



VACANT BUILDINGS AND FLY TIPPING

Real Estate Bulletin



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INTRODUCTION

In recent years fly tipping has become a major issue. It not only affects unoccupied sites, but is now also common on occupied sites. The increase in the amount of fly tipping has also led to escalating expenses and waste disposal challenges. There are two main groups of fly tippers; organised and opportunists.

Fly tipping by short-term tenants is also increasing significantly. This occurs when the tenant takes on the lease and then disappears, leaving the premises full of waste.

The cost of legally clearing up the waste left behind by fly tippers can be substantial and time consuming. Additional costs associated with managing the waste in situ may also be required (e.g. pest control).

The main defence against fly tippers is excellent levels of security.

This bulletin aims to provide some practical solutions to help prevent fly tipping on your property and mitigate the risk should it occur.



INCIDENT HANDLING

Rapid action is of paramount importance once a security breach has been reported. The groups involved actively network, maintaining intelligence on the availability of vacant property and they have the benefit of practical and legal advice freely available via a number of squatter websites. As soon as evidence of an illegal entry has been detected, quickly pass details to the police, local authority and insurers. The location should be visited as soon as possible once it is safe to do so.

In the section of this document titled 'Further Advice' we have provided links to documents providing greater information on how to deal with unauthorised occupation.



PERIMETER SECURITY

- Secure the perimeter with substantial fencing or reinforce existing fencing to a similar standard
 - Examples of 'substantial fencing' are weldmesh fencing or secure palisade fencing, which is welded and not bolted. Fences should be to a minimum height of 2.2 metres
 - Use strategic planting – hawthorn or other spikey plants to back-up weaker perimeter enclosures, such as chain-link fencing, timber fencing or walls
- Ensure gates are secure and strong and not easily removed from their hinges
- If padlocks are being used to secure gates or other entrances, these need to be substantial closed or straight shackle padlocks
- All padlocks should be accounted for, i.e. 'fit for purpose padlocks' with serial numbers listed on a formal schedule: unaccounted for padlocks should be removed and replaced
- Where electrically operated gates or bollards are in use, provide suitable instructions and signage to ensure that persons are aware of the risk of tail-gating and the need to ensure the gates are closed and bollards have risen before driving off
- Barbed or razor wire is a great deterrent, but these should not be installed at a height below 2.4 metres and their use needs to be risk assessed with due regard to property owners' 'duty of care'
- External intruder detection and alarms can be installed – these are systems that typically utilise Infrared (IR) beams: once the beam is broken the alarm is triggered
- Strategic signage highlighting security patrols, CCTV and contact details in the event of an emergency can improve security as part of the holistic approach



BUILDING SECURITY

If there is inferior perimeter security, then building security is even more important.

- Arrange and secure roller shutters, bay doors and entrance doors to prevent ramming or forced entry
- Install security lighting around the perimeter of the building – this should be sufficiently high to prevent tampering
- Replace or repair any damaged or deteriorated external doors
- Secure accessible windows
- Regular site inspections should be made to ensure fences, doors, windows and lighting are all intact
- Prevent climbing on roofs by:
 - Removing overhanging trees
 - Using anti-climb paint on drainpipes and other features that could be used to gain unauthorised roof access
 - Consider strategic use of barbed or razor wire
- CCTV can provide a good deterrent: monitored systems are the most effective
- Intruder alarms that don't call security companies could draw unwanted attention to a site. Alarms should preferably be connected to an Approved Alarm Receiving Centre. The use of security companies who respond directly to an alarm is also beneficial
- Security guards on more exposed sites can be a good deterrent, although there are instances where security guards have been overpowered or put under duress to gain access: therefore safety of the guards will need to be considered
- In areas of high footfall, such as where 24/7 working takes place, surveillance from employees of nearby businesses and members of the public can be beneficial. However, clear lines of sight from occupied buildings must be available, as well as good external lighting

