Are you ready for risk assessment?

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EN Standards are coming. Are YOU and your company ready?

1st October 2005 is the deadline. After that date you will have to install systems that conform to those parts of the EN Standards that are called up within the UK document PD6662:2004.

Confused already? Then now is the time to start getting your mind around the issues that will affect you in the future. Even better enroll on one of the SSAIB EN 50131 seminars.

Here are a few crucial points that you should be seriously considering NOW:-

1. Will you and your company be able to comply with the risk assessment requirements set out in the EN Standards?
2. Do you see risk assessment as a business opportunity?
3. Is your business set up to take advantage of risk assessment opportunities?
4. Do you attempt to "cross sell" to clients?
5. Are you obtaining extra work after a maintenance visit?
6. Do you understand the Grading system and notification options?
7. If you are installing police calling systems have you considered the implications of DD243:2004 relating to:-
   - a Confirmation
   - b Entry/exit procedures
   - c Dual signaling
   - d Information that must be included in the System Design Proposal?
8. Has your equipment supplier confirmed that equipment will be ready?
9. Do you have a programme to ensure that you and your staff are trained in the new standards before the 1st October 2005?
10. Will your paperwork match the requirements of PD6662:2004 and DD243:2004?

If, in modern parlance you can "tick the box" to all the above questions then you must congratulate yourself as you are well ahead of your competitors. If, on the other hand you are not clear on certain aspects I strongly advise you to seek help and advice.

In this article I would just like to explore question one a little further.

Risk assessment:
It is a requirement of EN50131-1 that that a risk assessment is undertaken. The details are given in DD CLC/TS 50131-7 - Application Guidelines. This is an excellent document that you must read and understand.

The guidelines states that before you prepare your System Design Proposal (new fancy name for what you and I used to call the Specification) you must undertake a:-

Location survey - this consists of:-

Risk assessment relating to the contents in the premises. Sets out factors that should be considered such as, how attractive the stock would be to thieves. *(Annex A)*

Risk assessment of the building. Details the physical aspects of the building that must be assessed e.g. construction, existing security etc. *(Annex B)*

Consideration of the influences that may affect the performance of the system WITHIN the building. These are generally under the control of the user of the premises and would include for example stock arrangements that may block the view of a movement detector. *(Annex C)*

Consideration of the influences that may affect the performance of the system EXTERNAL to the building. These factors may be outside the control of the user, for example the building may be close to a railway line but by being aware of the problem you should use appropriate equipment that is not going to cause false alarms. *(Annex D)*

And a:-

Technical survey - Requires you to identify any factors that may affect the reliable operation of the intruder alarm system. An example would be if you intend to use a dual technology device that has microwave as one of the detection elements then you should ensure that the microwave detection is confined within the protected area. *(Annex G)*

Until now I have not yet mentioned Annex E.

Levels of Supervision
This now comes into play and gives guidance, on a Grade by Grade basis, as to the Levels of Supervision that should be considered when designing an intruder alarm system. In simple terms if you are designing a Grade 2 system you should consider that an intruder may open a perimeter door or window and you should also consider including trap protection in rooms. It does NOT say every external door and window has a contact - merely that when designing a Grade2 system you should at least consider an intruder may enter the property by opening a door or window. How you provide detection to this or any other type of entry that you feel may occur is up to you. *(Annex E)*

After dealing with all aspects of the Location survey and the Technical survey, and taking into account the guidance on the Level of Supervision, you are now in a position to design the system and prepare the System Design Proposal (the specification).

This all sounds like a considerable amount of hard work. However just reflect for a few minutes and you will see that it is commonsense and, hopefully not very far from what you are already doing.

Now the next stage is to take advantage of all the information you have obtained during the risk assessment and sell your potential client a system that is commensurate with the risk and meets his needs. You may well have identified areas of risk that the client had not even realised and be able to sell him a suitable security solution. Risk assessment is NEVER a waste of time - it is just good business practice.

If you want more information on a detailed training workshop that cover all aspects of Questions 1 to 10 then contact Martin Kane at *Kaneecs@aol.com* (or phone 077 141 40276) and he will send you details. I work with Martin on the course and, as a retired Insurer, help delegates with advice on all aspects of risk assessment.

Making UDL accessible A new perspective

Most of you will remember those halcyon days of the VCR in the 1970's. The excitement and anticipation of finally owning one, the revolution that was taking place right inside your living room. The ability to watch what you wanted: when you wanted.

I bet then you also remember what happened next. Technology took over. Manufacturers of VCR's were starting to put more and more features in their products. VCR's became difficult to operate and the very features that had attracted you were virtually impossible to access. The VCR which was supposed to put the customer in control had now been taken hostage by R & D engineers, sales teams and MD's looking to beat competitors at all costs. What had been forgotten was that simplicity always rules.

And then someone somewhere had a revolutionary idea. OTR. One Touch Record. One tiny thing revolutionises how all VCR's of the future are going to work.

So what's all this got to do with the security industry? Well upload/download has been around for a long time but has really only been utilised in the commercial sector. Manufacturers have over-complicated the software and the product by adding more & more features. Simplicity had been lost.

mdt has made a UDL control panel that is quick and easy because they felt that slow and clumsy was fairly well covered. What's more they've done it for the price of a basic bells-only control panel! So apart from simplicity why should you be fitting upload/download systems on domestic and light commercial installations?

