




# Securing Empty Property

## A good practice guide

A risk management approach  
to vacant property security

### This guide encompasses :-

-  Physical Security
-  Electronic Security
-  Site Perimeter Security
-  Manned guarding



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# Overview of the problem

Property is a valuable asset and risks associated with that asset increase significantly when it is vacant or void. Whether the property is residential, commercial, retail or industrial, its perceived abandonment attracts both the determined thief or squatter as well as the opportunistic vandal. Such illegal activity can be perceived as victimless but its detrimental impact upon the property value, delays in refurbishment or reletting all add up to a significant cost to the owner.

Luckily the landlord has a wide range of options to mitigate these risks in a cost-effective and timely manner whilst maintaining insurance cover against significant or catastrophic losses. However, choosing the right level of security at the right time is more of an art-form than science and that's why you need the advice of security experts. There are many security options to choose, each with benefits and limitations. This guide is designed to steer the landlord or property owner through this complex security maze and aid informed decision making.

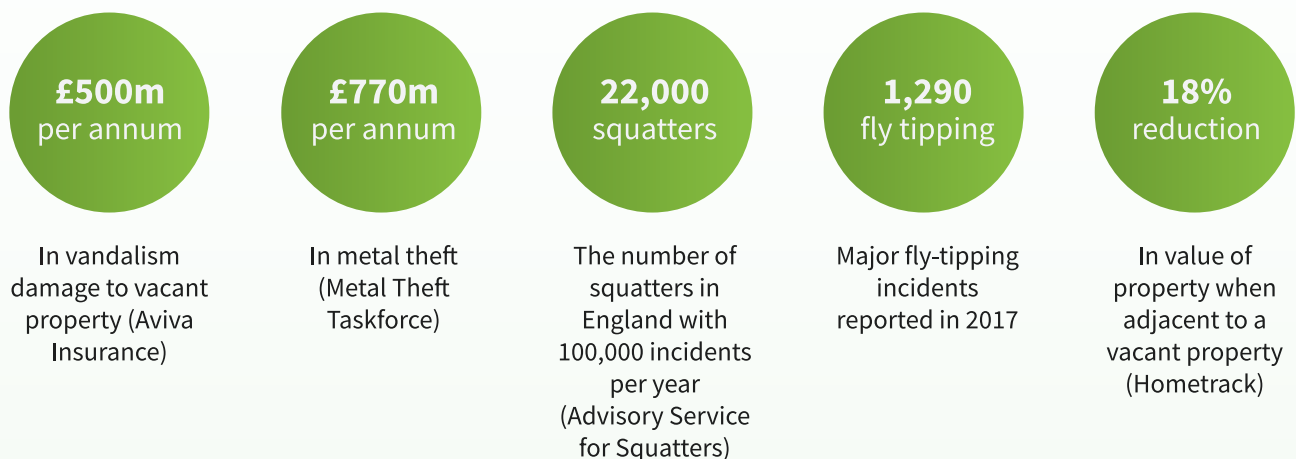


# The Risks

The type of attack to a vacant property range significantly in impact. These can include simple vandalism or theft of high-value or re-sellable items such as metal through to squatting and even arson which can jeopardise adjacent occupied property. Occupation by drug users can leave dangerous paraphernalia such as needles or syringes which represent a hazard to keyholders. In addition, traveller occupation and fly-tipping – potentially of hazardous waste such as asbestos – should be considered if the property has a larger site accessible to vehicles or car-park area.

The risk of attack to vacant property depends upon a number of factors. These can include location of the site, duration the site is vacant, visibility from public spaces, local lighting, community policing, dilapidation and isolation away from prying eyes. Risk can also escalate during school holidays, hot and dry summers with warm, light evenings or cold snaps with the resultant flooding from burst water pipes.

