



# Buyers Guide

## Intruder Alarm System

Your guide to the procurement of an Intruder alarm for your premises



## *Welcome to this, our essential buyers' guide*

Thank you for reading this Lifeline essential buyers guide to Intruder Alarms.

We know from our experience that choosing the correct Intruder Alarm for your home or organisation can be a challenge. There are so many choices, including DIY options. In addition to selecting which type of system you require and choosing a reliable company to deliver it.



With the right guidance, coupled with a reliable competent company that provides excellent service, the whole process can be made a lot easier and less time consuming than you might think.

**For these reasons we have created this FREE Buyers Guide.**

This guide includes the best advice we can offer and help you to gain the essential knowledge required in order to choose the right system and the right company. This guide has been created with the benefit of many years of experience and valuable alarms and security industry knowledge. It contains up to date information helping you make your own independent educated choice. We hope that this will help you avoid any expensive mistakes, saving you time and money. At Lifeline Fire and Security we want to make sure you can take your next steps with confidence and ask the right questions. Should you have any additional questions, or require specific guidance in any area of fire safety or security please call our friendly team **01983 521621** or email us at [info@lifeline-security.co.uk](mailto:info@lifeline-security.co.uk) and we will be happy to help you.

## Where to start?

If you are considering having an Intruder Alarm installed to protect your home or business premises, we thought you would like to know how to choose a system and a reliable provider.

There are a number of influencing factors to consider, so in order to help you make the right choice, following are a few things you might want to consider:

1. What do I want out of an Intruder Alarm?
2. What type of system do I need?
3. What influences the type of system I need?
4. Do I have to comply with any British Standards and regulations?
5. How do I choose the best company?
6. What do I need to do once the system is fitted?



It is important to keep in mind that the Intruder Alarm is not the only solution to your security requirements, but should form part of a layer of an overall security solution.

In this comprehensive guide we will show you:

- How to identify which system you require
- Obtaining the correct quote
- The importance of choosing the right company
- The importance of proving competence
- The different types of Intruder Alarms available
- The required British and European Standards
- Documentation and certification requirements
- Your responsibilities
- Maintenance information
- The importance of warranties for your new system
- Why ongoing support is vital

## *What you can do.*

Determine the reason you need an Intruder Alarm System. This might be an insurance requirement. Maybe your home or business is in a higher risk area, or is a holiday home and only occupied periodically, or simply your type of business means you are at greater risk of intrusion or break in, such as attractive stock.

In addition to this, consider factors unique to your situation such as access to your building. Housekeeping and security lighting should all be taken into account when considering installing an intruder alarm system. Think too, about the areas that require protection, who will operate the alarm and at what times. This will help in making sure you get the correct system installed suited to your individual needs.

You might want to assess your property yourself initially and identify any potential vulnerable entry points or weaknesses and any specific areas you want to have protected. This will help to identify where detection devices should be sited so as to provide the best protection. Make sure you have your site surveyed professionally by an Intruder Alarm Systems expert. They will consider your individual requirements, produce and submit a plan of exactly how your Intruder Alarm and detectors should be installed to fit your specification. They will also produce a **Risk Assessment** and submit a copy to you based on the requirements and risks of your property.

Selecting the right company to design, install and maintain your Intruder Alarm System is an extremely important decision. Selecting the right Intruder Alarm System company can make the whole process go smoothly, efficiently and with the least amount of disruption to your home or business. Making the wrong choice could mean you waste money, end up with an unreliable system, poor quality workmanship, delays and interruption to your daily routines. In addition, you might still be at risk from security breaches while you are unprotected. So, how do you decide on which company to appoint to install your Intruder Alarm System? Following are some very important considerations you should make before deciding on your choice:



## About your choice of company

Here we list a few of the things you should consider when selecting a Security Systems Provider.

### Competence & Accreditation

Every reputable security company should be able to demonstrate and prove their competence. One of the best ways to ensure you are employing a competent company is by selecting an organisation that is part of a registered inspectorate scheme such as the "National Security Inspectorate" (NSI [www.nsi.org.uk](http://www.nsi.org.uk)). NSI, under their Codes of Practice, will frequently inspect registered companies to ensure they are installing and maintaining Intruder Alarm Systems to the highest standards. In addition, compliance checks include insurance cover, quality control, financial standing, reputation, performance to codes of practice and standards. By choosing an NSI Gold installer, you can be sure of their competence, quality and reputation.

