

# The 90-day test

Who runs the security business  
when you are away?

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**2027 edition**   10-minute read

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A practical guide with an owner-dependency scorecard

Images are illustrative.

# The whole guide on one page

Start with the calls that still come to you. Turn each one into a named responsibility, a permitted deputy and a record of what happened without your help.

| The check                                       | What good looks like                        | Ask for                                     |
|-------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| <b>1. Map the work that reaches you</b>         | Each interruption has a reason and an owner | Quotation, rota and escalation records      |
| <b>2. Separate permission from availability</b> | A deputy can do the actual task             | Role, licence and customer authority checks |
| <b>3. Test the night and weekend chain</b>      | The next person knows what to do            | On-call instructions and escalation log     |
| <b>4. Cost the work that remains</b>            | Replacement duties sit beside the profit    | Role description and supported cost         |
| <b>5. Run a controlled absence trial</b>        | The log shows decisions and interventions   | Trial plan, stop points and review          |
| <b>6. Decide what to fix before a sale</b>      | An unresolved dependency has an owner       | Completed scorecard and next action         |

Ninety days is our suggested review period, not a legal requirement or an industry benchmark. Build the trial around safe cover for your actual work.

Use the two-page scorecard to record cover and test it. Bring the responsibility you cannot yet hand over to a free first conversation: 01285 704466.

# 1. Map the work that reaches you

Which part of yesterday's rota needed you? Start there, then add quotations, keyholding instructions and customer calls. Record the decision you made, not just the fact that somebody rang.

## What good looks like

Take a completed shift record and trace each escalation to the named person who resolved it. Match their decision to the written instruction. This is a practical evidence test.

| Work reaching you              | Record to examine        | Question to answer                 |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <b>Guarding rota change</b>    | Rota and cover request   | Who can arrange suitable cover?    |
| <b>Alarm-service quotation</b> | Scope and price approval | Who can agree the work and charge? |
| <b>Keyholding escalation</b>   | Customer instructions    | Who may authorise the next action? |

### Alderfen Security Services

Illustrative example, not a real deal

Alderfen is invented. Its figures are illustrative. Annual revenue is £1.2m: £600,000 guarding, £360,000 maintenance and £240,000 installations and reactive work. Map the owner's duties across these services before costing replacement cover.

### What the buyer is thinking

The rota names a supervisor. Show which decisions that person can make and which still return to the owner.

## What to check

☐ Find the instruction behind one completed escalation.

☐ Record who acted and whether you intervened.

## 2. Separate permission from availability

A free diary slot does not answer whether someone can take over a task. Check the work, the person's competence and the authority given to them separately.

### What good looks like

SIA licensing depends on the activity and circumstances. A person doing licensable front-line work needs the appropriate front-line licence, whatever their job title [1]. Match the proposed deputy to the actual activity.

| Check                | Evidence to inspect                                  |
|----------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| Individual licence   | Activity, licence status and applicable SIA guidance |
| Practical competence | Training record and observed task                    |
| Company authority    | Written responsibility and decision limits           |
| Customer permission  | Actual terms and named authorised contacts           |

### Alderfen Security Services

Illustrative example, not a real deal

The cover plan needs separate entries for guarding, maintenance and installation work. A person listed against one entry does not settle the checks for another. Leave the evidence column open until the relevant record is examined.

### What the buyer is thinking

Give me the role and its evidence together. A title on an organisation chart does not tell me who can perform a particular assignment.

### What to check

- ☐ Check relevant director or manager licensing against the actual circumstances [1].
- ☐ Read each customer's terms for authority and contact arrangements.

## 3. Test the night and weekend chain

A daytime handover leaves a separate question: what happens when the office is closed? Trace a missed shift, an alarm call and an unresolved customer instruction through the out-of-hours chain.

### What good looks like

Use the current customer instructions and monitoring agreement as the test. The person taking the call can find the authorised action, contact route and point at which to escalate.

| Situation                    | Evidence test                            | Record the gap                  |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <b>Guard cannot attend</b>   | Follow the authorised cover route        | Who confirms the replacement?   |
| <b>Keyholding query</b>      | Read the customer's current instructions | Who may change the instruction? |
| <b>Monitoring escalation</b> | Trace the provider's contact route       | What happens if nobody answers? |

### Alderfen Security Services

Illustrative example, not a real deal

Of £360,000 maintenance income, £240,000 is under signed terms still in date. Read those terms and examine the records behind the remaining £120,000. Income alone does not supply an escalation instruction.

