



PERIMETER PROTECTION

Peter Jackson examines top security measures to consider when protecting businesses and national infrastructure

One of the main questions the industry is facing at the moment is: are we doing enough to protect our critical infrastructure and business properties? After the pandemic and lockdowns throughout 2020-21, crime rates have been increasing. The Office for National Statistics revealed that crime rates rose by 14 percent between September 2019 and 2021. This clearly demonstrates there is an ever-growing risk to companies, transport networks and public buildings, suggesting decision-makers need to ensure their security measures are robust and up to date.

Businesses, government buildings and national infrastructure are likely targets for terrorists and criminals, and previous attacks have shown there is a need for additional security to be installed. Therefore, security specialists are recommending that physical security is taken seriously.

According to Jacksons Fencing's transport report survey that was conducted in the summer of 2021, 55 percent of the 211 architects and national infrastructure decision-makers believe vandalism is the biggest threat to transport and national infrastructure, but 42 percent believe trespassers with criminal intent is the greatest. Railway engineers are also

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feeling the strain of the recent ramp in infrastructure projects, with 55 percent of respondents stating that designs need to be completed within too short a time frame and that small budgets are making specifying difficult. Beyond this, the survey discovered that more needs to be done by the industry to improve current standards associated with perimeter security and safety. Approximately 68 percent of respondents agree that more knowledge is needed.

Currently, cost is a huge constraining factor preventing proper security specifications from being met. However, this shouldn't be an obstacle, and all contributing factors should be considered. Underthinking, underfunding and underspending are serious problems. Perimeter safety needs to be given a lot more thought and investment, and those involved need to avoid cutting costs by downgrading specifications.

Sustainability is at the forefront of conversations and businesses are facing more pressure than ever before to improve their sustainability initiatives to achieve proper change. If lower-quality products and security are installed, replacements and maintenance are more likely, increasing waste. Consider lifetime cost and how comparable products cost upfront divided by the length of the guarantee. For example, if a chosen security fence is supplied without any kind of guarantee, it is more than likely going to need replacing in the near future.

Generally, each part of a site will require different levels of security. It is important to establish the weaker areas first, such as the perimeters of a public venue or the entrance to schools, and ensure they are initially protected from potential attacks. A robust and thorough security procedure should be implemented together with security fencing. One of the major challenges site operators are currently facing when establishing high-level perimeter security is keeping intruders out, while ensuring there is a quick and safe evacuation protocol for those working there.

Finally, consider how much damage poor security would cost. Lax arrangements can result in theft, terror attacks or other forms of criminal activity. Try and assess the areas you need to protect and draw comparisons between the security measures you're bearing in mind. There are a lot of solutions you can implement, such as high-security perimeter systems, fencing and gates, and surveillance. However, it is important when preparing your site against any criminal activity, to take a holistic approach. Relying on one solution and dismissing others, or ignoring the need for regular checks and maintenance, is very risky.

Rigorous security systems at the perimeter of the site should be the focus in order to protect any business, place of worship, museum, transport hub or power station. Installing perimeter security creates a large barrier between your site and unauthorised intruders or those wanting to inflict harm. Security specialists recommend installing robust fencing, gating, barriers and bollards. Toppings should also be considered, such as barbed wire or spikes, and these can deter intruders from climbing a fence or wall as it increases the height of the barrier.

Jacksons Fencing's Barbican range provides a vigorous, high level of security with other benefits. This is an alternative to palisade fencing and features welded pale-through-rail construction, concealed panel-to-post connectors, with hidden bolts and rivets, therefore preventing them from being removed. The horizontal rails are sleeved onto the upright posts to provide a seamless

design that is incredibly strong and looks smart. Barbican's sleek appearance also helps to make it more aesthetically pleasing for the public and staff, however the appearance of the pales extending through the top rail can also make it intimidating for intruders. Another option is Barbican with Finials. These mimic traditional steel railing designs and demonstrate how security fencing doesn't have to be ugly and overbearing, but can easily blend into any surrounding environment while providing the strength and protection you need.

