Purpose

The purpose of this Policy Directive is to provide clearly defined requirements relating to the management and control of the Mobile Duress Alarm System.

The Mobile Duress Alarm System (MDAS) forms part of an overall strategy to ensure the safety and security for staff and official visitors entering prisons by assisting in the provision of appropriate levels of response to possible and actual incidents.

Definitions

**Mobile Duress Alarm System (MDAS)**

A system designed to receive duress alarms activated by a wearer and give an approximate location on a site map to allow for immediate assistance to be provided.

**Personal Alarm Transmitter (PAT)**

Device worn by individual that can be activated in case of emergency.

1. **Principles**

The Mobile Duress Alarm System is designed as a means of alerting central control and/or duty room staff to the location of any staff member or visitor (other than social visitors to prisoners) who consider themselves in imminent danger and require assistance urgently.

The following core principles in relation to the Mobile Duress Alarm System are to be adhered to across all prison sites.

1.1 Safety and security are fundamental considerations for all aspects of prisons operations.

1.2 All duress alarms are to be ‘classified’ as CODE RED emergency situations.

1.3 There should be Uninterrupted Power Supply (UPS) and emergency power available to maintain essential MDAS services as a consequence of mains power disruption.

1.4 All physical and electronic systems installed as part of the mobile duress alarm system are to be maintained to design standards.

1.5 Any facility upgrade or change to a building’s configuration that may impact on duress alarm coverage is to be reported to Strategic Asset Services prior to any works commencing.
1.6 The PAT is not a replacement for the use of the prison radio system in the calling of operational 'code red emergencies'.

2. **General Requirements**

2.1 It is mandatory for all staff and visitors (other than social visitors to prisoners) to draw a personal alarm transmitter. This Directive applies to all people entering a prison who are:
   - employed on a full-time, part-time or casual basis by the Department
   - in paid or unpaid employment for the Department
   - employed directly or indirectly by the Department, or
   - employed by another organisation but work within a prison.

2.2 Staff and visitors entering the prison who are under Officer Escort at all times are not required to carry a personal alarm transmitter.

2.3 Response procedures for a Duress Alarm are to be developed at each prison and it is the responsibility of the Designated Superintendent to ensure users of personal alarm transmitters (PATs) and response groups are kept up to date with the procedures at all times.

2.4 The function of the 'lanyard pull' associated with the personal alarm transmitter should be removed completely to reduce false alarm rates.

2.5 In the interest of consistency ‘Personal Alarm Transmitters’ should only be carried in pouches approved by the Department and not clipped to belts directly.

2.6 Personal alarm transmitters should be situated and issued from an appropriate/secure location within the prison.

2.7 All staff and visitors (other than social visitors to prisoners) issued with a transmitter are to test the transmitter prior to commencing duty or entering the prison.

2.8 Weekly testing of a minimum 3 transmitters is to be conducted by the security manager or nominated delegate across varied locations within the inner prison envelope to check for system functionality and transmitter reporting accuracy.

2.9 All weekly checks are to be recorded in a separate register maintained by the security manager. The register is to contain the following details:
   - date and time of the test
   - name of the person conducting the test
   - result of the test and / or details of any faults
   - any follow up action.

2.10 The response plan shall be reviewed, amended and re-tested annually to ensure an effective response to duress alarms is maintained.

2.11 A duress alarm response exercise shall be practiced consistent with security requirements for each prison at least every 3 months.

3. **Standing and Local Orders**

Each prison is to develop a comprehensive local order covering the following and other site specific factors:
• location of transmitters
• issue of transmitters
• personal carriage of transmitters
• return of transmitters
• daily transmitter testing
• procedure for transmitter use/activation
• action on receipt of a duress alarm
• coordinated response to an alarm (responding officers)
• weekly system functionality and transmitter accuracy testing
• mandatory recording in relation to duress alarm activation
• establishment of an inventory and monthly auditing requirements for all transmitters
• establish and maintain a process for the following:
  o system functionality breakdown
  o unserviceable transmitter
  o loss of a transmitter
  o accidental removal of a transmitter from prison.

4. Policy Review

A review of this policy is to be carried out 2 yearly to assess changes to operational policy and technology.

Applicability

Applies to all public and private prisons.

Policy Sponsor

Director Security Services

Contact Person

Executive Support Officer Security Services