### Reputation & Testimonials

What is the reputation of the company you are going to select, ask around. Can they provide testimonials or even case studies of their work? A quality security systems company will have great feedback from their clients and will be proud to display the comments made by their customers. Ask for case studies as well of jobs that have been completed to the customers satisfaction.

### Transparency – Know who you are dealing with

It is essential to ensure the whole project is surveyed, installed and managed by the security systems company with their own security screened staff. This will ensure you receive the very best service, they own the project from start to finish. Ask if the surveyor and engineers are correctly trained in security systems engineering.

You need to know who you are dealing with as well. Who are the faces behind the names? A company that is fully transparent in their dealings will provide names and contact details of the key people in the organisation – including support staff, engineers, supervisors, managers and directors. At Lifeline we have a full team ready and waiting to assist you. Or you may visit our offices in Newport.

### Insurance Cover

Your Security Systems provider must carry sufficient insurance cover? As a minimum any responsible security systems company should have the following:

- ✓ Employers' liability – Lifeline carry £10m Employers liability cover
- ✓ Public liability – Lifeline carry £10m Public Liabilities cover.
- ✓ Efficacy – Lifeline carry £10m of efficacy and failure to perform cover.

## Warranty

What warranty period is provided and what does it include? Once your system has been fitted you want to ensure someone is there to guarantee its operation for 'at least' the next 12 months if not more. Any professional security systems company will guarantee their work for a minimum of 12 months so it is essential you ask this question. Make sure warranties include parts and labour.

## Support

What support is provided post installation? Can you summon engineering support from your security systems company at all times 365/24/7? Ensure they can respond to your system within 4 hours. Insist too on support services such as 24 hour call out, technical support and preventative maintenance.

## Quotation and Design proposal

This should be a very comprehensive document and **not just a one page** list of equipment and a price.

The quotation should also at the very least detail the type and location of the equipment to be used, the detection types and positions, the cause and effect (what it will do if it activates), the standards it will be installed to, what happens when the power goes out. This document should form the basis of everything you require and agree to. It should also be supported by a professionally raised **Security Risk Assessment**. This will detail any specific risks you have discussed, the grade of the proposed system and the solution offered as well as

datasheets of the proposed equipment.

To date, this will be one of the most important documents in the entire process, so make sure it fills you with confidence.



### WISE WORDS:

*The Hatton Garden robbers spent three years carrying out their risk assessment.*

## Types of Alarms

In this section we highlight the various types of alarms available on the market and their unique characteristics.

In the UK, intruder alarm systems are graded to determine the level of protection, the type of equipment and the risk involved. Grading starts at 1 and continues through to 4. Your insurer will normally specify which grade they require, or if you require advice on grading our consultants will advise you on the level required. The grades are based on resilience to attack and compromise, performance and design of the systems and products installed.

**Grade 1** – Very Low Risk. Intruders are expected to have little knowledge and tools to compromise the system. Normally available from DIY Stores.

Lifeline Fire and Security do not install Grade 1 Systems.

**Grade 2** – Medium Risk. Thieves are expected to have an interest as the property will have items of significant value, including Laptops, Tablets and other valuables. Therefore, intruders are expected to have limited knowledge and tools to compromise the system. Remote monitoring of the system is normally a good consideration, build quality is enforced along with design requirements such as tamper protection, battery backup, 500 event memory log.

Applications – most domestic and low risk commercial

**Grade 3** – Medium to High Risk. Thieves are expected to have a high interest as the property will have items of high

value, therefore intruders are expected to have knowledge and a full range of tools to compromise the system. Remote monitoring **must** be installed and utilise 2 paths of signalling, normally one by landline and the other by GPRS for back up. Detection devices should be able to identify if their range has been blocked or masked.

Applications – Commercial and high value properties.

**Grade 4** – High Risk. Thieves are expected to have a high interest in the property and are likely to be sophisticated in their planning of attack and theft, they would be expected to fully plan any intrusion and are expected to have sophisticated knowledge and tools to compromise the system. Similarities with grade 3 systems are in place and in addition detectors should be able to sense a reduction in range of the detector.