In England and Wales the overall costs related to vacant property is staggering :-



However, property risk is not fixed but a dynamic factor which changes over time and in response to both the 'lifecycle' of the void property and variable external factors. It is important therefore to ensure that security measures can change and respond to these challenges to mitigate risk effectively without incurring additional expense in 'over-securing' the site at each particular point in its 'lifecycle'. This is a fine balance and a significant challenge to the landlord or their FM / Security partner



The table below (Table 1) shows a typical Risk Evaluation Matrix and how Likelihood / Frequency of Attack is balanced against the Severity of Loss as a consequence of an attack to the vacant property. This assists landlords in decision making about the investment they should make in security to the vacant property.

Table 1 – Void Security Risk Evaluation Matrix

		CONSEQUENCE - £ How severe could the losses be if the void is attacked?				
		1 - £ Insignificant	2 - ££ Minor	3 - £££ Significant	4 - ££££ Major	5 - £££££ Severe
LIKELIHOOD - FREQUENCY What is the chance of the void being attacked?	5 Certain	5 Medium	10 High	15 Very High	20 Extreme	25 Extreme
	4 Likely	4 Medium	8 High	12 Very High	16 Extreme	20 Extreme
	3 Moderate	3 Medium	6 High	9 Very High	12 Extreme	15 Extreme
	2 Unlikely	2 Medium	4 High	6 Very High	8 Extreme	10 Extreme
	1 Rare	1 Medium	2 High	3 Very High	4 Extreme	5 Extreme

Historic crime in the neighbourhood can be a good indicator of future potential risk to any vacant property. This information is readily available through Crime Maps of the UK based on postcodes. However, do also talk to neighbours and assess levels of local vandalism, graffiti, fly-tipping to draw your own conclusions. Discuss these with your property insurer or their risk surveyors who can look at insurance premium levels in the locality.



# Legislation (England & Wales)

The landlord's recourse to the law when experiencing attacks to their vacant property can seem to be weighed strongly in favour of the intruder or squatter, especially in England and Wales. Stretched police forces and court services are unlikely to provide a speedy remedy to problems with a vacant property. Reviewing the below legislation does demonstrate clearly that prevention is better than cure.

## Defective Premises Act 1972

Landlords have statutory obligations under the Defective Premises Act 1972 including liability for injury or damage caused to persons through defects in the state of premises.

## Occupiers Liability Act 1984

The 1984 Act allows an injured trespasser to sue for personal injury or death although not for damage to personal property.

## Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012

Squatting in residential property became a criminal offence on 1 September 2012. However, this legislation did not cover commercial or industrial property and the unintended consequence was to increase squatting in these property types. This law does not cover situations where:

- the property is not residential,
- people are or were tenants (including sub-tenants) of the property,
- people have (or had) an agreement with someone with a right to the property,
- people in the property are not intending to live there

## Criminal Law Act 1977

This Act makes it an offence to force entry to a building which is occupied including squats. Squatters cannot be simply removed from the property but the landlord has to instigate civil proceedings to have them evicted which takes significant time and money. Evicted squatters are also unlikely to leave the property quietly or in good condition.

## Squatting in Scotland and Northern Ireland

### The Trespass (Scotland) Act 1965

Under the terms of this Act, squatting is a criminal offence in Scotland. The owner or lawful occupier of the property which squatters are occupying have the right to eject them from the premises without serving any notice or applying to the court for an eviction order.

In Northern Ireland, it is a criminal offence to occupy a property without the owner's permission. A squatter could face prosecution if they do not leave when a landlord obtains a court order and/or when a person who normally lives in the property, or has a right to move in, asks them to leave.



# Specifying security products and services

When considering investing in security product and services to protect and secure empty property, it is important to consider a number of key decision factors :-



## Property Risk Profile

Referring to Table 1 above, this classifies six potential risk levels which in turn suggest appropriate levels of security to mitigate the risk and an escalating security response as detailed below :-



### Very Low Risk

This implies a property which is already secure, in a low-crime neighbourhood with good local community policing and surveillance. In addition, the property may only be vacant for a matter of days and less than the period of unoccupancy stated by the property insurer in their policy conditions beyond which insurance cover is diminished. Alternatively, risk may have been transferred to a building or demolition contractor who therefore take responsibility for any vandalism risk and associated delays and costs in their contract. This contractual risk transfer is detailed in certain JCT (The Joint Contracts Tribunal) building contracts.



