

*Manufacture, application & data recording of
asset marking systems*
Code of practice

Important information

This code of practice does not purport to include all the necessary provisions of a contract.

Users of this code of practice are responsible for its correct application.

Compliance with this code of practice cannot confer immunity from legal obligations.

For other information please contact:

British Security Industry Association

01905 342020

info@bsia.co.uk

www.bsia.co.uk

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Foreword

This code of practice was developed by members of the Asset & Property Marking Section of the British Security Industry Association. It represents a standard of good practice and therefore takes the form of a series of recommendations.

This code of practice has been prepared in consultation with companies supplying product marking and/or asset database services to safeguard the interests of consumers in the United Kingdom regarding the services provided by those companies.

Copies of this code are available free of charge to companies, customers, local consumer organisations and others with a legitimate interest.

The principal aim of the code is to set out clearly for companies a best practice document to promote and maintain a high standard of products.

BSIA will publicise the existence and availability of the code of practice and all companies are encouraged to advertise their compliance with the code and have available a copy for use on demand at their premises.

The Asset & Property Marking Section of the BSIA will review this code of practice every three years or sooner should the need arise.

Introduction

Asset or Property marking is one of the oldest parts of the security market as owners of valuable property have always sought ways to identify their property.

Asset marking systems, when used according to the manufacturer's instructions and fitted to defined types of asset enable the marked asset to be identified and traced to the legal owner via a secure database register and act as a deterrent to theft in the first instance when the existence of marking is known.

Modern property marking systems have developed to cope with the ever-increasing sophistication of acquisitive criminals and can include registration of the marked asset on a secure database to allow the items to be traced. This code of practice is intended to be a valuable source of information to assist specifiers and end-users.

This code of practice does not recommend any one particular design of marking system nor does it evaluate the effects of that marking system on the operation/value of the asset on which it is used.

In accordance with BSIA membership requirements, the manufacturer's quality system will be certified by a UKAS approved authority as conforming to BS EN ISO 9001.

1. Scope

This code of practice gives recommendations related to asset marking systems intended to enable the identification of the asset and the legal owner of the marked asset. Recommendations are given for the manufacture/supply and suitability of application of the asset marking system together with the operation of associated registers.

Asset marking included within the scope of this code of practice may employ covert or overt marking of the product with a mark that, by virtue of an inherent identification feature and associated systems or processes, permit unique identification of the legal owner of the asset.

This code of practice is not intended to replace the requirements of PAS 40 (Banknote theft deterrent systems using dye or smoke-dye).

This code of practice does not give performance requirements for marking technologies nor the durability of the system or components. It is the responsibility of the individual manufacturer/supplier of the system to clearly identify these issues for the benefit of the customer as highlighted in Section 5 of this document.

Although this code of practice recommends that the product instructions shall include hazard data, confirmation of the authenticity of such data is not addressed.

2. Normative references

The following referenced documents are indispensable for the application of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the publication (including any amendments) applies.

BS 7858	Screening of individuals working in a secure environment - Code of Practice
BS ISO/IEC 27001 (BS 7799-2)	Information technology – Security techniques – Information security management systems – Requirements
BS EN ISO 9001	Quality Management Systems - Requirements
LPS 1224: Issue 2 3 or later	Requirements for companies providing secure asset registration services
LPS 1225: Issue 3 or later	Requirements for the LPCB Approval and Listing of Asset Marking Systems
PAS 40	Banknote theft deterrent systems using dye or smoke-dye

3. Terms, definitions & abbreviations

3.1 Definitions

For the purposes of this code of practice, the following terms and definitions apply:

3.1.1 Company

The legal entity manufacturing or providing asset marking devices, equipment or services and/or secure asset registration services.

3.1.2 Covert Marking

A type of marking that is not visible by the majority of people under normal lighting conditions but can be read by widely available or simple equipment. Examples are RFID & forensic technologies, fluorescent colours, microdots, etc.

3.1.3 Database Management Company (DMC)

A company that has operational control of a secure asset register.

3.1.4 Event triggered marking

Marking of an asset and/or suspected criminal to provide evidence of a crime where the marking is the result of detection of a genuine or possible crime or a manual activation.

3.1.5 Forensic Chemical/Coding Marking

A type of marking in which the asset is uniquely identified using materials that can be distinguished by laboratory analysis.

3.1.6 Marking

Addition to an asset of an attribute that can provide information, either immediately or after analysis, linking the asset via an associated database register, to the asset's legal owner.

3.1.7 Marking device (MD)

A method of securely marking or tagging an asset to provide information uniquely linking the asset to its legal owner.

3.1.8 Marking system (MS)

Combination of marking devices (either overt or overt and covert) and secure database registers used to provide traceability of the marked assets to their legal owner.

3.1.9 Overt Marking

A type of marking that is easily visible to a majority of people and certified as complying with a recognized standard, such as the requirements of LPS 1225.