Applications – banks, museums, art galleries

**Most professionally installed systems will be either Grade 2 or 3 with a choice of signalling method. Specialist systems will be grade 4.**

### WIRED SYSTEMS

A wired intruder alarm system has traditionally been the most common type of system available. As well as a main control panel, additional detection is required which can take the form of door contacts, movement sensors, panic alarms, break glass sensors and many more. Wired systems can be grade 1, 2, 3 or 4.

## WIRELESS SYSTEMS

*Advanced technology, intelligently applied.*



A wireless system is similar in make up to a wired system, but detection is relayed to the control panel wirelessly. With the progress of battery and wireless technology, wireless intruder alarms are very popular. They limit disruption to premises, they are usually quicker to install and are an excellent choice as retro fits. Wireless systems can be grade 1 or 2.

*TIP: Grade 1, DIY wireless systems can be highly vulnerable to attack or hacking.*

- Buildings of historical or heritage importance
- Domestic applications
- Fully decorated properties

Of course, you also have hybrid systems, which are a combination of both wired and wireless technology. These also tend to be only grade 2.

## Signalling

This can be described as what will your system do when or if it activates, who will know about it and how.

## AUDIBLE ONLY

This is the most basic option of intruder alarm systems. If the system is triggered, an audible external alarm sounder known as a bell box sounds to alert that an intruder has entered, or is trying to enter, the premises. This type of alarm can be suited to premises in high density areas (such as housing estates) where the alarm may be responded to by others such as a neighbour. In our experience however, people are becoming more reluctant to get involved for fear of attack. Important too, is that the Police do not recognise this type of system and will not attend, unless third party verification provides proof of a crime in progress.

## SMART DEVICE ALERT

Whilst these types of systems can still be described as audible only, many now have the ability to simply add a device that can alert you on your smart device of activations, setting and

unsetting. This gives you more control over an Audible Only System. These

can be signalled using a WiFi internet connection, or a telephone line. New systems on the market will also allow you to set and unset the system remotely using your smart device.

Systems also can offer the additional facility of adding smart plugs to allow you to control various devices in your home from the same app.



## MONITORED SYSTEM



A monitored system allows for two different types of response. Either a nominated keyholder can be alerted, or the signal is sent to an ARC (Alarm Receiving Centre). This is proving to be one of the most popular types of system. Depending on the arrangement, the ARC will then either alert the keyholder or initiate a police or guard response. Police will only respond to confirmed alarms, where more than one or different types of detection has been activated. This is known as sequential confirmation. Smart Device control can be added to these systems as well, providing you with total control.

Depending on the risk and the assessed grade, a system may have a single path signalling system or dual path, using two different technologies such as telephone line and GPRS.



**PROFESSIONAL MONITORING STATIONS ARE OPERATIONAL 24 HOURS A DAY**



### **Wise Words:**

*"he who pays least ends up paying the most".*

## Components & Types of Detection



### DOOR/WINDOW CONTACTS

Contacts can be fitted to almost all types of doors or windows. Many only choose to have the doors they enter in and out of protected, but you should also consider areas where unauthorised entry is a risk. When the intruder alarm is set, the contact will signal to the control panel if the door or window is opened.



### MOVEMENT DETECTORS

These devices are one of the most commonly identified part of an alarm system. Movement sensors are installed normally within the building to identify a breach during the set period. Devices can also be added externally.

Sensors can be one of 3 types:

Standard PIR (passive infrared) sensors which monitor infrared light radiating from objects in its field of view.

Dualtech (Dual technology) sensors which measure both infrared light and microwaves. These devices are normally used in harsher environments such as garages, out houses and rooms that might be subject to extreme changes in temperature or conditions. These if set up and installed

correctly have a high immunity to false alarms and reduced call out costs.

Sequential detection devices, are devices that in effect have two detectors in one housing. They feature two non-overlapping detectors in one device.



### PANIC ALARMS

Panic alarms can be desk or wall mounted, or wireless. They can be programmed to be either silent or activate the intruder alarm system sounders. In both circumstances, pushing the panic alarm will activate the intruder alarm and trigger the agreed action, normally police response if the system is monitored.