### Security response

*Maintain impression of occupancy through, lighting timers, maintain gardens and car-parking areas. Seal letter boxes to re-direct post and prevent a build-up of junk mail. Ensure locks and existing hard-wired intruder alarm codes are changed. Ensure existing alarm systems are under a current maintenance and monitoring contract where applicable.*





## Low Risk

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Here, the property owner still sleeps peacefully – but is mindful of potential risks and wary of any changes to the property or its surroundings. For example, fly-tipping, graffiti or a broken window in the neighbourhood which may escalate quickly.



### **Security response**

*Above maintaining the site, gardens and property, keeping ‘eyes and ears’ on the property becomes worthwhile. This can be using neighbours and local keyholders or an approved security contractor making weekly internal and external site inspections – generally called Void Property Inspections (VPI). Some basic target-hardening is worthwhile such as sealing letter flaps (to redirect post and avoid any GDPR issues), ensuring all windows and doors are locked or if necessary screwed shut.*



## Medium Risk

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In neighbourhoods where there is perceived risk or evidence of historic attacks to the property (albeit possibly unsuccessful or a ‘dry-run’) then leaving property security to chance becomes more foolhardy. Researching historic crime records in the locality may identify burglary, criminal damage, arson, drugs and anti-social behaviour.



### **Security response**

*Close monitoring of the site day and night become worthwhile and temporary GSM (Global System for Mobile communication) intruder alarm technology offers 24-hour monitoring with a keyholder response to activations. These systems do not require mains power or telephone lines so all utilities can be isolated and water systems drained down to avoid potential flooding. In addition, these systems can include smoke detection, water detection, tamper / movement detection etc. This technology also independently verified and time / date stamps contractor activity on site and evidences weekly VPI's. At this risk level, professional VPI's conducted by uniformed Security Industry Authority (SIA) approved contractors with tracked vehicles supersede any cost savings by using neighbours or local estate agents.*

*The property and surrounding site should be cleared of waste and any potentially flammable material. This should include external bins and storage. Ensure any contractors engaged with such clearance have valid waste carrier licences to avoid the risk of further fly-tipping.*



## High Risk

Where property attacks are both likely and their financial impact severe, a combination of both target hardening and electronic security measures becomes a sensible investment. These properties may have an extended void period or are undergoing major refurbishment or change of use. This could involve high-value items being delivered and installed to the site which could be very attractive to potential thieves.



### Security response

*Modular, temporary steel security doors and window screens provide a visual and physical deterrent to intruders. These steel shutters are sometimes called Sitex screens. These can be installed to the ground and vulnerable 1st floor levels maintaining both natural light, ventilation and keyholder access with minimal damage to window or door frames. Modular screens installed with internal back bars are suitable for most opening windows to minimise damage whilst temporary steel security doors can have modular side and fanlights attached to cover the entire opening. Internal back bars can also have cushioning pads to preserve painted finishes and spread the load of localised compression required by this type of product. In some cases, the option of code operated doors can remove issues of key-handling and key-management affording unrestricted access to the property for contractors and authorised visitors. Providing keyless access or even simply insurance-approved key safes on site also speeds up response to alarm activations as the responder does not have to collect keys before attending site.*

*Plywood boarding or 'boarding up' windows is sometimes a natural reaction to vulnerable property however this can cause more problems than it solves. As well as restricting easy access into the property, such boarding prevents ventilation and natural light inside the property for VPI's. Security is also dependent upon the fixings (sometimes just basic Phillips screws) and the strength of the anchoring frames themselves. A more secure alternative is galvanised, perforated steel sheet which can be bespoke cut to fit within window reveals and is secured with specialised security fixings. This reduces the opportunity to insert levers to prise off the security sheeting.*

*Target hardening should also extend to car-parks, open space or any vehicle access points. These can attract fly-tipping, traveller occupation or the use of vehicles to remove bulky items from the property. So temporary fencing, concrete bollards (Temporary Vertical Concrete Barriers – TVCB) and lockable vehicle access gates should be considered.*

*Combining the above with temporary GSM internal intruder alarm technology provides 'belt and braces' security should the perimeter security be breached by the use of power tools or angle grinders. Evidence of such criminal damage will assist with the eviction of potential squatters.*





## Very High Risk

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When evidence suggests that property attacks are a matter of 'when' rather than 'if', advanced warning of intruders or trespassers on the property site is advantageous. This allows the situation to be evaluated and potentially a response team despatched to site before any concerted attack can be made.



