



Security Considerations in a High Crime Environment

Crime is an everyday worry in South Africa. It is out of control and police are unable to contain the situation. The numbers of private security guards far outweighs the number of police, but confidence in the guards' effectiveness is low.

Residential and business security focuses on alarms and access control. Criminals 'adapt' to these systems by a move towards burglary while residents are at home, and in large security estates criminal syndicate members may well reside within the estate.

Although armed response is needed, reaction times are typically not fast enough to catch the crooks. Traditional forms of security are losing their effectiveness as crime evolves to circumvent them. What can be done to fight back?

A new approach

To catch and hold crooks requires police and/or guards that are backed by a justice system. These are all under pressure. Today it is not realistic to hope change the human component of security.

While automated systems can only address part of the problem of crime prevention/deterrence, they have the advantage that they do not have to be 'motivated'; they work 24/7 and cannot be intimidated or swayed.

Most of the security products on the market today have been around, in one form or another, for many years. Most stand alone and do not function well in cooperation with other systems.

What aspects can be addressed given the urgent need to move systems to the next level?

False alarms:

These are perhaps the biggest problem for armed response companies. Most alarm events are caused by sensors that falsely report motion, or by owners triggering their own alarms.

'Intelligent' alarms:

Security is a hassle and encroaches on a free lifestyle. To provide more tightly tailored security, especially when at home, more intelligent and integrated systems are necessary.

Armed Response:

There are slow responses to alarm events. Customer experience of armed response will depend on a variety of factors including the company providing the reaction, the area in which they live and the weather. Conversely, reaction companies encounter difficulties proving they have visited clients' premises.

Guards at access control points:

Guards do not always adhere to the rules laid down by the client regarding granting access to the estate/area. This is a major problem and a source of contention.

Guards on duty fall asleep:

Guards should not fall asleep. They are employed to patrol and fulfil their duties. In reality, to stay awake on a 12 hour shift when nothing is happening is not so easy.

Guards do not follow their patrol route:



A minority of guards can be very inventive in ways to avoid doing their assigned routes, especially in inclement weather.

✚ Maintenance of equipment:

Once systems are installed they have to be maintained. This is normally overlooked. Inspection on a routine basis is very expensive if trained people undertake the work. While some of these tasks may be delegated to security guards, lack of training reduces the efficacy.

✚ Audits and Records:

If there are no event or system records, any debate on the status of a situation comes down to hearsay. Poor records do not allow performance evaluation and pattern analysis.

✚ User Interface:

It is much easier to work with a computer than it is with a traditional alarm keypad and a user manual. A keypad is fine to arm and disarm, but a high resolution colour display makes it much easier to carry out setup, diagnostics and view reports.

✚ Integrated Systems:

Clients should be able to setup and review all aspects of their security profiles from viewing alarm events, to visitor access logs, to performance of the electric fence, to the patrol frequency of the guards through to a community bulletin board.

To minimise costs and maximise integration a single management system is needed to support the required diverse services and installed equipment. It is important to ensure high operational standards from both man and machine.

Guards

To achieve the best economy of scale, estate or area security is best handled by a single guarding company. Armed response and guarding should be provided by the same company and should be on site if the client base is large enough. It is essential to have real-time monitoring of their activities to ensure adherence to their duties.

Alarm monitoring

Truly 'intelligent' alarm systems are expensive. Alternatively basic alarm events can be interpreted or evaluated by a centralised server system providing good economy of scale. The installed alarms would still be autonomous. For example, an intrusion alarm event would be rated differently by the response team if a resident *entered* the estate through the access control system *two minutes* earlier, than if the resident *left* the estate through the access control system *one hour* earlier.

The cause of persistent false alarms can be identified and addressed.

Access Control

The best way to avoid guards and visitors circumventing access control policies is to have a fully automatic system that excludes the guards' involvement in decision making. This system must not be a 'one-size-fits-all', but should rather effectively address the needs of the people requiring access. Cell phones, remote controls, biometrics and digital tokens can all be of value if used appropriately.

User Interface

The user interface should allow simple operation of a complex system.



Residents need to access their profile on the system. Guards need to be monitored by their supervisors. Estate management needs to assess unusual access patterns. A single integrated system with an advanced user interface is optimum.

Estate policies frequently do not allow residents adequate access to the operational side of their security, and this can lead to frustration and apathy. Autocratic management prefaces obsolete configuration, bottlenecks and a weakening of security. Clear levels of trust and involvement should be nurtured within the residential community.

Residents need to know who entered and exited the estate using their rules. If an alarm was raised, how was it dealt with? How quick was the response? Residents need immediate answers to these questions.

It is unwise to involve guards in technical or judgmental roles. The more systems are able to 'look after themselves' the better the end result. Guards are freed for the functions for which they were employed.

Deterrence

Deterrence: The act of deterring or preventing by fear.

Criminals fear detection. A criminal syndicate will not live in a secured area or estate if the criminals think they will be detected. At present syndicates believe that some security estates are safe havens because of the isolated environment and low level of police activity. Stolen cars can be parked there with little risk of detection. Homes can be burgled and stolen goods stored on site.

It is not realistic to hope that a reduction in crime can be achieved at this time. The best alternative is to try and 'drive' it elsewhere. To drive it elsewhere, effective security measures have to be put in place to act as a deterrent. *And they have to be maintained to perform optimally.*

People are moving to security estates/areas for protection. The larger the estate, the larger are the challenges. If they are met, the reward will be a freer lifestyle and higher property values.

Dial Tech

Economic and practical considerations for an estate dictate a server based approach. A single server can store all the events on an estate or in an area including alarms, visitor entry and exit events as well as the security and access control settings. This information can be made available on the Internet for easy access country-wide. Logic and event pre-processing can be added at the server level thus keeping costs to an absolute minimum. Great value is added this way with relatively little cost. Centralised SMS facilities provide the same cost savings for people on the move.

Dial Tech offers:

- ✚ A server based management system for security estates/areas:
 - It is strongly recommended that a domain name is registered and that the server is connected to the Internet.
 - GSM facilities including SMS accessibility form part of the feature set.
- ✚ Cell phone based panic/alarm functionality:
 - Friends and relatives may notified by SMS in an emergency.
 - Browser based configuration and audit trail.
 - Protected access.



Viewable 30 day log.

- ✚ Extended cell phone based system with up to ten zones or functionality options.

- ✚ Access control system for residents and visitors:

Remote control or digital token based access is recommended for residents.

Cell phone based access is recommended for visitors. (Cell phones are trusted *and managed* identification devices that incur no cost to the security estate, are traceable and may be setup in absentia.)

Browser based configuration facilitates restriction based on time, day-of-the-week and number of visits for each of the visitor profiles setup by the resident.

Optional SMS notification of visitor arrival/exit.

Viewable 30 day log.

- ✚ Video monitoring/record of vehicles/people entering/leaving estate.

- ✚ Community bulletin board with posting access restricted to registered residents.

- ✚ Custom equipment monitoring:

Perimeter electric fence or internal electric fences.

Real-time reporting of events and system availability.

- ✚ Real-time guard monitoring:

Manual and fully automatic systems including roster generation.

- ✚ Estate Control Room facilities:

Video images and storage of access control points.

Notification of identity of people gaining access.

Alarm event and access record coupled logic.

Resident/visitor registration software.

Guard patrol live status.

GPS based map of alarm incidents.

Browser based administration.

Remote management.