3.1.10 Postcode

A series of letters and/or numbers that form a recognised code corresponding to a specific postal address or group of addresses.

3.1.11 Secure Asset Register (SAR)

A database containing a reference to a unique mark on an asset and linking it to the identity of the legal owner of that asset.

3.1.12 Temporary marking

A type of marking of intentionally reduced longevity.

3.1.13 Transferable mark

A type of mark intended to extend from the marked asset to a person coming into contact with it.

3.2 Abbreviations

- DMC** Database Management Company
MD Marking Device
MS Marking System
SAR Secure Asset Register

4. Recommendations for manufacturers/suppliers

4.1 General

The company should have a defined structure and a quality management system meeting BS EN ISO 9001 registered with a UKAS accredited certification body. The manufacturer's quality system should be such that compliance of the finished product with the specification can be demonstrated.

The company should comply with all current applicable national and European safety legislation, including without limitation, data protection and consumer protection laws. Products, including marking fluids and chemicals, should meet all applicable health and safety requirements and comply with applicable legislation.

4.2 Marketing and Advertising of Goods and Services

Companies will promote their products, services, guarantees and warranties in a legal, decent, honest and fair manner and in accordance with the British Code of Advertising, Sales Promotion and Direct Marketing.

Company product performance claims should be substantiated. More information on the code of ethics for BSIA members can be found via BSIA [Form 355](#).

4.3 Information to be provided to the customer

Companies should provide sufficient information on the goods and/or services being supplied. As a minimum this should include:

- a) The fitness for purpose of the product for the application it was designed for or for which the customer has stated it will be used. This should specifically include the suitability of the product with regard to safety and its COSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health) status.
- b) Advice on the proper installation of equipment sold to meet the requirements of the relevant specification and regulations.
- c) Details of guarantees, warranties and statutory rights.
- d) The canister of marking fluid and/or product packaging should be marked with the following information:
 - Manufacturer's name and/or trade mark.
 - Storage and usage information.
 - Batch code and/or date of manufacture.
 - Identification of the SAR to which the system is linked (where applicable).
- e) Details of the associated SAR (where applicable) including:
 - Name of the operator.
 - Asset registration and "change of detail" forms.
 - Relationship of the company to the database management company.
 - Methods by which enquiries are accepted.
 - Hours of service availability and timescales for responding to enquiries.
 - Fees for services (registration, change of details, provision of reports, etc).
- f) Details of the standards or certification with which the product or service conforms or is certified.

4.4 Supply, After-sales Service and Support, Guarantees and Warranties

Companies should conduct all their sales and commercial activities with a high degree of professionalism and integrity. The company should have a formal set of trading terms and conditions. Details of these terms and conditions should be made available to organisations intending to conduct business with the company before any transactions are complete.

Customers' legal rights should not be adversely affected by any guarantee and the customer should be informed of this.

Products should carry a guarantee or warranty against faulty manufacture and workmanship for a period of not less than 12 months from date of manufacture. It should be clearly stated if the shelf-life of the product (see 5.3.3) or expected permanence of the whole product or component parts thereof (see 5.3.4) will affect any guarantee or warranty.

Products installed by a company should carry a guarantee against faulty manufacture, workmanship or installation for a period of not less than 12 months from the date of handover to the customer following commissioning.

The company should honour all product guarantees or warranties given, in particular those related to durability and efficacy.

Note: Whereas a customer can easily verify the continued operation of a visible mark this is not the case with covert marks, non-visible components of marks and the devices used in event triggered marking (e.g. forensic spray systems). In these situations, and especially in the absence of test results based on recognised product standards, customers rely on the existence of guarantees and they therefore have particular importance.

5. Suitability to the application

5.1 General

Asset marking can be achieved by a variety of techniques. Each technique has advantages and disadvantages compared to alternatives and will be more or less suitable for the intended application. Companies should provide advice to users regarding the suitability of their product or system for typical applications.

Factors to be taken into account are given in **5.3**.

Information that would facilitate the education of the criminal fraternity should be kept confidential but not to the detriment of the customer. For example, in instances where it is known that particular solvents or substances may remove the marking, access to this information may be restricted.

The effect of the marking system on the functionality of the assets to which it is applied is outside the scope of this code of practice. Companies should caution customers that, before applying the system to any asset, users and specifiers should verify the likely effects to the asset of using the marking.

Customers should be advised to consider whether use would invalidate any product warranties applicable to the assets or unduly decrease its value.

5.2 Type of Product

The suitability of a product is largely dependent on its general type. Companies should clearly identify the type of product. Products can be of one or more of the following type, as defined by the definitions in section 3.1:

- Forensic Chemical/Coding Marking.
- Covert Marking.
- Overt Marking.
- Temporary Marking.
- Event Triggered Marking.
- Transferable Mark.

5.3 Factors affecting suitability for the application

5.3.1 Overt or covert marking

The advantages and disadvantages of these forms of marking should be described together with advice about additional marking.