### Security response

*In addition to the previously detailed security measures, external intruder detection around the site perimeter offers advanced warning. As external detectors can be triggered by wildlife or movement of foliage, to avoid un-necessary and expensive response to these false alarms, verification of the activation through video footage is very effective. These systems can be mounted on the building or site hoarding. Alternatively, a stand-alone 'Tower' unit can provide 360° coverage of large open sites. Again these temporary GSM systems are wireless, battery powered and do not need 'phone lines to communicate to a remote alarm receiving centre (ARC).*

*Elevating security to have a visible presence on site may be worthwhile and regular mobile patrols of uniformed staff especially during hours of darkness is an effective deterrent. It also provides a speedy response to alarm activations and other issues which may occur.*



## Extreme Risk

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Where sites have been breached or vandalised previously or are subject to an eviction process, then intruders can be highly motivated to breach the property again. Although the police or local police community support officers (PCSO) may be sympathetic and appreciate such voids are targets for drug dealing, cannabis growing and other illegal activity, their support is likely to be responsive rather than pro-active.



### Security response

*A static guarding presence provides 24/7 'eyes and ears' on the site and is suited to larger or complex sites which cannot be easily 'target hardened'. If there is regular activity on site such as contractors or surveyors then a manned presence is helpful to receive deliveries and may overcome lone-worker issues. The use of canine (K9) guard officers is also a very effective deterrent. To minimise cost, static guarding can be combined with the site security technology detailed above which should avoid the requirement for multiple guards on larger sites and protects all parts of the site simultaneously even in darkness.*

## Duration the property is vacant

Whether a void is short-term, medium-term or long-term makes a significant impact upon the necessary security response to vandalism risk.

### Short-term voids

A property which is vacant for a very short period of time may escape the attention of potential trespassers and be occupied again before any loss can occur. Certain property types such as social housing voids may be under close scrutiny by criminal elements locally who can easily observe departing tenants or be aware of night time 'flits' or abandonment. As a result, a very fast, same day security deployment may be necessary. As local authority and housing association property is generally 'self insured' then any loss is borne directly by the organisation which can lead to a temptation to 'over secure' dwellings. This is understandable as any vandalism attack impacts upon the availability of housing stock which is in extreme demand.

### Medium-term voids

When void periods extend from days into weeks or months, increasing dilapidation of the property, overgrown gardens and highly visible – and often ineffective – security like plywood boarding, can actually attract vandalism and criminal elements. Attacks can escalate very quickly from some minor external damage or broken window through to wholesale vandalism or illegal occupation. These properties demand much closer attention regarding security measures and an intensive risk-based approach. Flexible rental of security services, even down to a daily hire basis, allows security to be optimised to each property during its lifecycle.

### Long-term voids

Conversely, property which has been vacant for a significant period without any loss may actually be relatively 'low risk' possibly due to its location or low levels of neighbourhood crime. A long-term 'mothballing' of the property may be desired, and security can be permanently installed on a fit-and-forget basis. In this case, on-going security rental costs may not be cost effective or appropriate so a one-off cost for security should be sought.





