



Security Industry Authority

# The SIA Approved Contractor Scheme

What's in it for you?





## The hallmark of quality and a significant aid to procurement

The introduction of licensing for individuals operating within the private security industry has helped ensure that people working within the industry are fit and proper persons who are adequately trained for the role they perform. The next stage in the drive for consistently higher standards in the provision of security services is the introduction of the SIA Approved Contractor Scheme.

### The private security sectors eligible for ACS are:

- Security Guarding
  - Security
  - Door Supervision\*
  - Close Protection
  - Cash and Valuables In Transit
  - Public Space Surveillance CCTV
- Key Holding
- Vehicle Immobilisation\*  
(only valid in England and Wales)

\*in-house also licensable

The SIA Approved Contractor Scheme (ACS) will, for the first time, provide a universally recognised hallmark of quality for suppliers of private security services.

The ACS accreditation mark will enable procurers of private security services to distinguish between potential suppliers quickly, accurately and objectively. It will provide assurance that the accredited provider has met a clearly defined and independently assessed set of quality standards throughout their business. As a result, purchasers of private security services can be confident that the quality of services they receive and the capabilities of the people deployed under contract meet the highest industry standards.





## The ACS standard

The ACS Standard encompasses all aspects of business operations. It takes a holistic view of how well an organisation is managed, how effectively it services its customers and how well it treats its employees. To achieve Approved Contractor status, companies supplying private security services must demonstrate to an independent assessor that they have met requirements within the following nine categories:

- Strategy
- Processes
- Commercial Relationship Management
- Financial Management
- Resources
- People
- Leadership
- Corporate Social Responsibility
- Results

The Approved Contractor Scheme is based upon widely recognised business improvement models: ISO9001:2000 and the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) Excellence Model™. The Scheme also references the British Standard codes of practice applicable to the private security industry. All approved companies must undergo annual re-inspection in order to maintain their ACS status. A full description of the standards and measures required for approval is available from: [www.the-sia.org.uk/acs](http://www.the-sia.org.uk/acs)

### How choosing an ACS accredited supplier can help you meet your security obligations

**Best practice and continuity of quality:** you can be confident that the employment practices of the supplier have been assessed in respect of quality and best practice for areas including employee vetting, training, holiday entitlement, disability discrimination and compliance with prevailing tax, immigration and social security legislation.

**Clear customer focus and increased flexibility:** you can expect effective customer focused procedures in place to overcome any issues that arise in service delivery. The ACS Standard encourages service customisation, rather than 'off-the-shelf' packages. This will help ensure that the services delivered more closely reflect your precise requirements.





**Leadership and innovation:** the ACS is a progressive quality initiative. It's also a voluntary scheme. You can expect accredited providers to be highly responsive to change and swift to adopt new methods and best practices.

**The 'extended police family':** the status of the ACS is valued by the police and offers the potential for enhanced working relationships. The aim is to provide practical benefits through 'joined-up' police, business and community initiatives.

**Register of ACS accredited providers:** you can view an online register of SIA Approved Contractors at [www.the-sia.org.uk/acs](http://www.the-sia.org.uk/acs) - alternatively, you can telephone 020 7227 3692 for further information or advice on choosing an accredited provider.

## Maximising quality, minimising risk – it's your responsibility too

Securing property and protecting people has become a very serious business. The escalating demand for private security services has created a major industry. Some estimates suggest that the number of people employed in the private security industry is 2-3 times greater than the size of the combined police force of Great Britain.

Over the next few years, the private security industry will evolve from a low-margin, under-valued service sector to a more capable, more professional and highly respected industry. The industry is making significant investments to achieve much needed change. Now it's time for buyers of private security services to play their part.

## Private security services – do you buy up to a quality or down to a price?

The procurement of private security services is too frequently based upon price rather than quality. Today, security should be viewed as a business critical service that is valued as highly as communications services and data security. All company directors have a legal obligation under corporate governance to ensure that all the organisation's assets are adequately protected. Therefore, security should form an integral component of an organisation's risk management strategy.

Every business should seek to forge a more responsible and professional relationship with its security supplier. Security requirements and contingency plans should be agreed and negotiated in a cooperative rather than competitive relationship.

The Approved Contractor Scheme aims to facilitate a continuing programme of positive change within an increasingly vital service industry. To reap the full rewards, buyers must now recognise the investment that has been made to provide a more capable and professional security industry. It is in everybody's interest that, when it comes to security, quality takes priority.

For more information on any aspects of the SIA Approved Contractor Scheme, visit:  
[www.the-sia.org.uk/acs](http://www.the-sia.org.uk/acs)



## About the Security Industry Authority

The Security Industry Authority (SIA) is an independent organisation established by government under the terms of the Private Security Industry Act 2001. Our intention is to help protect society by working in collaboration to develop and attain high standards of professionalism and service throughout the private security industry.

As part of this process, the SIA has introduced mandatory licensing for people working in certain sectors of the private security industry in England and Wales. This is expected to be extended to include Scotland from November 2007. The new licensing requirements carry the force of law and will help reassure the public that those providing security services are fit and proper persons who have been adequately trained for the role they perform.

In consultation, buyers of private security services have made their needs clear. They want higher standards of service, access to security personnel that are appropriately trained, and to work with suppliers that have performance management and quality systems in place. The Approved Contractor Scheme has been introduced by the SIA to make it easier for buyers to achieve exactly this.



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