



Acting as the voice of the **security industry**

Confederation of European Security Services



Dispatch centers/control rooms for human guard force operations



WHITE PAPER



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Introduction

In a concern to cover safety and security aspects of security personnel on duty, most security/guarding companies possess a permanently available central contact point where guards on duty can call in to report, send alerts or distress signals and where (potentially electronically or not) registration of arrival, presence, or other required signals are centralized and treated if necessary. Often these centers are called 'dispatch centers' or 'control rooms'.

Smaller guarding companies might not want to set up their own dispatch center for different reasons, mainly because of cost efficiency. They then will rely on external parties to perform this service for them.

The purpose of this document is to try to come to minimal general rules and guidelines to assure that each guard on duty – usually in the absence of his hierarchy or in emergency situations - is able to rely on centers that can professionally treat the information that comes in based on a set of minimal requirements/standards and protocols and in compliance with local legislation and/or European directives. When national legislation of a higher level applies, this takes precedence over the recommendations/requirements set out in this document.

External parties executing this service for guarding companies can for example be Monitoring & Alarm Receiving Centers.

Of absolute essence is that professional treatment implies very strongly a thorough knowledge of security as a business including the content and risks of the different guarding activities. To assure this, the centers that want to operate as 'dispatch center' for guard force operations should comply with a set of standards and requirements so as to minimally guarantee correct treatment of situations at hand and as such assure to the best knowledge the security and safety of the guards on duty on the one hand as well as the people and premises involved in the critical treatment of a particular security or safety situation on the other hand.

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President CoESS Working Committee Monitoring & Remote Surveillance

I. Scope

This document suggests and specifies the minimum requirements to assure a professional follow up of human guard force activities executed remotely by dispatch operators. It concerns the follow up of activities of static site guarding, mobile patrol and/or intervention after alarm service.

Dispatch centers/control rooms should be designed to allow the following functions, whether in combination or alone, to be performed:

- a) provision or procurement of assistance, information or advice for security guards (on static sites and mobile patrols or on intervention) and supervisors, in routine and emergency situations;
- b) effective monitoring of security guards and supervisors, by strict observance of documented, established telephone, radio or other communication procedures;
- c) recording of all appropriate routine and emergency matters, to enable management to deal quickly and efficiently with contractual responsibilities;
- d) recording the movement of customers' keys held in the dispatch center/control room.

Dispatch centers/control rooms should be restricted areas open only to authorized personnel.

Where dispatch center/control room functions are outsourced, the organization should be provided with documentation that the dispatch center/control room conforms to all requirements stated in this document before starting the operations.

II. References

EN 50518 on 'Monitoring and Alarm Receiving Centers'.

III. Building infrastructure

All parts of the shell of a dispatch center/control room should be soundly constructed to ensure physical security, safety and integrity, for the protection of employees and the safeguarding of customers' records and property.

Attention has to be drawn to relevant building regulations, fire regulations, health and safety legislation and working regulations.

IV. Organisation

In order to achieve objectives in the legal entity providing dispatch center/control room services, the organization shall ensure the implementation of a management system for example along the principles of EN ISO 9001 which covers all requirements of this standard.

This includes amongst others:

- a) establishing of the vision, setting objectives, providing direction and manage the risks of their organization by defining written strategies which take into consideration the needs and expectations of all relevant stakeholders;

- b) implementing an ongoing monitoring of the business environment as well as of the organizational performance (including a complaints management system);
- c) establishing an ongoing communication with all stakeholders to maintain a high level of awareness in relation to the safety and security oriented services provided.

The organization should possess a clearly defined management structure showing control and accountability at each level of operation. It should also possess a risk and contingency management, covering aspects of resilience, business continuity & disaster recovery with a comprehensive risk analysis.

V. Procedures

Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's) shall be established and made available to all staff as required by their function. Where KPI's are required to measure SOP execution and quality levels they shall be identified together with the method of measurement.

SOP's shall clearly indicate the stages at which an incident should be reported by the operator to more senior personnel.

The SOP's should outline the action to be taken on receipt of incident reports, and methods of recording incidents. Records of incidents should be provided including for example the following (manually and/or automatically registered):

- a) the date, time and location of the incident with serial number;
- b) the date and time of reporting, who reported and who received the report;
- c) details of the incident;
- d) action taken, including onward reporting;
- e) action to be taken;
- f) names and addresses of persons who witnessed the incident.