### What the buyer is thinking

Show the record from a completed handover. If the final step was to call you, identify what the next person lacked.

### What to check

- ☐ Confirm current customer and monitoring contacts from the actual records.
- ☐ Where a sale could change an arrangement, ask that party or issuer for its written position on the proposed transaction.

## 4. Cost the work that remains

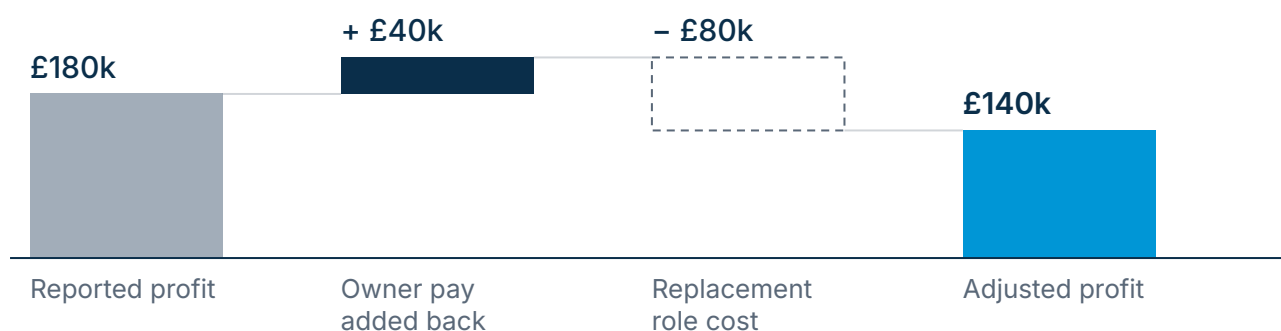
Write down the owner's continuing duties before adjusting profit. Passing a task to a supervisor still needs a plan for their time, cover and authority.

### What good looks like

Reconcile the role description to the rota and payroll records. Support a replacement cost with a specific staffing plan or quotation. Compare like duties and total cost, rather than a job title alone.

### The work still needs paying for

Illustrative



Illustrative figures: £180,000 + £40,000 less £80,000 = £140,000.

### Alderfen Security Services

Illustrative example, not a real deal

Reported profit is £180,000 after £40,000 owner pay. Adding that pay back and deducting the chosen £80,000 replacement cost leaves £140,000 adjusted profit. The replacement cost is a teaching assumption, not a salary benchmark.

### What the buyer is thinking

Show who will do the work represented by that cost. If some duties stay with you after completion, put their scope and duration into the proposed handover plan.

### What to check

- ☐ Match each continuing duty to the replacement plan.
- ☐ Check that a cost already in payroll is not deducted twice.

## 5. Run a controlled absence trial

Use the suggested 90-day period to prepare, observe and review cover. It does not mean leaving the business unsupported for three months.

### What good looks like

Choose an assignment whose scope and instructions are clear. Record the planned cover, the decisions made and every owner intervention. Compare the result with the agreed instructions, not with how quiet your phone was.

| Stage          | Action                                          | Evidence to keep              |
|----------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Prepare</b> | Confirm deputy, permission and safe stop points | Written cover plan            |
| <b>Observe</b> | Let the deputy handle the agreed responsibility | Decision and intervention log |
| <b>Review</b>  | Explain each return to the owner                | Gap, action and next trial    |

#### Alderfen Security Services

Illustrative example, not a real deal

For the fictional firm's rota work, the trial record has a place for the replacement decision, the authority used and any owner intervention. No completed trial result is assumed.

#### What the buyer is thinking

An honest intervention log helps me follow the dependency. Show what changed after the first attempt and which responsibility still needs cover.

### What to check

- ☐ Agree when the deputy must stop and escalate before starting.
- ☐ Keep normal safety, licensing and customer requirements in place.
- ☐ Set the next review date against the unresolved task.

