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**Code of practice for the provision of
investigative services**

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Summary of pages

This document comprises a front cover, and inside front cover, pages i to iv, pages 1 to 18, an inside back cover and a back cover.

Foreword

Publishing information

This British Standard is published by BSI Standards Limited, under licence from The British Standards Institution, and came into effect on 31 August 2018. It was prepared by Technical Committee GW/3, *Private security management and services*. A list of organizations represented on this committee can be obtained on request to its secretary.

Supersession

This British Standard supersedes BS 102000:2013, which is withdrawn.

Information about this document

This British Standard seeks to help providers of investigative services demonstrate their accountability at a time when the government is implementing the licensing of such services. The Private Security Industry Act 2001 [1] contains provisions for regulating private investigations; these are yet to be introduced.

This British Standard is intended for use by all providers, but it might be perceived that some of its recommendations could be beyond the resources of smaller service providers, e.g. sole traders; however, it is expected that affiliation to a professional body or engaging the services of other organizations would enable such providers to comply with the recommendations.

This is a full revision of the standard, and introduces the following principal changes:

- an enhanced definition of "investigation";
- the introduction of a definition of "person of interest";
- updated references; and
- reconsideration of the vetting processes.

Use of this document

As a code of practice, this British Standard takes the form of guidance and recommendations. It should not be quoted as if it were a specification and particular care should be taken to ensure that claims of compliance are not misleading.

Any user claiming compliance with this British Standard is expected to be able to justify any course of action that deviates from its recommendations.

It has been assumed in the preparation of this British Standard that the execution of its provisions will be entrusted to appropriately qualified and experienced people, for whose use it has been produced.

Presentational conventions

The provisions of this standard are presented in roman (i.e. upright) type. Its recommendations are expressed in sentences in which the principal auxiliary verb is "should".

Commentary, explanation and general informative material is presented in smaller italic type, and does not constitute a normative element.

Where words have alternative spellings, the preferred spelling of The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary is used (e.g. "organization" rather than "organisation").

Contractual and legal considerations

This publication does not purport to include all the necessary provisions of a contract. Users are responsible for its correct application.

Compliance with a British Standard cannot confer immunity from legal obligations.

Particular attention is drawn to the legislation listed in [Annex A](#).

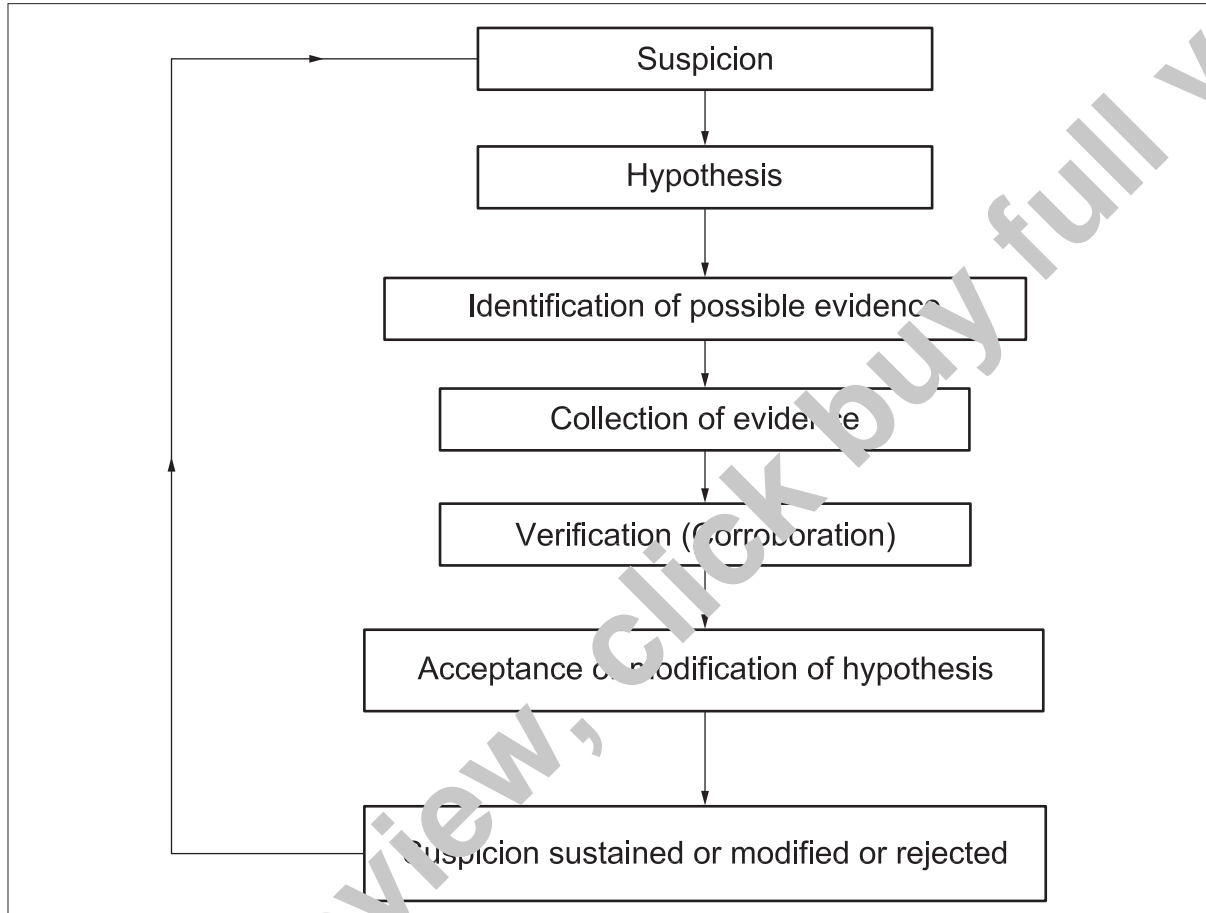
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Introduction

An investigation, regardless of type, is likely to follow a set process. There are varying practices, legal protocols and restrictions in place that could have an effect on how the process is applied, depending on specialist enquiries, but in essence investigations follow a pattern called the inference cycle (see [Figure 1](#)). This was identified by Hugo Cornwall [2].

