



Notice

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Saint-Gobain Performance Plastics
Unit 13, Ball Mill Top Business Park
Grimley, Worcestershire WR2 6LS
United Kingdom
Tel: +44 (0) 1905 640 400
E-mail: solargardukinfo@saint-gobain.com
www.solargard.co.uk

A film not all about security...

This month in the Risk UK Interview hot seat is Ian Penfold, architectural manager at Solar Gard who gives us an insight into the concerns he is hearing regarding the 2012 Olympics and the role of window films in security

Ian is the Architectural manager for Solar Gard in the UK. He joined Solar Gard in 2005 and has spent 25 years in the window film industry. Ian has been Chair of the Glass and Glazing Federation Applied Film Group for the last three years. This combined with his customer duties means that he frequently makes presentations on a variety of glazing topics.

What are the trends that you are seeing in the market today?

A key trend we are seeing in the UK is that energy and cost concerns are overriding those of safety. Although improved security is recognised as important to UK businesses, the current green agenda, combined with spending cuts due to the recession, means more emphasis is being put onto saving energy, reducing CO2 output and lowering expenses.

Has the 2012 Olympic Games increased the interest in window films, especially in the major cities?

The Olympics has certainly increased the focus on security and business continuity as a whole, and enquiries around window film have increased as a result. But it should be noted that the problem of terrorism and glass breakage has been with us for decades - the Olympics has simply highlighted the issue.

What are the typical questions you are being asked with regard to security?

The first question is almost always price - "how much does it cost." However, as soon as we explain that safety film can also be used for solar control we find customers are quick to tune into the cost benefits and payback implications of this. Typically, our films will have paid for themselves within two to three years.

Businesses are also keen to find out if their windows are compatible with Health, Safety and Welfare Regulation 14. This regulation demands that glass surfaces are protected against dangerous breakage, but a large number of businesses, perhaps the majority, are unaware of whether they comply or not. Failure to comply with this could prove very costly in the event of glass breakage, as companies could be made liable for any property damage or injury caused. The implications of this for many small businesses could be disastrous.

What are the common misconceptions/myths surrounding window films?

When people think of window film, they may well think of blacked-out, celebrity car windows. They might think that, in order to block out solar energy, the films have to be dark in colour, or have a reflective surface that almost

turns the window into a mirror. In fact, many window films are practically invisible on glass surfaces, and don't interrupt the view from the window in any way whatsoever.

It's also important to note that window films offer a permanent solution rather than a make do option. The latest products, for example, come with a 16-year warranty available.

Window films not only address security concerns but also provide energy savings and perform other tasks (privacy, wifi control etc). Is there an end-user knowledge gap of this?

Absolutely - a key problem in our industry is the general ignorance of the multitude of benefits window film can provide. In many cases people know about one benefit but they aren't aware of any of the others.

The most well-known benefit of window film is probably solar control. These films can reduce the energy required for cooling a typical building by 30%, which clearly has a knock-on effect for a building's CO2 emissions. By rejecting up to 80% of solar energy they eliminate hot spots and reduce solar glare inside the building, without blocking natural light.

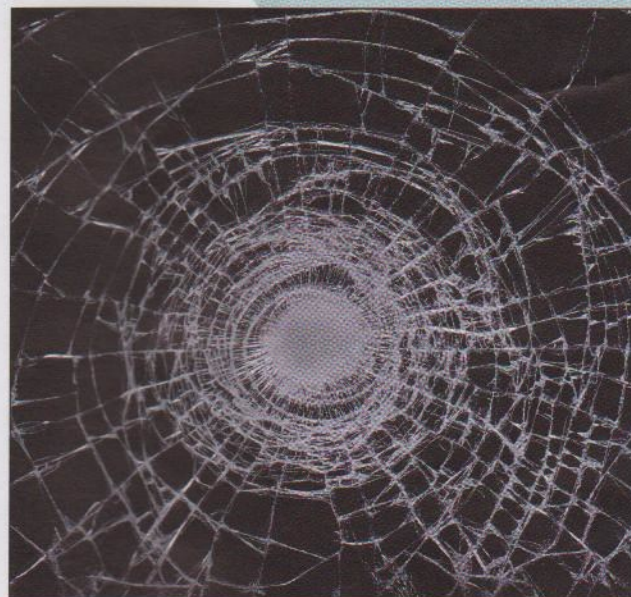
From a security point of view, films not only help hold broken glass together in the event of an explosion, but they can also help stop information theft, using Electromagnetic Interference (EMI) to block signals from devices such as phones, wireless networks and computers.

How relevant is the window frame in the security side of things?

The window frame is a really important factor that needs to be considered to ensure the right level of protection is achieved.

On the vast majority of windows that have safety film applied to them, there is a small edge gap between the film and the frame. Although this enables the window to break without creating dangerous glass shards, it allows the blast wave from an explosion to pass through the building, which can cause damage or injury.

This application provides the greatest value for money in most scenarios, but businesses taking this option leave themselves at risk. Installing safety window film that covers the entire glass surface, or in some cases →



Ian Penfold

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fitting an edge retention system to the glass, greatly reduces the chances of property damage or injury occurring.

What are your predictions for the next twelve months in the sector?

The build up to the Olympic Games, the Royal wedding and many other high-profile events in the UK will continue to draw attention to the security market. One hundred and twenty World Leaders will attend the Olympics, for example, so their security will be paramount. When the final analysis of security and continuity is made around these events I believe we will see a sharp increase in the demand for our product range.

What is your security pet hate?

High-tech products and services that measure or record an incident taking place, rather than offering a preventative or protective solution.

How important do you think trade associations are?

Published impact standards and security Standards, such as EN12600 and EN356, through to International Blast Standards, such as 16933, are very important. From a testing and lobbying point of view, they are vital to our business.

Is there too much legislation/bureaucracy in your industry or is it essential?

Legislation is a great motivator, so I'd argue it's essential. Measures such as Regulation 14 are a great example, although more could be done to boost awareness of this amongst business owners. On a day-to-day basis we are educating UK businesses on the major risks they face and having legislation in place means that they are inclined to take these concerns more seriously.

What is your top security tip?

The best tip is to have 'security awareness'. Encouraging staff to be vigilant is the most effective, yet probably the least expensive, way to improve security.

Is there more that the government can do to improve security/safety in the UK?

There are a few areas the government should be looking at more closely when it comes to security in the UK.

For example they need to take steps to ensure companies have business continuity in the event of a disaster. Too many businesses, particularly small businesses, do not have a continuity plan, and this results in loss of data, building damage and air conditioning failure, which is incredibly costly.

There should also be more help with funding when it comes to safety. Government-supported schemes such as the windows scrappage scheme encourage businesses to improve their window energy ratings, but there is increased demand for similar support for combined energy saving and safety initiatives.

