

BS 9518:2021



BSI Standards Publication

Processing of alarm signals by an alarm receiving centre — Code of practice

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Published by BSI Standards Limited 2021

ISBN 978 0 539 12876 5

ICS 13.320

The following BSI references relate to the work on this document:

Committee reference GW/1/11

Draft for comment 21/30411818 DC

Amendments/corrigenda issued since publication

Date

Text affected

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Foreword

Publishing information

This British Standard is published by BSI Standards Limited, under licence from The British Standards Institution, and came into effect on 31 July 2021. It was prepared by Subcommittee GW/1/11, *Remote centres*, under the authority of Technical Committee GW/1, *Electronic security systems*. A list of organizations represented on these committees can be obtained on request to the committee manager.

Supersession

This British Standard supersedes [BS 8591:2014](#), which will be withdrawn on 31 July 2022.

Relationship with other publications

This British Standard has been produced following the publication of [BS EN 50518:2019](#) and is intended to complement that standard by providing UK-specific recommendations for the processing of alarm signals.

The UK has produced standards for the planning, construction, facilities and operation of manned and unmanned remote centres since the 1990s.

The first of these was [BS 5979](#) (*Remote centres receiving signals from fire and security systems – Code of practice*), which gave recommendations for the planning, construction and facilities of manned and unmanned remote centres, and for the operation of alarm receiving centres (ARCs) receiving signals from security systems including intruder and hold-up alarm systems (I&HAS). Following the publication of [BS EN 50518](#), parts 1–3 in 2013, which provided requirements for planning, construction, facilities and for the operation of ARCs receiving signals from I&HAS, [BS 5979:2007](#) was withdrawn.

[BS 8591](#) (*Remote centres receiving signals from alarm systems – Code of practice*) was produced in 2014 following the publication of [BS EN 50518](#) in 2013 to provide recommendations for the planning, construction and facilities of manned and unmanned remote centres, and for the operation of ARCs receiving signals from security systems other than I&HAS. The publication of [BS EN 50518:2019](#) has prompted the development of BS 9518 and the withdrawal in due course of [BS 8591](#).

ARCs certificated to [BS 5979](#) or [BS 8591](#) at the date when that British Standard was withdrawn are presently able to maintain certification to [BS 5979](#) or [BS 8591](#) as appropriate, subject to the terms of the certification scheme.

[BS 5979:2007](#) and [BS 8591:2014](#) both contained UK procedural and performance recommendations for the processing of signals from alarm systems. These recommendations have been reviewed and updated during the development of BS 9518, with specific changes to procedures to reflect changes in the expectations of UK Emergency Services organizations. As a result of this review and update, there might be conflicts between the procedural and performance recommendations given in BS 9518 and the withdrawn standards ([BS 5979](#) and [BS 8591](#)); where such conflict exists, the recommendations in BS 9518 supersede those in [BS 5979](#) or [BS 8591](#).

Certification schemes for ARCs to [BS EN 50518](#) may be extended to include certification to BS 9518.

Information about this document

This British Standard covers the alarm handling procedures for ARCs receiving signals from I&HAS, fire alarm systems, social alarm systems, VSS and lone worker devices.

This standard was written to retain those sections of [BS 8591](#) not in conflict with [BS EN 50518](#) and in addition to include alarm handling procedures for alarm types covered in other British Standards, i.e. [BS 8243](#), [BS 8418](#) and [BS 8484](#).

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Where websites and webpages have been cited, they are provided for ease of reference and are correct at the time of publication. The location of a webpage or website, or its contents, cannot be guaranteed.

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As a code of practice, this British Standard takes the form of recommendations and guidance. It is not to be quoted as if it were a specification. Users are expected to ensure that claims of compliance are not misleading.

Users may substitute any of the recommendations in this British Standard with practices of equivalent or better outcome. Any user claiming compliance with this British Standard is expected to be able to justify any course of action that deviates from its recommendations.

Presentational conventions

The provisions of this standard are presented in roman (i.e. upright) type. Its recommendations are expressed in sentences in which the principal auxiliary verb is “should”.

Commentary, explanation and general informative material is presented in smaller italic type, and does not constitute a normative element.

Where words have alternative spellings, the preferred spelling of the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary is used (e.g. “organization” rather than “organisation”).

The word “should” is used to express recommendations of this standard. The word “may” is used in the text to express permissibility, e.g. as an alternative to the primary recommendation of the Clause. The word “can” is used to express possibility, e.g. a consequence of an action or an event.

Notes and commentaries are provided throughout the text of this standard. Notes give references and additional information that are important but do not form part of the recommendations. Commentaries give background information.

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1 Scope

This British Standard gives recommendations for the processing of signals by an alarm receiving centre (ARC) from alarm systems, such as but not limited to fire detection and fire alarm systems, fixed firefighting systems, intrusion and holdup alarm systems, video surveillance systems, social alarms systems, lone worker, and combinations of such systems.

NOTE [BS EN 50518:2019](#) provides guidance on planning, construction, systems, management processes, leadership, governance, management and staffing of an alarm receiving centre. [BS 5979](#) and [BS 8591](#) also provide guidance.

2 Normative references

The following documents are referred to in the text in such a way that some or all of their content constitutes provisions of this document.¹⁾ For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

[BS 7858](#), *Screening of individuals working in a secure environment – Code of practice*

BS EN 50131-1, *Alarm systems – Intrusion and hold-up systems – Part 1: System requirements*

[BS EN 50134-7:2017](#), *Alarm systems – Social alarm systems – Part 7: Application guidelines*

[BS EN 50518:2019](#), *Monitoring and Alarm Receiving Centre*

BS EN 62676-4:2015, *Video surveillance systems for use in security applications – Part 4: Application guidelines*

3 Terms, definitions and abbreviated terms

3.1 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this British Standard, the terms and definitions given in BS EN 50131-1 and the following apply.

3.1.1 alarm company

organization that provides installation and/or maintenance services for alarm systems

3.1.2 alarm condition

condition of an alarm system, or part thereof, that results from the response of the system to the presence of a hazard

[SOURCE: BS EN 50518:2019, 3.1.2]

3.1.3 alarm filtering

procedure whereby signalled alarm conditions are intentionally delayed and their status reviewed for the purpose of preventing unnecessary calls to the relevant emergency service or nominated contact by cancelling certain alarm conditions, where such cancellation is authorized by the user or responsible/authorized person

NOTE Such filtering is not usually applied to signals from fire alarm systems in residential care premises.

¹⁾ Documents that are referred to solely in an informative manner are listed in the Bibliography.