# 6. Decide what to fix before a sale

Choose one responsibility to improve. Preparing for a sale or keeping the business are both valid outcomes.

## What good looks like

Give each dependency a named person, an evidence request and a trial to repeat. Judge progress against that record.

| Finding                         | Practical next action                     |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Deputy lacks permission         | Resolve authority with the relevant party |
| Instructions cannot be followed | Rewrite and test that step                |
| Owner retains a role            | Define and cost the handover              |

### Alderfen Security Services

Illustrative example, not a real deal

Its £140,000 adjusted profit includes the £80,000 replacement-cost assumption. Change that assumption only with supporting evidence.

### What the buyer is thinking

Which responsibility stays with the owner? Show the proposed cover.

An acquirer's announcement in March 2026 reported completion of an owner-managed Poole security business purchase. The target had 12 staff, one outlet and £1.04m revenue for the year ending December 2025 [2]. That provides evidence at a similar revenue scale to Alderfen; its electronic security and locksmith work differs from guarding and does not establish comparable operations or value.

## Bring one unresolved responsibility

Complete the scorecard and bring your next question to a free first conversation.

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Arrange a conversation

# Security owner-dependency scorecard

Business and review date go above the table. For each task, name the primary person and permitted deputy, then identify the record supporting that cover. Use the second sheet to test the handover.

## Business and review date

| Responsibility                | Primary person       | Permitted deputy     | Evidence and limits  |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Guarding rota</b>          | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
| <b>Quotations</b>             | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
| <b>Night escalation</b>       | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
| <b>Keyholding instruction</b> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
| <b>Customer authority</b>     | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |

## Unresolved dependency, person responsible and next review date

Type your answers in and save a copy, or print the page and fill it in by hand. Nothing you enter is sent to us.

# Test the handover

Use an agreed, safely covered absence trial. Record what happened, every owner intervention and the next action. A blank result is an open question, not a pass. Keep detailed records securely with the business.

## Business and trial period

| Responsibility                | Absence trial and result | Owner intervention   | Next action and date |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Guarding rota</b>          | <input type="text"/>     | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
| <b>Quotations</b>             | <input type="text"/>     | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
| <b>Night escalation</b>       | <input type="text"/>     | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
| <b>Keyholding instruction</b> | <input type="text"/>     | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
| <b>Customer authority</b>     | <input type="text"/>     | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |

## Stop points, remaining dependency and decision before the next trial

Type your answers in and save a copy, or print the page and fill it in by hand. Nothing you enter is sent to us.

# Sources and validity

1. Security Industry Authority: Find out if you need an SIA licence, updated Jan 2026. UK private security. Requirements depend on activity and circumstances, including exemptions and in-house distinctions. Relevant directors and managers can require a front-line or non-front-line licence. Alarm installation is not presented here as an SIA-licensed activity.
2. Croma Security Solutions Group plc: Acquisition of Southern Security Services, issuer-authored regulatory announcement hosted by Investegate, March 2026, RNS 6562W. Completion announced, not a separately identified legal completion day. Acquired from owner-manager Pierre Grandjean: Poole, 12 staff, one outlet, £1.04m revenue for the year ending December 2025. Principally electronic security with specialist locksmith services. Similar revenue scale does not prove comparable operations, value or handover outcomes. No Reads involvement is established.

**Checked Oct 2026.** We review every guide after the Autumn Budget in October 2026. Take legal and technical advice on the actual work and transaction where needed.

**The checks.** The 90-day period, role-cover matrix and absence trial are suggested practical exercises. They are not regulatory tests, industry standards or evidence of a particular value. Contract, monitoring and certification continuity questions must be answered from the actual terms and the relevant party's written position; no automatic transfer or universal consent rule is asserted.

**The example.** Alderfen Security Services is invented, not a Reads client or a real sale. Its figures demonstrate arithmetic, not market evidence. Revenue is £1.2m; £240,000 of its £360,000 maintenance income is under signed terms still in date. The £80,000 replacement cost is a chosen total-cost assumption. The images are illustrative.

# Start with the call that still comes to you



Bring the completed scorecard and one responsibility you want to hand over. Use a free first conversation to discuss what needs to happen next.

Keeping the business and improving cover is a valid decision too.

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