5.3.2 Use of labels in addition to the marking

Additional labels can render a marking method more or less suitable for an application depending on the customers desire for anti-theft deterrence. This should be highlighted in advice to customers.

5.3.3 Product Shelf-life

Customers should be advised if there are any limitations regarding the duration of storage of the product prior to use and any effect that a prolonged period of storage may have upon its subsequent use. Additionally any particular requirements for storage should be stated.

5.3.4 Permanence of marking

Customers should be advised whether the mark is permanent or transferable.

This should include information about the marking and the suitability of the adhesive and any overt, covert or forensic content for use on different typical materials (e.g. glass, metal, plastics) and exposure to typical environments (e.g. sunlight, water, cleaning, temperature extremes). In some applications a short period of permanence may be desirable.

Where components of a mark have different durations of permanence this should be stated. It should also be indicated if the mark, or components thereof, might gradually deteriorate over time (e.g. fading or degradation of one or more of the overt, covert or forensic components of the mark) or rapidly cease to be effective (e.g. by loss of adhesion).

5.3.5 Effect on asset (appearance, degradation)

The likely effect of the use of chemicals or adhesive on the asset should be advised together with the consequence of fixing visible labels. Customers should be reminded that such effects could be desirable or not, depending on the asset.

5.3.6 Ability to transfer ownership

Customers should be advised that the presence of marks of a certain type (e.g. a postcode) can prevent legitimate transfer of ownership whilst other marks in conjunction with an SAR may positively benefit such transfer.

5.3.7 Information provided on labels

Customers should be advised regarding what types of information may be included on a label together with potential advantages and disadvantages of certain content. This particularly applies to assets frequently transported away from a permanent location.

5.3.8 Service provided by the company providing a SAR

Customers should be advised about options for inclusion on a SAR and the service provided (refer to section 6).

6. Secure asset register

The asset marking system may be dependent on the use of an associated SAR.

Note 1: Systems not using a SAR rely on identification of the owner by virtue of the content of the mark on the asset. This method may not be suitable in all applications.

The management of data held by the SAR should be by security vetted staff only, working to secure protocols for data handling in accordance with GDPR and the Data Protection Act.

Note 2: A suitable standard for the security vetting of staff is BS 7858.

Controls should be implemented to preserve the integrity and validity of the asset registration data. These controls should comply with industry recognised information security standard requirements such as LPS 1224, ISO 27001 and any of its nationally recognised variants. The information processing system should have implemented a level of security features and data handling auditing tools appropriate to the risk of failure of the system.

The following system attributes should be considered carefully:

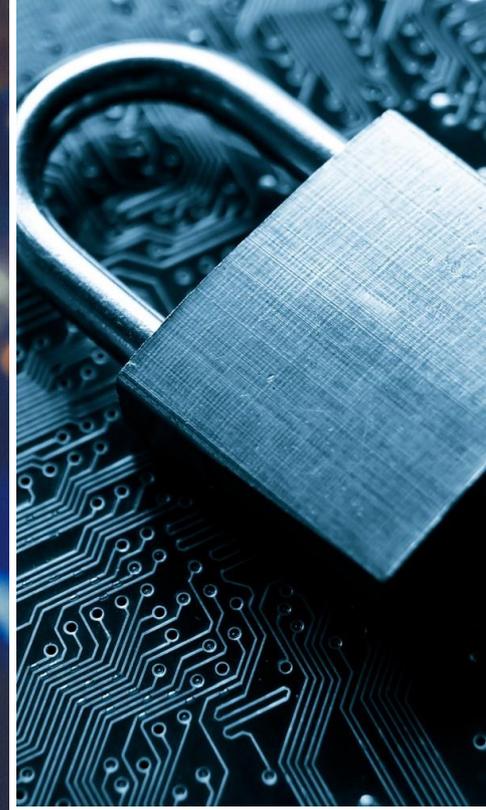
- Network security and monitoring.
- Resilient data backups (including real-time backups, where appropriate).
- Off-site backup storage.
- Defined data handling processes taking into account integrity, validity, security and availability of the processes.
- Auditing and evaluation of the system within a culture of continuous improvement.
- The ability to maintain the software systems provided by third-parties (including, when appropriate, the ability by prior arrangement to obtain the source code and documentation of such systems).

Company premises used for provision of the SAR should be adequately secure.

The resilience of the system to failures is of high importance. This should include the presence of an effective business continuity plan subject to regular review and appropriate testing. The business continuity plan should be created with consideration of the company's stated service level availability.

The company should have appropriate arrangements prepared to enable continuation of the service in the event that the company ceases trading. This may include an escrow arrangement for transfer of information to an alternative provider.

Customers should be informed of any changes to the company contact details or ownership and in event of the company ceasing to trade.



About the BSIA

The British Security Industry Association (BSIA) is the trade association representing over 70% of the UK's private security industry. Its membership includes companies specialising in all sectors of security. For security buyers, BSIA membership is an assurance of quality, with all member companies required to adhere to strict quality standards.

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