### GLASSBREAK DETECTORS

Using acoustic microphones these detectors listen out for the frequency and sound of breaking glass. Depending on the area being covered, one or several devices might be mounted on the ceiling of the protected area.



### VIBRATION OR SHOCK DETECTORS

These devices detect shock or vibrations and can be used on both windows and doors, frames, walls, metal cladding or on objects such as

ATMs, vending machines, cabinets and safes.

## SMART DEVICES



Modern systems are now including the facility to control smart plugs and other devices through your intruder alarm. This means you can ask the system to turn lights on if it activates, or you can control devices from your smart phone.



## REMOTE KEYPADS

Keypads are normally located adjacent to the door by which you would enter and exit the property. These are the devices you will interact with on a daily basis. Depending on the size of your property, you may have multiple keypads at different entry locations. These might be at a back door, workshop entrance, bedroom or other designated entry point.



## CONTROL PANEL & EXPANSION

This is the brains of the system. This will normally be located remotely out of general view. This contains the connections to the mains supply, signalling equipment, battery backup, control board and zone expansion. It is normally only accessed by the installing or service engineer.



## SOUNDERS/STROBES

Your intruder alarm system should be linked up to a sounder device and/or strobe. These might be internal or external. Some people chose to have a decoy sounder on the outside with a live sounder on the inside. Several sounders can be linked to one intruder alarm system. A strobe can be surface mounted or be mounted within the alarm bell box housing. If fitted the external strobe gives off high intensity pulsing flashes to identify the property the alarm is emanating from.

***TIP: All systems grade 2 and above will be fitted with a tamper circuit to prevent unauthorised removal of devices. All devices will be tamper protected so undoing or removing them will create an alarm activation.***

## FOGGING

A Fogging System is a product that can be connected to your intruder alarm system. On detection of an intruder the system will activate a dense fog into the protected area making it virtually impossible to see. The fog leaves no residue, is

completely inert and disperses in time. The system however will continue to supply fog all the time it is in alarm, making theft almost impossible.



#### FOBS & REMOTES

Most new systems will be set and unset by the use of a proximity tag or a remote device. Each device is unique to the user and leaves a time and date stamp in the event log.

#### SMOKE & CO DETECTION

Many systems will now include the facility to add safety devices such as Carbon Monoxide and Smoke Detectors offering life protection. These can also be programmed to alert you both locally and remotely.



## Paying for & Running Your System

The cost of your Intruder Alarm System will depend on a number of factors such as the size of your property, the amount of control equipment and detection devices required and the type of system you choose.

Once the system is installed, you will normally have a service agreement available, which should provide you with priority access to engineers 24 hours a day, service inspections and any monitoring facilities you will have selected.

Protecting your property is important, however keeping your Intruder Alarm System in optimal working order is vital

## Standards

There are a lot of standards pertaining to Intruder Alarm Systems and how they are designed, installed and used.

The most up to date standards are:

**BS8243:2010+A1:2014** - Installation and configuration of intruder and hold up alarm systems designed to generate confirmed alarm conditions.

**EN50131-1:2006+A2:2017** – Intruder and Hold Up Alarm Systems

**BS8473:2006+A2:2013** – Intruder and Hold Up Alarm Systems – Management of False Alarms.

**PD6662:2017** – Published Document for the application of European Standards for intruder and hold up systems in the UK.

**BS9263:2016** – Intruder and Hold Up Alarm, commissioning, maintenance and remote support.

## Police & Alarms

Police response is available on intruder alarm systems of grade 2 and above. However, the police will only guarantee a response to confirmed alarm signals from systems which have been granted a police URN (unique reference number). A confirmed alarm signal is when at least two separate zones of the intruder alarm have been activated. Monitored systems can only be installed by certificated providers and must be subject to a maintenance agreement. Excessive false or unwanted alarms will jeopardise police response.

## Handover

It is essential that once the Intruder Alarm System is commissioned, that the engineer demonstrates how to use the system to the appropriate individual(s). This will include how to operate the system, good housekeeping and how to keep the system in a good state of repair. Once the system is fully complete and the installation is finished then the design, installation and commissioning certificates should be handed over to the client, together with an NSI Certificate of Installation and any warranty details.

