

Edinburgh businesses warned of threats to their vacant premises

Leading voices from police, fire and rescue and security sector host free dedicated webinar for Scottish business owners and keyholders

Empty workplaces in Edinburgh are being seen as potential easy targets for thieves and vandals looking to commit crime.

The warning comes following a spate of attacks on premises across the country, suggesting criminals are keen to exploit the current Covid-19 lockdown which is leaving most commercial premises empty for extended periods – and a lack of potential witnesses on the streets.

Experts across policing, fire and rescue and the security sector are coming together to help advise businesses of the risks and dangers, through an upcoming free webinar as part of a timely series launched by the Scottish Business Resilience Centre (SBRC) at the outset of the Covid-19 response.

David MacCrimmon is seconded to SBRC from Police Scotland, as its lead for serious and organised crime and counter terrorism and will be available to speak with concerned business owners and keyholders at the session, which takes place on Thursday 16 April 2020 at 10.00am.

He said: “With most of us stranded in our homes, the clear and

obvious place that burglars, arsonists and vandals will sadly be looking to will be our empty offices, clubs, bars and shops.

“This could range from a one-off break in to steal alcohol from a bar, to an organised effort to steal valuable assets.

“But businesses can limit their exposure to the risk – and there are reasonable steps they can still be taking to protect their premises while sticking to lockdown advice. This webinar will give us a chance to fully explain some of those options and for those that sign up to ask questions.”

As in previous webinars in the series, the SBRC will draw on its widespread expertise alongside leading industry names, to provide guidance to business owners concerned about the wide-ranging implications of the Covid-19 pandemic.

As part of its advice, the upcoming session will cover tips on what to remove from the premises, what to leave in windows, as well as how and when to safely visit.

Gary Wood, a Watch Commander with Scottish Fire and Rescue Service seconded to SBRC, will also lead a discussion on fire and safety risks – with simple tips that can be followed.

He said: “With many businesses temporarily closed due to the current Government restrictions on Covid-19, premises may now be unoccupied.

“Fire can strike at any time including periods of unprecedented situations such as the global pandemic we currently face. But with a number of straightforward steps, it is possible to appropriately manage fire risk within your temporarily vacant premises.

“The watchwords are ‘Protect the building – Protect the

business'. There can be a link between fire risk and criminality in terms of the risk of willful fire raising.

"This webinar will focus on practical guidance and advice that business owners and managers can use to mitigate those fire risks."

Further expertise will be provided by Ronnie Megaughin, Regional Manager for Scotland and Northern Ireland with the Security Industry Authority and Allan Burnett QPM, Operations Director with SecuriGroup.

During its first week, the SBRC provided advice to more than 600 business people across areas from cyber security to the legal implications of Covid-19. So far the dedicated webinars have been viewed by more than 1250 individuals.

To register for the session on vacant properties, you have to [click here](#) to register.

To watch previous webinars, please visit: <https://www.sbrcentre.co.uk/news/>

The SBRC is a non-profit organisation which exists to support and help protect Scottish Businesses.

To ensure Scotland remains a safe place to live, work and do business, SBRC will be regularly sharing Covid-19 developments and advice from Scottish Government, its partners and members as they happen.

SBRC maintains a unique connection to Police Scotland, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and Scottish Government, which gives the organisation exclusive access to the latest information to advise citizens and businesses how to interact safely.

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