

## The Role of Hostile Vehicle Mitigation in a Protective Security Strategy

Hostile Vehicle Mitigation (HVM) has a critical role to play in protecting property and, more importantly, people. Here, Richard Winstanley at Bft Automation explores how pharmaceutical firms can incorporate HVM into their security plans...

Mitigating against the threat of a cyber attack is a major focus of security strategies for today's pharmaceutical businesses, and rightly so. But the threat of physical attack sadly also remains a concern, especially for organisations working in any particularly sensitive or controversial areas within pharmacology or those who produce products in high demand or short supply.

While terror attacks do not dominate news headlines the way they did in the years leading up to the Coronavirus pandemic, the threat of terrorism in the UK remains serious and, sadly, hostile vehicles have become increasingly relied on by those seeking to launch an attack.

For pharmaceutical firms that have identified the threat of a terror attack or another serious crime, HVM is a key consideration when planning how to defend their property and, crucially, the people who work there.

### Assessing the Risk

HVM comes into play as part of an integrated protective approach to security and, as such, should fit within the overarching priorities of a wider security strategy.

With this in mind, the process of introducing HVM should begin with a risk assessment of the threat to every individual site operated by a company. For multinational operations, the nature of the risk is likely to differ according to location – for instance, a UK pharmaceutical firm with a manufacturing plant in a politically volatile country will have different needs to an organisation that is primarily based out of just one country.

Regardless of the size of a firm's operations, some examples of what this risk assessment should include are:



*Retractable bollards allow access for emergency vehicles*

### 1. Identifying all vehicle access points to every site

This includes looking at any weak areas that may be particularly vulnerable to a hostile vehicle attack.

### 2. An investigation of the local environment

The surrounding roads are likely to have an impact on the threat of HVM. For example, consider how traffic currently flows around the location and whether this can be reviewed to keep vehicles further away from the property.

Also, bear in mind that a hostile vehicle incident usually begins on public roads with little or no warning, but vehicles approaching the property will need an area of 'run up' in order to build up speed. If this is denied by the very nature of the road layout, the risk to life and of damage caused to property is reduced.

### 3. Parking considerations

If the introduction of security barriers is likely to impact on access to parking facilities, there are measures that can be taken to address this, such as the use of automated bollards that can be lowered to allow entry.

### 4. The immediacy of any threat

In circumstances where a company is made aware of a clear and present threat to their premises, it's possible to hire temporary security products while you search for a permanent solution. These are just a few examples and a thorough risk assessment should not be limited to the above. Manufacturers and installers of HVM solutions are well

placed to support security teams in the risk assessment process if needed.

### Finding the Right Solution

There are numerous HVM solutions which range from automatic bollards to static columns and barriers.

If rammed by a truck travelling at speed, conventional barriers may slow the vehicle, but could still be displaced beyond the point of impact and may still strike at anyone in the immediate vicinity. The simplest and most versatile solution is to install anti-terrorism bollards, either fixed or retractable, which offer protection without impeding on the movement of pedestrians and cyclists.

Certified HVM bollards are not only designed and tested to withstand impact from vehicles of various sizes and design but also at different speed ranges, for example 30mph or 50mph.

The Centre for the Protection of National Infrastructure (CPNI) is a useful starting point to find out more about the range of bollard options available. A Government-backed resource for physical and personnel protective security, the website includes details on HVM barriers, with an interactive online list of vehicle security barriers that meet all regulations and standards, including crash test certification: [www.cpni.gov.uk](http://www.cpni.gov.uk)

As well as ensuring that any HVM solution meets all regulations, it's useful to look at the following factors:

- Does the solution provide protection from vehicles large and small?
- What's the potential approach speed attainable?
- A site risk assessment to assess how the HVM solution would work in practice is advisable.

## Fixed vs Automated

One of the first decisions to make before the introduction of bollards is whether it's more appropriate to use a fixed or automated option.

Fixed bollards present a clear, visible deterrent to potential attackers. For example, for thieves looking to steal goods from a pharmaceutical manufacturing plant, simply having an obvious barrier like security bollards can be enough to make them think twice and choose an easier target.

Plus, if there is a known threat to the property, those who work there are likely to feel safer with an obvious deterrent in place.

However, while barriers are designed to keep hostile vehicles out, security teams must also consider the need to allow emergency vehicles in, should the need arise. This is where a solution such as retractable bollards will come into play, with vehicle access control built in for emergency and operational vehicles. This solution offers flexibility to accommodate temporary changes in traffic flow.

Furthermore, automated bollards can be integrated into a building management system, where a security team would be able to control them in the same way they would a CCTV system and an alarm network.

Integrating bollard controls into a building management system would enable a security team to control them remotely and to deploy them rapidly (referred to as EFO – emergency



*A security guard is able to use an emergency fast operation setting to activate bollards*

fast operation). For example, if a security guard at a pharmaceutical factory were to notice an unexpected vehicle approaching, they could use an emergency fast operation setting to activate bollards in less than three seconds, as opposed to a more typical time of between five and 10 seconds.

## A Note on Aesthetics

Fixed bollards are naturally an ideal option for protecting a street entrance or in any other environment where a building is accessed on foot or by bike, as there is no need to lower them to allow vehicles to enter.

But for some companies, the idea of visible bollards may be off-putting. It might be that there's no need for a visible deterrent and the visual impact of bollards might jar with the immediate setting. Or a company is keen for members of staff to feel safe without a reminder of any threat to security.

In such cases, there are anti-terrorism products available that can preserve the appearance of the surrounding environment while providing safety – by appearing as a row of planters, as just one example.

## Practical Points

Installers and manufacturers can advise on practical details that will influence what make of bollard a security team decides to use. A few points to consider are:

- The height and visibility of the bollards, particularly in low light conditions.
- The ground conditions at a site, as permanent bollards require foundations into the ground.
- The placement and spacing of bollards in relation to pedestrian movement.

As well as the detailed information provided by the CPNI, another useful resource is the Perimeter Security Suppliers Association (PSSA), which has a dedicated hub of information purely on HVM: <https://hvmhub.com/about/>

Whether it's mitigating against an act of terror targeted at the pharmacological sector or any other serious crimes where a hostile vehicle could be used, HVM can play a significant role in protecting property and, most importantly, those who work in or visit any pharmaceutical firm.



*Bollards stop a lorry approaching at speed*



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