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The popularity of security cameras has increased in the last decade, mostly due to the advancement of technology. The British Security Industry Association (BSIA) has estimated that by 2020, there were 5.2-million CCTV cameras present nationwide and over 96 percent of these are operated by private businesses or homeowners. Security specialists also recommend that businesses and public sector sites across the UK install and implement surveillance systems. These can range from guards on patrol to burglar alarms, CCTV and movement sensors. Having a robust security system can ensure the premises are monitored continuously and then information can be gathered in the need of an incident.

These technological surveillance systems can be costly and require a lot of attention in order to run smoothly. Consider which areas of your premises require a CCTV camera and seek security specialist help if you're unsure. Also, do your research into security cameras. There is a wide range on the market, however wireless versions offer more flexibility as they can be placed anywhere to detect and deter criminal activity.

Despite their initial costs, surveillance systems have significantly helped deter crimes and theft. It has been estimated that in places where there is a presence of CCTV surveillance, sites witnessed a 13 percent decrease in criminal activity, compared with other places without it. Combining surveillance with other security measures, such as improved lighting and perimeter fencing, decreased crime rates by 34 percent.

Regularly check your perimeter security systems by inspecting, testing, maintaining and repairing. This will guarantee that your products are performing to their specification. Maintenance and repairs will prevent any unforeseen faults, ensuring your security solutions last longer, saving you any further costs later down the line.

Identifying the most prolific threats ahead of time means there is more time to put the appropriate solutions in place across the UK's businesses and national infrastructure. Doing so can greatly improve safety and security. It is important that appropriate solutions are put in place across all sites, preventing any targeted attacks or intruders from entering the properties.

To do so, security professionals need to be aware of which areas should be regularly checked and prioritised.

A systemic assessment needs to be done first, to make you aware of any security-related issues. When conducting this, think about what robust security options

you have, and consider those which are appropriate. The aesthetics are also really significant, yet the survey reveals this is frequently overlooked. Some people may assume that aesthetically pleasing products have a higher cost, however simple, innovative solutions often do not compromise a site's visual appeal, and they can offer strong security and protection.

Make sure you're abiding by safety and sustainability requirements. If you need advice, suppliers' websites or

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product videos are good at explaining the requirements you need to meet the quality and level specified. When unsure, ask an expert.

Prioritising high-quality materials is key and it helps to do some research beforehand and choose those products which will last. Value for money and longevity will ensure your site requires a lot less maintenance later down the line, preventing any further costs.

Fewer repairs and maintenance will benefit you in the long run, making your decision more cost-effective. Higher quality products are more likely to be stronger, therefore preventing any form of vandalism or tampering. Avoid products that do not come with a guarantee on lifespan; these will most likely need maintenance or replacing. Products with a guarantee will cost more initially, however, damage to client relationships and reputation after product failure is a possibility, and worth thinking about.

Using surveillance or an integrated security system will also significantly reduce the risk and threat of criminal behaviour. Installing CCTV cameras or technology that enables alarms, such as Perimeter Intrusion Detection Systems or monitors, with high-security perimeter fencing will deter any activity and criminal occurrences.

When specifying a 'tested and certified' product for a development site, such as a fence, gate or barrier, follow this checklist: obtain proof of certification from your supplier; be sure of your fencing's suitability to site-specific ground conditions; check specifications to ensure effectiveness against specific threats; specify appropriate coatings, especially for use in corrosive atmospheres; install in accordance with manufacturer's specifications; regularly inspect for condition, damage, and operation; and regularly maintain to prevent premature degrading.

All those involved in perimeter security and making crucial choices, whether for the public or private sector, need to consider a risk management-driven approach and truly consider high-level, robust security in order to prevent any criminal activity from occurring. It is a prominent, ever-growing issue, and adopting this approach can make a big difference.

Physical security has come on leaps and bounds in the last decade, but with threats remaining so prominent, decision-makers have a big role to play in protecting people and property. The best way for organisations to be prepared is to plan and implement security measures strategically, taking a long-term view of safety alongside sustainability. We all deserve safe places to live, travel, work and be entertained, and only by implementing the right security measures can that vital level of trust and confidence be achieved ●

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It is important to take a holistic approach when preparing your site against any criminal activity



Picture credit: Jacksons Fencing