according to the level of threat.

Searchers should choose the most appropriate technique or combination of techniques taking into account the circumstances.

Consideration should be given to the use and location of CCTV surveillance to record the search of vehicles and treatment of drivers and passengers. In some cases ensuring the presence of witnesses may be of benefit.

Possible search techniques include:

- a. Search under and around vehicle (e.g. use of a mirror trolley)
- b. Searching of interior, luggage or cargo space
- c. Searching of engine compartment
- d. Checking of fuel
- e. Checking for hidden storage.

Procedures should describe what action is to be taken regarding vehicles found to have items of concern.

11. Search with Dogs

Care should be exercised when using detection dogs and their use should be in accordance with BS 8517-2.

The use of dogs for searching is appropriate for searching for drugs, explosives and other pre-determined items and should be included as a technique only after consideration of the benefits and following a risk assessment. The risk assessment should include consideration of:

- a. Whether the search is of individuals (where dogs may be used for initial search selection)
- b. Whether the search is of vehicles, areas or buildings
- c. Threats to the dog, handler and other searchers
- d. Relationship with other persons in the search area
- e. Impact on the environment
- f. Impact on possible crime scene (e.g. affecting evidence)
- g. The suitability of the target.

Annex A – Informative - BS 7499 excerpts

A.1 General

This Code of Practice includes reference to clauses within BS 7499 “Static site guarding and mobile patrol service – Code of Practice”. In many but not all cases BS 7499 will be applicable to the provision of searchers. For the benefit of employers of searchers to which BS 7499 is not applicable and as a convenience to others this annex includes excerpts and summaries of the content that is referenced in this Code.

References to clause numbers given here refer to BS 7499: 2013.

A.2 Finances – Clause 4.2

Refer to 4.3 of this Code. The term organization used in BS 7499 is synonymous with that of this code (see 3.1).

Summary of content of BS 7499:

- a. The organization’s working capital should be sufficient.
- b. The organization’s capital reserves should be sufficient for current and planned needs.
- c. The organization should be able to present two years’ audited trading accounts.

***NOTE:** Exceptions are permitted if the organization is starting as a subsidiary of an established business or in the case of a new start up business but evidence of financial viability is still required.*

- d. The organization should prepare annual accounts, certified by an accountant or solicitor and available for examination on request.

A.3 Insurance – Clause 4.3

Refer to 4.3 of this Code. The term organization used in BS 7499 is synonymous with that of this code (see 3.1).

Summary of content of BS 7499:

- The organization should possess insurance cover commensurate with the business undertaken and the number of persons employed
- Fidelity guarantee should be available up to limits required by the customer.

A.4 Selection and screening – Clause 5.3.2

Refer to 5.1.1 of this Code.

Excerpt of content of BS 7499:

All persons undertaking, or having access to details of, security duties, should be selected and screened in accordance with BS 7858.

If employees are acquired through a takeover, the employer should satisfy itself that the recommendations of this subclause have been fully met.

Prospective employees should be asked to demonstrate good reading, writing and verbal communication abilities.

Where night-time working is involved, prospective employees should be asked to confirm that there is nothing in their circumstances that would be detrimental to their working night shifts. Night-time workers should be offered the opportunity of a free medical assessment.

NOTE: Attention is drawn to the Working Time Regulation 2003.

Employers should validate the employee's driving license against their policy for those employees whose duties involve driving.

The employer should hold on file a validated copy of the employee's driving licence. The employer should check the employee's driving licence or carry out a DVLA license check on the employee every six months.

A.5 Terms and conditions of employment – Clause 5.3.4

Refer to 4.5.2 of this Code.

Excerpt of content of BS 7499:

Employees should be sent a written statement of the terms and conditions of their employment that include details of the following:

- a. Job title
- b. Effective start date
- c. Probationary period (if required)
- d. Provisional period subject to screening (if applicable)
- e. Pay and allowances
- f. Hours and days of work
- g. Leave entitlement
- h. Conditions of payment during absence through illness
- i. Pension entitlement
- j. Industrial injury procedures
- k. The address of the organization
- l. Equipment supplied
- m. Disciplinary and appeals procedures
- n. Terms of notice of termination of employment.

Employees should not be required to work hours that could be detrimental to their health, safety or efficiency.

NOTE: Attention is drawn to statutory requirements relating to employment, and in particular, to requirements relating to working hours.

A.6 Disciplinary code – Clause 5.3.5

Refer to 4.5.2 of this Code. In this clause the term organization used in BS 7499 is synonymous with "employer" in this code (see 3.1).

NOTE: The text used in the summary below has revised terminology to match that of this code (e.g. if a searcher is employed by a retail outlet then the term customer is not applicable, a customer is somebody retaining the searching services of an organization).

Summary of content of BS 7499:

A list is given of a number of actions that employees doing or aiding and abetting others to do would could constitute a breach of their terms and conditions of employment. This list includes:

- a. Neglecting, without sufficient cause, to complete a required work task promptly and diligently
- b. Leaving, without sufficient cause, a place of work without permission
- c. Making or signing any false statements
- d. Destroying, altering or erasing documents, records or electronic data without permission or through negligence
- e. Divulging matters confidential to their employer or customer, either past or present, without permission
- f. Soliciting or receipt of gratuities or other consideration from any person
- g. Failing to account for keys, money or property received in connection with their employment
- h. Incivility to persons encountered in the course of duties
- i. Misuse of authority in connection with their employment
- j. Conduct in a manner likely to bring discredit to their employer, customers of an organization, or fellow employee
- k. Use of uniform, equipment or identification without permission
- l. Being under the influence of alcohol or restricted drugs, or use of these, whilst on duty
- m. Failure to notify their employer immediately of any: conviction for a criminal and/or motoring offence; indictment for any offence; police caution; legal summons; refusal, suspension or revoking of a licence (e.g. a Security Industry Authority (SIA) Licence)
- n. Permitting unauthorized access to a customer's premises
- o. Carrying of equipment not issued as essential to an employee's duties
- p. Use of an employer's or customer's equipment or facilities without permission
- q. Not maintaining agreed standards of appearance and deportment whilst at work.

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