## Service, Maintenance & 24hr Support

Ongoing service and maintenance of the system by a competent approved NSI accredited security systems company should be carried out. A monitored system should be serviced twice a year, and non-monitored systems at least annually. Good practice would see a signed service agreement in place.

Your security systems company should provide engineering support 365 days a year. Emergency contact details should be made available to provide access to engineering support. Agreements should include a call out facility with a minimum response time (the standard is 4 hours) to ensure any emergencies are responded to as soon as possible. All Intruder Alarm Systems should have a preventative maintenance visit during which tests are carried out to ensure the system operates at its optimum level of performance and any failing components are addressed before they cause any major failure.



Your installation should carry a warranty of at least 12 months. It is important to determine with your supplier that this warranty includes both labour and parts.

It is important to have any faulty components corrected or replaced as soon as possible. Just as you would do with any other investment, it is wise (mandatory in the event of police response systems) to keep your Intruder Alarm System up to date and working at its optimum level. The engineer will check sounders, mains

voltage, battery backup and charging, send test signals to the monitoring station, amend the time and date if it has drifted, replace any batteries that are low or in poor condition. These checks will also greatly reduce the risk of a part of the system not operating correctly at the time when you need it the most. A report should then be left with you or sent to you for your records, following the service inspection.

Your new Intruder Alarm System should last around 5 - 10 years, depending on its usage, before upgrades to the system will be needed. During this time things will break down and/or get damaged. There will be building changes, legislation and standard changes but if you correct these as they happen then you can be certain of a reliable and cost-effective Intruder Alarm System.

We have produced a Do's and Don'ts document that will assist you to keep and operate the system to the best of its ability. Click [here](#) to download a copy.

Ask about our 3 year Warranty Program.



## Checklist

Use this check list to see how we compare in meeting your requirements.

Question		Explanation
Are your staff all security screened to BS7858 and Police checked?		All staff are security screened to BS7858 prior to their starting at Lifeline.
How long have you been installing Security Systems?	<b>30 years</b> (circa)	Nearly 30 years. (Since 1990)
Do you have adequate resources to support my systems?		We have a dedicated operations and engineering team available 24hours a day,
Do you have a Data Protection Policy and are you compliant with GDPR?		Yes, see our website for our full privacy, data protection and data retention policies
Do you have an ISO 9001 Quality System that covers security systems?		Yes. This is rigorously implemented and independently audited at least four times throughout the year.
Do you operate from secure premises?		Yes, access controlled, covered by monitored intruder & fire alarms, fogging system and CCTV.
Do you have Chamber of Commerce Quality in Business Accreditation?		Yes. We were the first company to achieve this setting the standard for others to follow.
Do you have official manufactures support?		Yes. We officially partner with our manufacturer partners, many of whom we know personally.
Do you offer a 36month Warranty?		Yes. We are the first and currently the only island security company to offer a certificated 36 month parts and labour warranty on our installations.
Can you send me some case studies?		Check our website or call and we will send you some relevant case studies.
Do you use subcontractors?		Never! All staff are direct employees of Lifeline.
Are you NSI Gold Accredited?		Yes, the first and still the only Island based company with this the highest accreditation in the industry.
Are you Police Approved		Yes
Are you Insurance Company approved		Yes

We trust that you have found this guide useful in making a choice of Intruder Alarm Provider. Armed with this basic knowledge you should be able to select a provider and type of system that will suit your individual requirements.

This guide really covers just the basics, if you require any additional information, then please contact us on 01983 521621 or use our contact form on the [website](#), or email us at [info@lifeline-security.co.uk](mailto:info@lifeline-security.co.uk).



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**lifeline**  
alarms & security  
services



*Protecting Homes & Businesses*

Lifeline Alarm Systems Ltd is a multi-award winning Fire and Security solutions provider. Based on the Isle of Wight, Lifeline were the first and still the only NSI Gold Security Systems and BAFE SP203 Fire Systems accredited installer.

By employing an individual approach to each application, Lifeline provide bespoke solutions to meet and match specific requirements to each unique circumstance, delivering optimum system design, performance and support.

