

SELECTING ELECTRONIC SECURITY SYSTEMS

An introduction

Jim Westlake

This Information Paper provides an introduction to selecting and procuring electronic security systems and is designed to aid security and facility managers of all types of buildings and premises. Areas covered are intruder alarms, automatic access control systems, closed circuit television (CCTV), integrated systems, remote monitoring, maintenance and false alarms, and product and service verification. Areas of interest and appropriate standards for various equipment types are described. This Information Paper also indicates some areas of concern and gives an overview of organisations that provide oversight of installers and equipments.

SUMMARY

Today, purchasers of electronic security systems can choose from a huge variety of products, suppliers and technologies. Reading the many claims made in promotional literature, one could be forgiven for thinking that the use of almost any device or service would be the solution to all of the security problems imaginable, but experience tells a different story. How then is the selection of complex and expensive equipment or services to be made? This guide is intended to introduce non-specialists responsible for electronic security systems to issues they may encounter and to give basic information on the subject.

The first and most important step is to know what is needed. Without a clear understanding of the site or asset to be protected, there is little chance that the product or service supplied will actually provide the level of protection needed. The investment of time in carrying out a thorough risk assessment will more than pay for itself later. By working through the risk assessment the issues will be clarified, and as a result a better understanding



Figure 1: Intruder alarm external sounder

of the security problems faced will be gained. This risk assessment is the starting point for the selection of any security product or service, including physical security and manned services as well as electronic services. A useful tool is provided in the forthcoming BRE publication *Security assessment of commercial and industrial premises*^[1], which provides guidance on carrying out a risk assessment.

INTRUDER ALARMS

In the UK, any intruder alarm that automatically generates a signal to summon the police must be installed and maintained by a company registered by an inspectorate



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