

Securing Vacant Building Sites

Guidance in Response to COVID 19 Operational Restrictions



Irish Security
Industry Association



The recent government announcement on further social restrictions has seen the closure of all but essential building sites. Vacant sites may attract unwanted activity, such as anti-social behaviour, theft or damage to valuable equipment and materials. The Irish Security Industry Association (ISIA) has compiled some guidance for consideration to minimise security risks at vacant sites.

Securing the Perimeter

Fencing should be installed around the full perimeter of the site. Palisade fencing should be considered. If fencing is already in place the fencing should be assessed to ensure that it has not been damaged and is fit for purpose. A trench or ditch may be dug around the perimeter to ensure maximum security. Regular patrols and inspection of the site should be carried out. Ensure that all vehicular and pedestrian entrances to the site are securely locked to deter entry to the site when not operational.

Monitored CCTV

Monitored CCTV is an extremely effective way of ensuring the security of the site. To maximise the effectiveness of an electronic security system it should be remotely monitored by a monitoring station. If there is a breach of the site, the monitoring station will then be notified. This will allow them to generate a suitable response to the breach. Fast deploy, mobile systems are available which can operate independently of site power and which are remotely monitored via GPRS. These may be suitable for temporarily vacant sites. All Electronic security systems (Intruder Alarms & CCTV) must only be installed and maintained by a Private Security Authority (PSA) licensed security installer.

Lighting

Lighting is an important security tool and may deter trespassers and reinforce the security of the site.

Signage

Signage is a low cost and extremely effective way of keeping a site secure and deterring potential trespassers. Signage that should be considered includes signs that notify potential trespassers that the property is privately owned and that trespassers will be prosecuted. Where CCTV is in use signage must be in place to comply with the requirements of GDPR. When applicable, community alert and neighbourhood watch signs may be of benefit, alerting potential trespassers to the fact that this site is part of an active community. Implementing signage puts a positive personality on the site.

Securing Plant & Machinery

All tools and machinery should be clearly marked to deter theft. If they can be returned to the owner, they can be traced to a theft. Ensuring equipment is clearly marked may be a deterrent for theft. Keep a register of the make, serial number, chassis number, Vehicle Identification Number (VIN), colour and any unusual features on equipment. Where the site is due to be vacant for a period of time, keys should be kept off site where possible. GPS Tracking devices on heavy plant can also be a very useful tool in securing these very valuable and potentially destructive pieces of equipment.

Manned Guarding Services

Engaging security guarding services can be extremely effective in ensuring the site is kept secure. This security solution provides the site owners with a visible human security presence and can often be the best deterrent. It also allows for the site owner to be notified if there is suspicious activity around the site or an attempted breach of the site.

If the site is considered essential during this time and is operational, consideration should also be given to employing Manned Security personnel to control access to the site during working hours. This has both a security and safety function and can ensure that sub-contractors possess Safe-Pass and that materials and/or equipment are not removed without authorisation.

Need for Increased Vigilance

If the site has been classified as an essential service during this period, remains operational and there is regular activity around the site, people are less likely to take notice of unusual vehicles in the area. This can have an impact on the site security and may also impact on the security of the community where the site is located if already populated.

Finding a Supplier

Combining manned, electronic & physical security solutions is the best approach when securing a site. Seeking the advice of a good security supplier or independent security consultant will assist you when assessing your security requirements. Members of the Irish Security Industry Association (ISIA) have been helping organisations and private residents to stay secure for nearly 50 years. Security services have been classified as an essential service to both services operating and shut during the implementation of government restrictions in response to the COVI 19 pandemic. To find an ISIA security supplier visit www.isia.ie.