



Trespass, Illegal Occupation and Vacant Property Crime - Managing the Risk

As an intelligence-led security business, Mitie supports our clients in managing risk by deploying the most suitable mitigation solution when the threat level to assets changes. Our intelligence hub team and wider security network utilise data trends, information sharing and open-source analysis to deliver insights to provide timely actionable intelligence.

Where client premises are identified in close proximity to an unauthorised encampment, our Intelligence Hub works quickly to identify the threat and inform nearby sites of this actionable intelligence to enable us to work collaboratively and implement procedures, systems or target hardening to reduce the risk to people, assets, and the environments.

CONSTANT AND CO

UK Enforcement Services | Debt Collectors, Bailiffs, Land Recovery | Constant and Co

Working with our partners at Constant & Co, we share anonymised data to support our clients in minimising the impact that an unauthorised encampment or a speight of fly-tipping can have on their people, assets & environments.

During 2023, Constant & Co have identified an increase in eviction notices and requests for support far earlier than in previous years. In addition, they have seen an increase in size and scale of the illegal occupation which has also increased the cost of site clean-up and remedial works once the illegal occupation has ceased.

Through our partnership the true value to our clients is the shared ability to deliver both the legal support and ethical enforcement, as well as the physical and technical security solutions on a national basis in real-time.

TYPICAL TRENDS

Historic data trends show that illegal occupation rates increase initially in the spring and remain throughout the summer until reducing as the weather turns colder in October and November months.

The seasonal weather has an impact on the type of location most likely to be illegally occupied; during early spring and autumn/winter locations with a hardstanding such as carparks, highways derelict buildings are likely to be occupied with the dryer, summer months creating an increase of illegal occupation of woods, farmland and grass land including parks and open spaces. While the trend data indicates a preference for certain locations; there is often no space that can't be illegally occupied as health and safety considerations rarely apply.

Recently, we have seen an increase of illegal occupation late on a Friday with the site closing down and moving on by Monday morning which can often leave the site owner unaware.

Alongside the illegal entry and occupation of sites, there are additional criminal behaviour that can cause issues for the landowner:

- Domestic and commercial organised fly-tipping into a vacant property that can leave clear-up costs running into tens of thousands of pounds.
- Empty buildings that can be stripped of office furniture, copper wiring and roofing lead. Often the buildings can be identified on commercial property letting websites which allows access to imagery and floor plans of the property.
- Unfortunately, this type of activity is regarded as a Landowner issue and the police rarely support in trespass and forced entry scenarios; this therefore leaves the property owner to meet the cost of additional security mitigations and target hardening. Private trespasser removal companies each attend in excess of 1000 evictions on private land each year.



TYPICAL CLEAR-UP COSTS

Clear-up costs vary significantly depending on the type and volume of waste deposited within a site. Some items such as asbestos waste, tyres and fridges are charged per item to be disposed of. The most recent Government statistics on the problem (based on public land and not private land) identified that:

- The most common size category for fly-tipping incidents in 2020/21 was equivalent to a 'small van load' (34% of total incidents), followed by the equivalent of a 'car boot or less' (26%).*
- In 2020/21, 39,000 or 4% of total incidents were of 'tipper lorry load' size or larger, which is an increase of 16% from 33,000 in 2019/20. For these large fly-tipping incidents, the cost of clearance to local authorities in England in 2020/21 was £11.6 million, compared with £10.9 million in 2019/20.*

Costs can reach hundreds of thousand pounds, and a key way to reduce this is by identifying the location quickly and removing the illegal occupiers or by adding security mitigations to the site to prevent further tipping.

This year waste management legislation was recently announced by the Environment Agency that effective 1 January 2023, all **upholstered household furniture containing Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs)** must be incinerated and not be put into the landfill, this now incurs a price per item for clearance and disposal.

* Fly-tipping statistics for England, 2021 to 2022 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)



HOWDEN: THE INSURANCE BURDEN OF ILLEGAL OCCUPATION

Howden Insurance Broker Limited
(<https://www.howdengroup.com/uk-en/real-estate-insurance>)

The cost and diversionary work associated to claims of this type can be extensive, including property damage, removal of the debris, loss of rent, delays to development/refurbishment work, reputational damage for occupiers/property owners, or potential new occupiers of vacant sites.

As we continue to see signs of a hard insurance market, differentiating your risk management profile can improve the likelihood of achieving competitive terms from the insurance market.

Should you wish to understand more about Howden's partnership with Mitie and how this could benefit your insurance programme then please contact Howden Real Estate Practice.

RISK MITIGATION SOLUTIONS

Prevention is key and ensuring that a property is as difficult to access as possible. Although no guarantee that this will deter the most determined of attacker, the key objective is to make your site less inviting and force the identification of an easier target.

Some typical solutions deployed are:

- ✓ Temporary CCTV including motion activated and solar powered
- ✓ Building alarm systems
- ✓ Perimeter protection; including fences barriers and alarms
- ✓ Regular internal property inspections
- ✓ External mobile patrols
- ✓ Open-source intelligence monitoring of high-risk sites/locations
- ✓ Static security officers or officers augmented with canine units
- ✓ Warning signage
- ✓ Remote and/or auditable access control
- ✓ Keyholding & response service

Should you be the victim of illegal occupation at one of your properties then Mitie are on hand to support with ethical, effective enforcement services using common law & high court injunctions.