Figure 1 — The inference cycle



The inference cycle is a series of stages, as follows.

- a) Suspicion – A suspicion, theory, incident, argument or other predicate event occurs that causes an investigation to start. In other words, something happens that causes a person to think an investigation is required. Routinely, this follows a report by the client or informant – that is, something occurs which a client wants investigated. The term "suspicion" includes actual incidents, and is used because it relates to those incidents which need investigation because the causes, consequences or responsibilities are not clear from the outset.
- b) Hypothesis – The inference cycle recognizes that in every case, an investigator begins to theorize as to what has happened and/or some other facts need investigation. This is not an obstruction to an objective investigation, merely an acknowledged fact. A hypothesis is not a conclusion – it is an initial assessment. For example, if an investigator walks into a room and sees a body wrapped in carpet with a knife in its back, the hypothesis is that a murder has taken place, no more. By inference, the hypothesis that this event is a murder means a murderer exists, but it does not identify a murderer. Very often, an early theory is proved to be correct but the following actions dig deeper into that initial hypothesis and might even change it. Application of the inference cycle either supports that theory, or proves it to be incorrect. But the hypothesis directs initial,

essential investigatory practice – in this case, the establishment of a murder team, the instigation of scene preservation and localized enquiries.

An alternative example is an accident in the workplace. The accident occurs, and attendance at the scene identifies a ladder on the floor, a scrape mark leading from the ladder to a pool of spilled oil, and broken materials at the victim's point of landing. The hypothesis is that the ladder was placed in a pool of oil, but whether this is true, who spilled the oil, who placed the ladder and other elements have still to be investigated. The hypothesis merely identifies potential lines of enquiry, but each line might provide new hypotheses.

A final example could be that in the light of requirements of insurers or as a result of good business practice (which, for example, is itself the result of negative experience with fraud) a company conducts due diligence investigations.

- c) Identification and collection of possible evidence – Having recognized that a theory exists, the investigator seeks evidence that either supports it, or creates a new theory. In an investigation, which has to be objective if it is to stand up to scrutiny in a court of law or in commerce, there is a set process of information and evidence gathering to achieve that aim.
- d) Verification or corroboration – Discovery of evidence is not complete until the quality of that evidence can be said to be beyond reproach. The normal method of assuring the quality of evidence is to support it by corroboration, but this can also be done statistically, as with DNA analysis, for example. The better the corroboration, the higher the probability that the fact that is to be proved, has been proved.
- e) Acceptance or modification of hypothesis – Having gathered all available evidence, one thing ought to be known. Was the initial hypothesis correct, or not? If the hypothesis changed as the enquiry developed, is the latest hypothesis correct? Is it proved beyond all reasonable doubt (the criminal standard of proof), beyond the balance of probabilities (the civil standard of proof), or is it proved to be false? It is evident that the hypothesis is not a static concept – it is dynamic and often changes during an investigation.
- f) Suspicion sustained, modified or rejected – The result of the answer to the previous question allows the investigator to decide whether sufficient evidence exists to support the original hypothesis, any amended hypotheses, or whether the investigator has to return to the beginning.

The inference cycle can be applied to individual elements of the investigation, to sections of it, or to the whole investigation process. It is not really necessary that the process be understood, but an understanding of the process and its application in investigation improves the quality of the investigation process, and its result.

This cycle can take seconds – an investigator is told something has happened, goes straight to a CCTV system or accesses records, and obtains the evidence that confirms the suspicion. Or an investigation can take years for procedural, ethical, legal or historical reasons.

For a practical illustration of how the inference cycle applies in an investigation, see [Annex B](#).

1 Scope

This British Standard gives recommendations for the conduct, management, staffing and operational accountability for the provision of investigative services.

This British Standard is specifically designed to provide a broad set of procedures to assist the investigative provider in adhering to industry best practice; it also draws attention to the case management procedures, data handling regulations and the employment practices applicable to the investigation. This standard also recommends how the organization can demonstrate it has the financial and operational resources available to provide the services offered, and is competent and provides recourse in the event of a complaint.

NOTE 1 Additionally, this British Standard can be used by those who wish to purchase investigative services.

NOTE 2 A non-exhaustive list of investigative services activities is given in [Annex C](#).

2 Normative references

There are no normative references in this document.

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this British Standard, the following terms and definitions apply.

3.1 client

legal person requesting the investigative service

3.2 independent adjudication

form of dispute resolution, the outcome of which is a decision by an external independent third party, within a specified period of time, which is binding on the parties in dispute, and final if there is deemed to be no case to answer but conversely if a prime facie case is found, is determined by an external disciplinary process, unless and until reviewed by either arbitration or litigation

3.3 investigative services

surveillance, enquiries or investigative activities that are carried out for the purposes of obtaining information about:

- a particular legal person or about the activities, status or whereabouts of a particular legal person; or
- the circumstances in which, or means by which, property has been lost, stolen, damaged or altered; or
- any other activities ancillary to current or anticipated legal proceedings, conducted under instruction of a client

NOTE A summary of these activities is given in [Annex C](#). Attention is also drawn to the Private Security Industry Act 2001 [1].

3.4 investigative service provider

legal person providing investigative services under contract

3.5 investigative service provider owner

proprietor, partner, shareholder or director of an investigative service provider