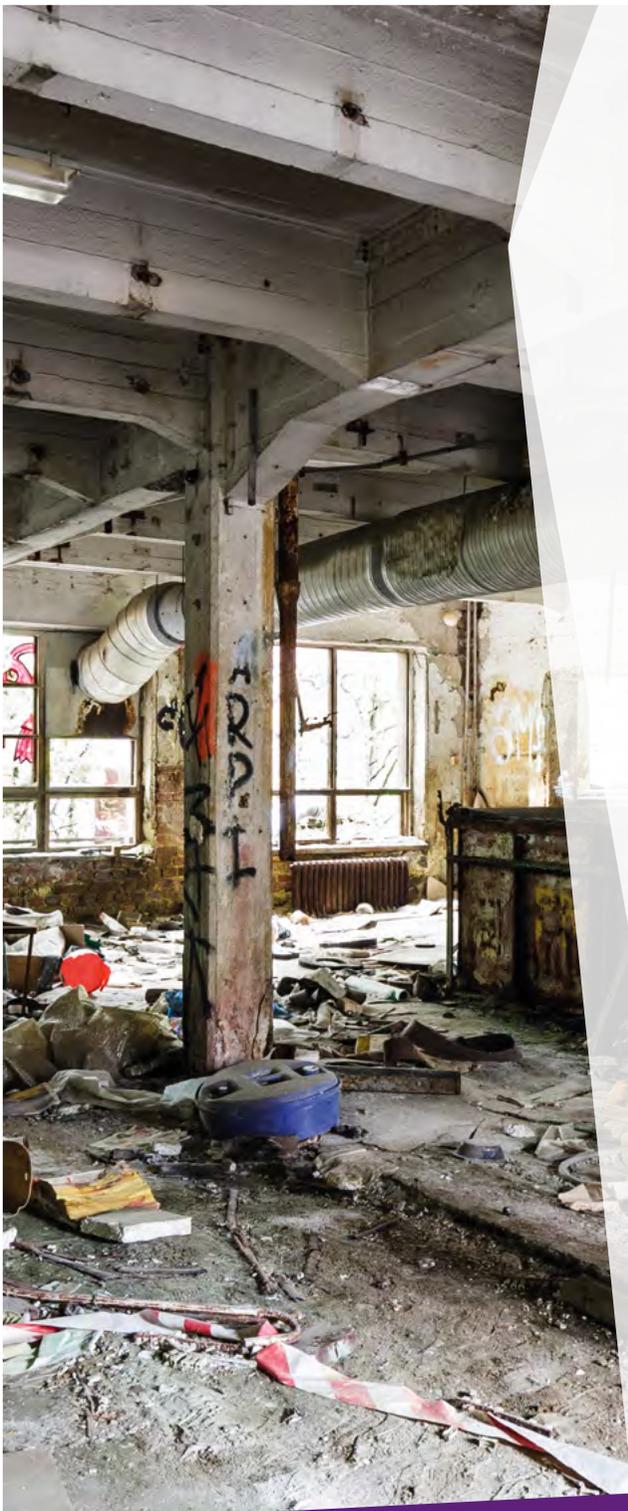
DEAD-ENDS AND SECLUDED AREAS

- Where possible deny access to dead-ends and unsecure secluded areas, by use of:
 - Concrete blocks placed in rows; preferably proprietary interlocking security barriers
 - Earth mounds or harsh landscaping
 - Heavy boulders
 - Planting of sharp and spikey plants
- Installation of prominent CCTV can also be an effective deterrent



VACANT BUILDINGS

- Seal all letter boxes
- Implement regular internal and external inspections - these should be at random times. The frequency of inspections should be based on exposure. The inspections should review the integrity of the perimeter and security of the building, as well as look for signs of unwanted access and damage
- Access points can be fully secured by blocking up external doors and windows
 - This can be with security steel work, or if the vacancy is longer-term, doors and windows can be bricked up
- Boulders can be placed behind gates to prevent access
- Block-off unnecessary vehicle entrances
- Quickly remove graffiti and signs of vandalism – this shows that the building is being watched
- For long-term vacant buildings consider the removal of external escape stairs to prevent access. This should be risk assessed
- Clear the building and associated yard areas of combustible contents and waste and ensure they are kept clear at all times
- Drain tanks of combustible liquids and make the tanks safe from any explosion risk arising from residual vapour
- Isolate the gas and electricity supplies to the premises at their entry to the building. Lock doors to the compartments containing the electrical switchgear and the gas shut-off valve. If unable to be locked, disconnect the supply in a manner to prevent reinstatement e.g. removal of circuit breakers and handles to isolating valves. Electrical circuits required for fire and security purposes may remain live
- Isolate the water supply at the incoming main. Drain down the water supply and heating system internal pipework and tanks. If the mains water stop valve is above ground, lag the pipework from where the incoming main emerges to the stop valve with good quality lagging, at least 32mm in thickness



SHORT-TERM LEASES

- Due diligence prior to signing leases can help prevent fly tippers from using your buildings
- Where tenants are on short-term leases and they are not known to the landlord or managing agents, regular inspections should be made to ensure their business is legitimate. The inspection should include an internal sweep to ensure no illegal waste is being stored
- If installed, CCTV can be used to monitor site activity – looking in particular for unusually large amounts of vehicles entering and leaving the site
- If security patrols are carried out either on foot or by vehicle, the company carrying out the patrols should be made aware to look out for suspicious activity from short-lease tenants – particularly around:
 - Large volumes of vehicle movements – vans and trucks
 - Large volumes of unmarked vehicles – reputable companies advertise their business
 - Vehicles fully entering buildings rather than stopping at loading bays





**For further advice
contact your underwriter**

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References:

[RSA Security Risk Control Guide v1 – RCG017\(E\)](#)

[RISCAuthority BDM10 – Code of Practice for the protection of empty buildings – Fire Safety and Security](#)

[RISCAuthority S31 unauthorised occupation of non-residential premises](#)

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