Picture the Scene
It's Monday evening. You've had a long, tiring day. You've just got time to eat your tea before you go back out to do a quotation. The phone rings: irate customer. The job you've fitted today (20 miles away) is false alarming! The customer has plans to go out but doesn't want to leave the property unprotected and *"if you don't get there immediately you can forget about payment!!!"*

Great so now you've got to be in two places at once and you've got bob hope of finishing your tea. So what to do? You can hare off back to the job and put the quotation off until another day or alternatively tell her that you'll be there within four hours. Either way you're not going to look great to someone. And if you don't look great to somebody they're less likely to recommend you to their friends. Remember we live in a *"cant wait, won't wait"* society.

What If?
However if you've installed an upload/download control panel this dilemma doesn't occur. You can dial into the installation, download the event log and for example disable the offending PIR in no time at all. You can then proceed quite merrily to your quotation knowing that the customer is perfectly happy.

As one SSAIB installer in the South West put it: *"we'd been using **Avanti**[xp] for a few weeks when a customer rang the office saying he couldn't set the system. As I wasn't used to upload/download I initially tried to talk it through over the phone. No go. All of the engineers were miles away & the customer was about to leave the country. I spoke to Graham (mdt) who suggested that I dial into the system and see what was going on. Now being an office manager and not an engineer I was somewhat dubious! I rang the customer back on his mobile and established that he had changed his code and couldn't remember the code! Whilst on the phone to him I changed his code via Dialog and indeed put in access codes for the rest of the family. Me an Office Manager! Naturally the boss was most happy upon his return until I told him the customer said he'd have paid more for the system if he'd known what it could do! Needless to say there's been a price increase since."*

What about the price?
Now you're no doubt thinking *"there's something wrong here. The cost of an upload/download control panel is too expensive for a basic domestic installation."* That's a natural assumption. The only problem is - it's no longer true.

*"I've been standardising on **Avanti**[xp] for some time now & I'm not going to divulge all my sales secrets but I will say that I fit **Avanti**[xp] on domestics as a bells-only system. I can do this because the price is virtually the same as the old bells-only panel I was using before. I then go back to the customer some time later and offer them an upgrade to upload/download for a small (!) fee. Most of them take me up on it. The engineer only has to connect to the telephone line as the communicator and modem are built in. This has been a very effective strategy to generate more business."*
(SSAIB Installer Wales)

By the time I've booted up the PC and performed the download I could have been there and probably back!
Not with ***Avanti***[xp]. The download speed is an amazing 6 seconds. And Dialog PC software is exceptionally easy to use. The screen capture below shows you just how simple ***Avanti***[xp] really is. Simply click on the icon you want and then click on the zone and you have made the change.

*"I fit upload/download control panels on all my commercial installations and have been reaping the rewards now for some years. When I heard about **Avanti**[xp] I was a little dubious. I'd wanted upload/download for domestic and light commercial but price was prohibitive and the speed of the download would be too slow on a domestic.*

*I couldn't believe it then when I tried **Avanti**[xp]. The price blew me away but the speed and simplicity really brought a smile to my face. 6 second download speed and the icons on the screen meant I didn't have to start learning something new. All the engineers love fitting it and I can't wait to programme remotely."*
(SSAIB Installer North West)

Yet another panel to learn?!
Because of mdt's pedigree the chances are that you won't have to learn anything! However there is also a Help File built into the LCD RKP.

*"I attended a Competitive Edge roadshow and saw the **Avanti**[xp]. It was just what I'd been waiting for. As soon as the presentation was over I went over to have a closer look. Caroline (mdt) talked me through the product and explained the history of mdt which meant that the product was already very familiar to me and my lads. When we'd finished I turned to my two engineers and said "the only problem now lads, you're going to have to learn how to programme a new panel" I was astonished when they told me they'd already learnt it. Whilst I was talking to Caroline they'd been playing with the LCD RKP. The Help File meant that they were away without the need for instructions- excellent!"*
(SSAIB Installer North East)

So how does all of this help me get maintenance contracts?
Contracts are obviously the name of the game. On a bells-only domestic this can sometimes be difficult. As the communicator and modem is built-in it makes it very simple to offer low-cost monitoring. Especially with the mezzanine XPress Connect system from Advanced Monitoring which generates text message alerts. Maintenance contracts are therefore easier to achieve.

*"One of the problems we've always suffered from is trying to compete with non-registered installers and then trying to get a maintenance contract. On a small domestic it's been a nightmare and as for monitoring - forget it. With **Avanti**[xp] we can offer low cost monitored systems. I remember the first time we fitted one and I tested the system. 20 seconds later the customer gets a text message telling her there's been an activation. She was very impressed and couldn't wait to tell all her friends. Business is great and as for the maintenance & monitoring contracts they keep on coming."*
(SSAIB Installer Yorkshire)

Avanti[xp] is a low cost solution for domestic and light commercial installations. With lightening speed download, integrated Help File in the LCD RKP and Icon based PC software ***Avanti***[xp] offers a new perspective to upload/download and makes it accessible to all - by keeping it simple.

Please refer to our advertisemnt on the inside front cover featuring the Avanti[xp]