



VPS helps prevent illegal rave and multi-million pound damage to commercial property

The rapid response and tenacity of VPS, The Vacant Property Specialists helped to prevent an illegal New Years Eve rave from taking place in a 100,000 sq ft warehouse facility at Park Royal, London. It enabled the police to arrest the alleged organiser of the event and averted potentially multi-million pounds worth of damage to the property.

VPS' SmartAlarm was installed on behalf of the client AXA Insurance, to protect the warehouse facility, which had recently been refurbished and comprises 86,000 sq ft of warehouse space with a further 20,000 sq ft of office space.

The alarm was triggered on Friday 30th December 2011 in the evening when a group entered the property through a fire door. This alerted VPS' Alarm Response Centre which reacted immediately by alerting the Police and sending a response team to inspect the break-in. VPS were on site within 42 minutes to find a highly organised group claiming 'squatters rights' under the Section 6 Act and setting up equipment for an illegal rave.

Over 2,500 tickets had been sold for the rave at £25 each and the group had hard wired their sound equipment into the building's electrical system. Because the group were claiming 'squatters rights' the Police were unable to take any further action so VPS installed 4 guards to monitor the situation over night.

Working around the clock and through sheer tenacity the VPS team used their expertise to coax the organiser out of the building the next day, which enabled Police to make an arrest.

“We are very pleased with the partnership that we have developed with VPS over the last 8 years. They realised the criticality of the situation and knew it was important to expedite. VPS offer a bespoke range of services and provide a rapid response, which is absolutely vital. Because they are focused on providing us with high standards of customer service it means that our property clients also get a better service.”

Douglas Barnett
Head of Customer Risk Management at AXA





VPS stepped up security even further installing eight security guards in anticipation of thousands of revellers arriving to attend the rave. The increased security presence meant that revellers were dispersed peacefully. Police are now pressing charges and VPS continues to provide both electronic and manned protection to prevent any future break-ins.

Douglas Barnett, Head of Customer Risk Management at AXA Insurance, a VPS client, said: "Had VPS not responded so quickly after the alarm activation and used their tenacity to enable the Police to make an arrest, it is likely that the damage from the rave could have resulted in a multi-million pound insurance claim".

"Metals such as the copper pipes and electrical wiring could have been stolen from the premises. Not only would these have needed to be replaced, but catastrophic water damage and flooding could have been caused during their removal. The clean-up operation would have also delayed any potential tenants from taking space immediately leaving the building owner even more out of pocket".

PROJECT TIMELINE

Friday 30th December

- 17:42** Alarm activated, Response Centre make contact with VPS response team.
- 18:26** VPS arrive on site to find group setting up party and claiming squatters rights. Inspections put in place over the evening to monitor the situation.

Saturday 31st December

- 11:00** VPS updated AXA and recommended placing 2 full time security officers on site.
- 12:00** 2 guards arrive on site within 1 hour of client's instruction.
- 14:10** VPS Response team coax organiser out of building. He was then promptly arrested for possession of stolen keys. VPS alerts AXA that rave is being planned for that evening.
- 14:15** On VPS's recommendation AXA approved 2 additional guards and steel security doors to be installed.
- 16:03** Squatters turned violent and were arrested and removed. VPS crew on site promptly reinstated alarms and replaced squatters padlocks with VPS padlocks.
- 16:43** VPS approved locksmith attended to change all locks.
- 18:17** The total number of guards on site was increased to 8 in anticipation of thousands of revellers arriving.

Sunday 1st January

- 08:12** Confirmation that all partygoers had been dispersed peacefully.

Monday 2nd January

Number of guards were reduced to 2 as the high risk period had passed.

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