## End-game or objective with the property

Property or sites can have many 'end-games' from re-let, re-development, construction, change of use, sale / disposal or demolition. The security response to these differing objectives depends upon the landlord's acceptance of minor damage to the property fenestration - window or door frames - to protect the main access points from intruders. As discussed, a manned presence on site is expensive but requires no interaction with the building itself other than the availability of welfare facilities. Installing physical security (steel anti-vandal sheet or plywood boarding) may require the compromise of drilling holes into the building fabric which can become an issue with new build, pre-sale or listed property. Penetration of PVCu or metal window frames has implication on product warranty and integrity or water-tightness of the system and can be particularly problematic with large fixed window openings such as retail outlet. In these cases, a supporting wooden frame over the glazing may be necessary. Penetration of brickwork adjacent to windows to affix steel sheeting or shutters is unattractive and difficult to repair when they are removed. Temporary GSM intruder alarm systems can be fitted on stands in new build properties therefore negating the need to fix to newly plastered and painted walls.

None of this is important for demolition or refurbishment property but can have a significant impact for property designated for a fast 'churn' re-let or sale.



## Other property services

### Property

Draining down of water systems and isolation of all utilities is frequently a requirement of insurance policy conditions to be achieved within 30-45 days of the property becoming vacant.

However, its important to understand specifically what is intended within these rather simplistic policy wordings:-

#### i). Mains water

It is important to clarify with the insurer their definition of 'switching off' mains water. For example, closing a mains water stop-cock and opening the property taps to drain the cold water tank may be considered sufficient. However, this stop-cock could also be 'locked-out' using a lockable device and padlock or indeed 'capped-off' which severs and seals the incoming water feed. Simply 'switching off' the mains water does not prevent subsequent contractors re-establishing the connection and its very difficult to identify responsibility at a later date. Regular VPI's can identify that cold water systems have been re-connected but exposure of the property to this additional risk will depend upon their frequency. Capping off water supplies is naturally more secure however re-connection is more expensive and may cause delays and hinder refurbishment works.

Where installed, sprinkler systems can either be drained to prevent flooding caused by vandalism or maintained to provide additional fire protection. The most appropriate decision will depend upon a number of factors such as the void duration, property type, risk etc.



## ii). Mains electrical supply

Again, most insurers require electrical power to be 'switched off' at the main circuit board to prevent electrical fires and make the property less attractive to squatters. However, this does disable hard-wired intruder and smoke alarm systems causing a conflict in advice. Electronic alarm security measures at the site can be maintained through stand-alone temporary GSM, battery-powered intruder and smoke detection as discussed previously. Again, a clarification of terms is important as 'switching off' can mean simply throwing the mains switch, locking out the mains switch (where possible), removing fuses at the fuse board, or full electrical isolation of the property by an approved electrical contractor.

Some insurers also require that specific power circuits and water systems are preserved over the winter months to maintain heating systems and prevent flooding due to burst pipes. In addition, when dealing with properties like pubs, insurers can also require a permanently live electrical circuit to cellar or sump pump to avoid flooding in certain properties.

## iii). Mains gas supply

All the above wording implications of 'switch off', 'lock-out' or isolation apply to the mains gas supply. Where installed, bottled gas cannisters should be dis-connected and removed from the site as soon as possible.

## Environs

Maintaining the property appearance not only maintains its value but can also be a good deterrent to vandalism. The property is perceived as valued and 'looked-after'. So maintaining gardens, cutting back vegetation and removing graffiti or litter is also beneficial. Creating a wide and clear garden space also improves electronic intruder detection and reduces false alarms through the movement of foliage when external detectors are installed.



## Vacant property lifecycle

Do consider the void property 'life-cycle' as it moves from newly vacant to pre-let. Ideally, initial surveys should take place before the departure of the existing tenant. During the void period, changes to the property – such as the installation of high value refurbishment fixtures and fittings or plant and equipment – can also increase risk and should be accompanied by an appropriate increase in security measures.

Initial instruction	Void period	End-game
Risk Assessment	Physical security	Preparation
Insurance survey	Electronic security	Viewings
Key holding	Guarding / patrols	De-secure
Escorted viewings	Vehicle barriers / fencing	Hand-over
Clearance	Isolate utilities	
Eviction	VPI / Keyholding	



## Security technology and contractor specification



Vacant property is a high-risk working environment and there is potential for injury to security installers, other contractors, the public and potential trespassers. So it's important that both the contractor and its staff operate to the highest health & safety processes and procedures.