Check calls from security guards should be received and recorded at the dispatch center/control room at intervals specified in their assignment instructions. The dispatch center/control room SOP's should detail the procedures to follow and actions to be taken in the event of a late and missed check call. The frequency of check calls should be determined following a health and safety risk assessment, and should take into account the number of security officers on duty according to a specific assignment.

Operators can be helped by technological tools and automated systems in the execution of their tasks. Procedures for daily verification that automated systems are working should be detailed in the dispatch center/control room manual and verifications should be documented.

Note : where non-human systems are used in the field (ex. drones, robots,...) additional SOP's might be required.

It is recommended that the operator should have immediate access to the following:

- a) all relevant assignment instructions;
- b) details of hours of cover for all assignments with the number of security guards, the number of contracted visits, and site telephone numbers;

- c) a means of displaying the names of security guards working at each assignment during shifts;
- d) the names, addresses and telephone numbers of all security guards including supervisors and principals of the organization;
- e) emergency contact records (including telephone numbers) for all customers;
- f) telephone numbers of police stations within the operational area of the control room;
- g) useful telephone numbers (e.g. fire brigades, water companies, electricity companies, ...);
- h) a copy of the dispatch center/control room SOP's;
- i) emergency procedures and contingency plans in case of fire, flood or bomb threat, etc., for the dispatch center/control room and other premises;
- j) a register of keys that are held in the control room (if applicable).

Records of all reported incidents shall be kept for a minimum of 3 months from the date of the event or according to national regulations. Entries should be numbered serially and should include the time and date of the incident and the name of the controller completing the record. Records of all telephone and radio calls from security guards and supervisors or other relevant persons shall also be kept for a minimum of 3 months or according to national regulations.

VI. Technical equipment

Dispatch centre/control room must be able to follow up and log standard communication coming from the operations (call on and call off, etc) and react upon it.

Dispatch centre/control room must be able to receive alert or communication signals coming from the equipment of the security guard (man down signal, silent alert, localization system, etc). It must have the communication means to instruct security guards and to give them the necessary information they need (via telephone, smartphone etc)

Dispatch centre/control room must be equipped to follow up the activities of the mobile guards and the intervention guards if this activity is exercised.

Dispatch centre/control room must be able to immediately alert the Law Enforcement Agencies in an efficient way. In the event of a dispatch center/control room being put entirely out of action, there shall be an emergency SOP for dealing with this situation (transfer of the services to another location equipped at least according to the same minimal requirements, information to clients and partners).

Data storage should be kept within the European space in accordance with the existing regulation & legislation.

VII. Personnel

The number of operators on duty should be consistent with the expected workload.

Permanent availability shall be assured (24/7 or for the duration of operations), and it is recommended to have the presence of minimum 2 operators. Alternatively, one operator can perform the services but with guaranteed back up and follow up coming from a second location having the same qualifications.

All persons undertaking, or having access to details of, security duties, should be selected correctly screened and vetted according to minimal security standards.

VIII. Training

Basic job training should be provided for all employees engaged in security duties, whether full-time or part-time, including seasonal and casual employees.

Basic job training should be provided prior to commencement of operational duties. Training should be provided by competent, qualified training persons, in a room that is suitable for the purpose of training.

Training shall last a number of necessary hours (often according to national legislation) and should include all necessary on the job-elements that relate to the specific role of operator to be undertaken, for example:

- a) outline of dispatch center/control room operations;
- b) detailed explanation of duties;
- c) radio and telephone procedures as well as emergency procedures;
- d) recording procedures and location and use of records;
- e) explanation of security guards' rosters.

It could be recommended that operators have basic security guard qualifications through training or training and experience. If no experience is at hand, the training should include an introduction to the security industry roles and responsibilities of security guards (including retail duties if applicable);

- a) the law;
- b) patrolling and intervention after alarm (if applicable);
- c) access control;
- d) searching;
- e) security and emergency systems;
- f) fire safety;
- g) emergencies;
- h) health and safety at work;
- i) customer care and social skills;
- j) communications and reporting;
- k) equality and diversity;
- l) communication skills and conflict management.

When the training period is complete, the trainee should take a written examination that meets the minimum core competency as set by a recognized body within the country or by national legislation.

It is recommended to have refresher courses at regular moments.

The employer shall carry out a gap analysis for security personnel holding another license for a security activity. Any training identified by the gap analysis should be provided.



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