

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a roof security system?

This particular roof security system consists of a series of passive infrared (PIR) motion detectors working wirelessly using digital radio technology. When the alarm is triggered, a voice-enhanced sounder and blue strobe lights activate, in order to deter intruders from trespassing further.

What else happens when the alarm is activated?

Once activated, the alarm system then relays immediate intrusion alerts to an NSI Gold Alarm Receiving Centre, who take action based on your previous instructions. If you have chosen to have the recommended alarm response service – this will include the immediate despatch of security personnel. This is particularly useful for buildings in more remote areas, where the alarm warns of danger but there may be no one to respond quickly or safely.

Whilst parishes may have the resources to attend an alarm activation, we recommend the use of the alarm response – which is a professional keyholder service – to eliminate the risk of church members being assaulted by thieves.

How does the alarm work?

A PIR motion sensor works with 'invisible' (infrared) energy. When an intruder passes through the sensor's detection area, it detects a rise in heat. This means that whilst a living body will trigger the detector, blowing leaves or moving tree branches will not. The system has also been designed to distinguish the difference between wildlife and people moving on a roof – making constant false alarms a thing of the past.

Is this particular system suited to protecting certain types of roof?

The system has been specifically designed to protect external roof areas and will provide an effective means of electronic roof protection for most church roofs. The installers will be able to provide more specific guidance on the suitability of the system for your church, along with any possible limitations, at the time of survey.

What does it cost?

Every alarm system is different due to the size of roof area to be covered, it's therefore only possible to accurately answer this question on an individual basis following a free* no-obligation site survey.

In addition to a one-off installation cost there are further annual ongoing charges for alarm maintenance and the alarm receiving centre (mandatory) and also the alarm response service (recommended). If the alarm activates and contacts the alarm receiving centre (using mobile phone technology), there are no additional costs for this as the costs are included in the alarm receiving centre annual cost.

If the alarm is activated there will be an additional charge to send out a security guard.

Please call us on **0845 600 9659** for further details.

Will fitting an alarm affect my metal theft insurance cover?

If you install an Ecclesiastical-approved roof security system, and have also applied a forensic marking system approved by us (such as SmartWater) to external metal, displayed signage and registered with the provider, we may be able to increase your metal theft cover, depending on individual circumstances (**please also see the question below**).

If at any stage the parish decides not to use the alarm, or ceases to pay the alarm maintenance and alarm receiving centre costs, any additional theft of metal cover provided under your policy will be reviewed and is likely to be restricted.

Please call our customer services team on **0845 777 3322** if you require further information about the provision of additional insurance cover.

What is the process for getting an alarm installed in my church?

If you are interested in getting a quote to install a roof alarm system at your church, please telephone **0845 600 9659**, or email roofalarms@ecclesiastical.com

Once we receive your details, here is what will happen next in most cases:

- The alarm installers will contact you to arrange a convenient day and time to meet with your representatives at the church.
- Your church will be surveyed and you will be sent a quote for installing the alarm.
- The quote will also include a full system design proposal for consideration.

(cont'd)

If you are thinking of going ahead but would like to ensure that you'll benefit from our additional metal theft cover once the alarm has been fitted, please send us a copy of your alarm system design proposal clearly quoting your policy number, prior to installation. Our Customer Services team will then review the proposal and contact you to confirm.

You can send the design proposal to us by email at churches@ecclesiastical.com or by post to Direct Insurance Operations, Ecclesiastical Insurance, Beaufort House, Brunswick Road, Gloucester GL1 1JZ.

What permissions are required prior to installation?

In the case of Anglican churches, the DAC should be consulted at the earliest stage about what permission is necessary for installing an alarm. Intruder alarms are included in the items for which an Archdeacon can grant a Faculty when the proposal is unopposed and the advisory committee recommends the works or proposals in question, or raises no objection to them. It is worth approaching your Archdeacon and your DAC secretary as soon as you start to consider the installation of a system and they will advise on what permission is necessary for installing the alarm. In some situations you will also need local authority planning permission. The installation may well be considered urgent, so it is worth asking the DAC secretary if there is a mechanism in your diocese for treating an intruder alarm as a *de minimis* item.

Churches from other denominations and other organisations should contact appropriate authorities. We can provide further guidance about permissions on an individual basis – please call us on **0845 600 9659**.

Is the installation of the alarm likely to cause any disruption?

Great care is taken to ensure that the location and fixing method for this security system respects the building. Conservation specialists are closely consulted in order to ensure that there is minimal impact to historic building fabric. Wireless technology will be deployed on the roof in order to minimise disruption and reduce unsightly cable installation. The installation is usually completed in one day and the system will be maintained annually by the installation company, at minimal cost.

What happens if the mains supply is cut off or is tampered with?

The system includes several backup batteries which will operate the alarm for several days if necessary. In addition, the panel includes a mains fail filter, which alerts the alarm receiving centre about the failure of the mains power, and continues to monitor battery levels and also confirms restoration of mains power.

As the detectors are wireless we assume that they are battery operated – how long do the batteries last?

The batteries would be expected to last in excess of two years, but they are changed at 12-month intervals as part of the annual service and inspection. The system will alert the alarm receiving centre to a detector battery failure, loss of radio and other fault.

How else can I reduce the risk of my church being targeted?

Every church is unique and we suggest you consider a range of security measures to deter metal theft attacks.

Top tips include:

- Applying SmartWater** to external metal, prominently displaying SmartWater signage around the church to deter thieves and registering the kit with SmartWater. If you require additional SmartWater supplies (at 40% discount), please call **01952 204 102**.
- Engaging with your local community. We encourage churches to engage with the local community as joining the local Neighbourhood Watch scheme and urging the church's neighbours to keep a watchful eye out for anything suspicious around the church can be a big help that costs nothing. You can see how this has helped Chichester diocese on our website below.
- Speaking to your local Insurance Consultant and Surveyor (IC&S). Our IC&S teams provide insurance advice and risk management guidance to parishes. Their key role is to act as a local contact point and to ensure the delivery of excellent customer service. They can even arrange to undertake a metal theft seminar at a parish, archdeaconry or diocese level.

More advice and detailed guidance notes can be found at www.ecclesiastical.com/churchmatters – where you can also find contact details for your local IC&S by entering your postcode.

If you have any questions about the roof security system which are not covered here, or you want to arrange a free* no-obligation alarm survey, please contact us on **0845 600 9659** or by email roofalarms@ecclesiastical.com

Note: These FAQs relate to the electronic roof security system that Ecclesiastical has been trialling in theft hot spots since March 2010. Ecclesiastical will review and assess alternative electronic roof alarm systems from other suppliers/installers upon submission of their details.

*UK mainland only – travel expenses may be applicable offshore.

**The registration and use of SmartWater, or an alternative forensic marking system approved by us, is a policy condition on both our Parishguard and Hallguard policies.