For example, seek contractors who are accredited by Constructionline, Safe Contractor, CHAS and Contractor Plus. This ensures their procedures and processes have been independently validated. ISO9000 also ensures that the companies' procedures are consistent, documented and professional.

Temporary intruder alarm technology is relatively new and few 3rd party accreditations exist. However do look for alarm systems which have been approved by the SSAIB (Security Systems & Alarms Inspection Board) under their Temporary Alarm Code of Practice. This covers both the alarm technology and the companies procedures to install, monitor and respond to such systems. Companies utilising alarm receiving centre's operating to BS 5979 and NSI Gold accreditation together with alarm installation to BS EN 50131 Security Grade 2 and maintenance in accordance with PD 6662:2010 is also highly desirable.

Security guarding and mobile patrols should comply with Security Industry Association (SIA) regulations with professional key holder services delivered to meet BS.7499.

In emergency situations, a fast response to site to secure the property is essential and some contractors can be on site next working day from instruction. Its also important that they are able to survey and quote new projects quickly and easily with transparent daily hire charges or agreed one-off costs for longer-term voids.



## Unoccupied property insurance policy conditions

Security and insurance should be considered to be two sides of the same coin when dealing with vacant property. Yet it is common that property managers are not familiar with their policy conditions and positive steps made to mitigate risk may not be communicated to the insurance broker or insurer. However, by ensuring that all parties are working towards the same goals with a clear understanding of each parties' obligations, risk can be most effectively mitigated.

There are significant variations in policy requirements beginning with the 'period of grace' between when the property first becomes vacant to the levels of security specified. However, after a relatively short period of time, insurance cover can significantly diminish to basic FLEA (Fire, Lighting, Earthquake, Aircraft) risks covering catastrophic events. Frequently policy wording has not been updated for some considerable time and it is not unusual to see requirements to 'brick-up' window openings or use plywood boarding. The latter being both flammable and easily removed and so worse than ineffective.

Some landlords with residential property – or commercial property which can be converted to habitable use – look to use live-in guardians to protect the property. This can be 'free' or can even generate a small revenue as the guardians pay a small fee to the landlord. Although this does have a social benefit and a perception of 'protection through occupation', most insurers are reluctant to extend cover when such occupation is in place. Indeed, it can be considered that live in guardians create more risks than they solve with potential injury, fires from cooking / smoking, anti-social behaviour etc. Flexibility to deploy or terminate guardians may also be limited as the void has become a short-term lease to new occupiers who may have to find alternative living accommodation at short notice. They may be reluctant to depart and be in possession of property keys. Property away from urban areas or public transport links may also be less popular and so harder to allocate to guardians within reasonable timescales.



## Sources of further information

There are lots of different sources of information about property and crime however few focus specifically upon security of empty property.

### Empty Property

The Empty Homes Agency - [www.actiononemptyhomes.org](http://www.actiononemptyhomes.org)

### Insurance

Association of British Insurers (ABI) - [www.abi.org.uk](http://www.abi.org.uk)

Association of Local Authority Risk Managers (ALARM) - [www.alarmrisk.com](http://www.alarmrisk.com)

### Security

British Security Industry Association (BSIA) - [www.bsia.co.uk](http://www.bsia.co.uk)

Secured by Design - [www.securedbydesign.com](http://www.securedbydesign.com)

Security Systems and Alarms Inspection Board - SSAIB - <https://ssaib.org>

Security Industry Authority (SIA) - [www.sia.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.sia.homeoffice.gov.uk)

## Security checklist

RISK	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High	Extreme
Seal letter-flap	X	X	X	X	X	X
Lock / secure windows	X	X	X	X	X	X
Lighting timers	X	X	X	X	X	X
Change locks	X	X	X	X	X	X
Void Property Inspection		X	X	X	X	X
Drain-down & isolate utilities		X	X	X	X	X
Temporary intruder & smoke alarm system with 24-hour monitoring - Internal			X	X	X	X
Property and site clearance			X	X	X	X
Temporary steel shutters				X	X	X
Concrete barriers (TVCB)				X	X	X
Temporary site fencing				X	X	X
Internal Intruder alarm & steel shutters					X	X
External site intruder alarm with video verification					X	X
Mobile patrols					X	X
Static guard or K9 team						X



