

*This magazine is probably the best magazine we have produced in terms of the number and scope of articles contributed by non-SSAIB staff. It is particularly gratifying to include contribution from organisations based in the Republic of Ireland where we continue to extend the scope of our activities. It is interesting to note that many of the articles touch on the regulatory issues faced by the security industry some of which I have commented on below.*

The security industry has always had to deal with a plethora of regulations of its own in addition to those that inadvertently influence it from other sectors. While the security industry has traditionally self regulated as it strove to improve standards and the quality of the services offered, more recently, with the encouragement of industry, Governments in both the UK and Ireland have taken steps to legislate and to regulate the security industry through licensing. In Ireland this encompasses both individuals and "companies" offering security related services. In the UK, legislation is currently restricted to individuals employed in the "manned services" sector; the electronic systems sector is currently excluded, but legislation may well be extended to include these systems in the not too distant future. Steve Kimber, Southern Monitoring, touches on this issue in his article on the 'Role of the ARC'. Unlike in Ireland, UK legislation does not include the licensing of "companies"; however the Security Industry Authority (SIA) has introduced a voluntary scheme for companies. Whether the UK will follow the Irish example and introduce mandatory licensing for companies and extend licensing to include individuals employed in the security systems sector remains to be seen. What is certain is that the SIA will extend its influence into Scotland, as of the 1st November 2007 when licensing of the same range of activities as in the rest of the UK comes into force.

The electronics sector is also facing several challenges unrelated to licensing; the introduction of European Standards for security systems started in the late 1990 with the introduction of standards for intruder alarm, CCTV and access control systems. Systems and equipment standards, particularly for intruder alarm systems, continue to be developed causing problems for both manufacturers and installers. The introduction of the WEEE Directive on the 1st July 2007 might also impact on the security systems sector as the Directive makes suppliers responsible for the disposal of obsolete equipment; Dave Profit's article deal with this issue in some detail.

Another major issue facing the security systems industry relates to the introduction, by BT, of their 21st Century Network (21CN). Based on the information available the introduction of this "packet switched" based network may well result in many older alarm signalling systems failing to operate correctly. As yet the introduction of the network is at a very early stage but installers would be well advised to check the compatibility of equipment with the 21CN during routine maintenance inspections and advise their clients accordingly.

Turning to the SSAIB I am pleased to report we are continuing to make good progress in terms of the scope of our activities reflecting the requirements of our customers. Whilst our roots were, and to a large degree remain, in the electronics sector we have extend our activities to offer certification services for a range of security guarding activities. Our scope of accreditation with UKAS now includes all the mainstream activities provided by a guarding company. Also as an SIA approved Certification Body we are authorised to assess (or reassess) the compliance of a company's self-assessment workbook against the Approved Contractors Scheme criteria.

Our decision to licence the BAFE SP 203 scheme for the certification of organisations designing, installing, commissioning and maintaining automatic fire detection systems has proved successful and we intended to extend our activities in the fire sector both in the UK and Ireland. We will shortly be launching a scheme for organisations maintaining fire extinguishing equipment to complement our existing schemes. In Ireland we are developing a scheme for organisations responsible for the design, installation and servicing of fire detection and alarm systems in accordance with IS 3218.

Reflecting the Governments strategy to improve care in the community many of our electronics firms are expanding their activities to include social alarms, to support these we will be introducing a specific certification scheme tailored to the social alarms market sector.

As a result of the introduction of a wider range of electronic system schemes and the introduction of a range of non-electronic schemes covering all the main security guarding activities, SSAIB is a much broader based Certification Body than it was some 5 years ago. As indicated above we intend to continue building on our existing schemes to provide comprehensive certification services for companies operating in the security and fire sectors. Needless to say, we intend to remain a specialised Certification Body focussed on the needs of these sectors, operating for the benefit of the industry and end users alike.



Geoff Tate, Chief Executive for SSAIB