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# VACANT PROPERTY CHECKLIST

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MANAGEMENT	YES	NO	CHECK	ACTION REQUIRED?		BY WHOM?	BY WHEN?	DATE COMPLETED
				YES	NO			
Is a responsible manager nominated?			If <b>NO</b> , nominate a team leader.					
Have the building insurers been informed?			If <b>NO</b> , ensure the insurer is informed in writing.					
Are regular inspections scheduled?			If <b>NO</b> , schedule regular inspections or alternatively outsource.					
Has post been re-directed?			If <b>NO</b> , contact the Post Office.					
Have keyholders been nominated?			If <b>NO</b> , ensure key sets are duplicated and distributed. Keyholding can be outsourced if required.					
Have the local police force been informed of the building status and keyholder details?			If <b>NO</b> , inform your neighbourhood police station. Find these here - <a href="https://www.police.uk/pu/contact-the-police/uk-police-forces/">https://www.police.uk/pu/contact-the-police/uk-police-forces/</a>					
Have the local fire brigade been informed and made aware of specific fire risks?			If <b>NO</b> , inform your local fire department. Find these here - <a href="https://www.fireservice.co.uk/information/ukfrs/">https://www.fireservice.co.uk/information/ukfrs/</a>					
Have options to mitigate empty property rates been explored?			If <b>NO</b> , consult specialist service providers.					
Have owners of all items on hire/lease including photocopiers, franking machines, beer kegs etc been notified?			If <b>NO</b> , make contact with the leasing companies and schedule removal from site.					
Have options to mitigate risk of fly-tipping and traveller occupation been explored?			If <b>NO</b> , make an assessment and implement recommendations.					
Has a risk assessment been completed involving the above parties?			If <b>NO</b> , conduct a systematic assessment and document. Use 'crime in your area' postcode checks.					

HEALTH AND SAFETY	YES	NO	CHECK	ACTION REQUIRED?		BY WHOM?	BY WHEN?	DATE COMPLETED
				YES	NO			
Have the H&S risks to visitors, contractors & staff been assessed?			If <b>NO</b> , make an assessment and implement recommendations.					
Have the H&S issues of trespassers, including children, been assessed?			If <b>NO</b> , make an assessment and implement recommendations.					
Has all rubbish been removed from internal & external areas?			If <b>NO</b> , ensure all rubbish is removed especially potentially combustible material.					
Has the site been checked for dangerous items including sharp edges, trips or falls?			If <b>NO</b> , check site and make safe if possible. Alternatively sign-post and document on the site risk assessment.					



HEALTH AND SAFETY	YES	NO	CHECK	ACTION REQUIRED?		BY WHOM?	BY WHEN?	DATE COMPLETED
				YES	NO			
Are all bannisters, walkways, rails or other fall protection in good conditions?			If <b>NO</b> , make good or isolate the area to prevent access. Use signage and record on the site risk assessment.					
Have all non-essential furniture, fixtures & equipment been removed from site?			If <b>NO</b> , remove from site especially potentially combustible items.					
Have all white goods and kitchen equipment been removed from site?			If <b>NO</b> , ensure they are removed. Fridges require de-gassing at a local authority recycling site.					
Have all skips, bins and local authority waste bins been removed from site?			If <b>NO</b> , ensure they are removed or at least emptied.					
Have final meter readings been taken?			If <b>NO</b> , ensure they are recorded, images taken and time/date stamped.					
Have all utilities been disconnected?			If <b>NO</b> , ensure utilities are switched off, fuses removed, water systems drained down and isolated if possible. Essential circuits for smoke alarms, sump pumps, sprinkler systems to remain live.					
Is the site asbestos register available and up to date?			If <b>NO</b> , find the register or instruct an asbestos survey company.					
Have all propane or gas cylinders been removed from site?			If <b>NO</b> , ensure they are removed.					
Have all fuel or oil tanks – above or below ground - been drained?			If <b>NO</b> , ensure they are drained and made safe.					
Is the site free from pests or under pest control contract?			If <b>NO</b> , consider regular baiting to avoid potential LA enforcement.					

FIRE SAFETY	YES	NO	CHECK	ACTION REQUIRED?		BY WHOM?	BY WHEN?	DATE COMPLETED
				YES	NO			
Have all hazardous or flammable substances been removed site?			If <b>NO</b> , ensure these are removed.					
Have all smoke or intruder alarms to remain active had a maintenance visit within the previous 12-months?			If <b>NO</b> , ensure they are correctly maintained and under contract. Ensure remote monitoring contract is in place. Alternatively use remotely monitored temporary alarm system.					
Has any Argonite fire suppressant gas been de-activated?			If <b>NO</b> , ensure this has been drained and made safe unless this is to be retained.					
If required, is the BT Redcare telephone line live?			If <b>NO</b> , and required for the hard-wired smoke or intruder alarm, ensure this is live and in contract.					
Is any automated sprinkler system operational and under maintenance contract?			If <b>NO</b> , consider maintaining this system and retaining for the void period.					
Are the portable fire extinguishers in situ and under maintenance contract?			If <b>NO</b> , consider maintaining these but only if there is an on-site guard. If not, remove from site.					
Is there a sign posted fire exit route from the building?			If <b>NO</b> , ensure a fire exit route is maintained to meet building regulations and seek advice from the local fire safety department.					
Are fire safety and relevant warning signage in place?			If <b>NO</b> , assess and implement as required.					

SECURITY	YES	NO	CHECK	ACTION REQUIRED?		BY WHOM?	BY WHEN?	DATE COMPLETED
				YES	NO			
Is the site perimeter secure?			If <b>NO</b> , make good or install temporary fencing.					
Can trespass onto the site be prevented?			If <b>NO</b> , consider external video or image verified intruder alarms with 24-hour monitoring.					
Has a risk assessment for fly-tipping or traveller occupation been made?			If <b>NO</b> , assess risks and vehicle access points. Concrete barriers will prevent access.					
Is it necessary to prevent vehicle access on site?			If <b>NO</b> , authorised access can be maintained by lockable vehicle barriers & fencing vehicle gates.					
Are existing windows & doors of a high security specification?			If <b>NO</b> , consider temporary anti-vandal steel security doors and window screens.					
Are letter flaps sealed?			If <b>NO</b> , seal to prevent build-up of combustible mail with GDPR issues.					
Do you have all property keys or are keys of a non-duplicate specification?			If <b>NO</b> , replace locks and re-issue keys to local keyholders. Alternatively install temporary steel security door.					
Are all access points and building elevations visible and with good community policing?			If <b>NO</b> , consider external remotely monitored video or image verified intruder alarm with fast key holder response to site.					
Are trees and vegetation cut back for easy access / visibility?			If <b>NO</b> , cut back and maintain the garden / landscape to improve the site appearance and minimise false alarms if an alarm system installed.					
Is there effective local street lighting around the property?			If <b>NO</b> , consider solar PIR activated lighting or day/night vision temporary intruder alarm systems.					
Is there local security or caretaker on site?			If <b>NO</b> , consider uniformed mobile patrols or live-in caretakers for a 24-hour presence on site.					

## Disclaimer

Any and all information contained herein does not constitute advice and accordingly you should consult with your insurers and risk advisors when developing policies. Whilst every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information, the content is naturally subject to change and we cannot guarantee its accuracy or currency. We reserve the right to make changes to the information without notice. We do not accept any liability for any direct, indirect, incidental or consequential losses arising from the use of this form.

**Telephone:**  
0330 088 1973

**Email:**  
operations@secureemptyproperty.com

**Location:**  
Integrity House  
Charles Lane  
Lancashire  
BB4 5EH

[www.secureemptyproperty.com](http://www.secureemptyproperty.com)

