

Do you really need an automated gate?



Automated gates offer many benefits to a site, whether it is residential or commercial. Improved access control, ease of entry and egress, a resultant heightened sense of security, these all feature heavily on the list of pros, as does aesthetic charm and kerb appeal. Gate Safe is very much in favour of the installation of automated gates but there are clearly some instances where, perhaps an automated gate does not represent the best solution for the client.

Gate Safe has put together a list of questions to consider when discussing the introduction of a new automated gate to a specific site.



Is the customer looking to introduce vehicular access control or pedestrian access control, or a combination of both?

Vehicular access control is ideally suited to an automated gate system, but if pedestrians will be required to use the same point of entry / exit, consideration should be given to providing segregated pedestrian access?



Who will be using the gate and what level of usage is anticipated?

A smart automated gate which is rarely used will not deliver the required return on investment. In addition, if the gate is to be frequently used by persons requiring security clearance, is an operated barrier a more appropriate installation? Should the gate be installed as a fully automatic operation or would a hold-to-run system of control be better suited to the setting?



Is the size of the gate that is being specified capable of handling the loading associated with an automated system? Is the gate itself suitably robust and of the rigid construction required for this type of installation?

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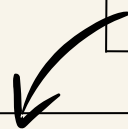


What plans does the customer have in terms of how the gate will be operated and access control granted?

If visitors to the site are going to be required to use an entry device such as an intercom or keypad, this must be mounted in a safe position well away from the gate to prevent the risk of coming into direct contact with the gate whilst operating the controls. Does the gate setting allow for this?



Finally, two critical questions which will determine whether an automated gate is deemed the most appropriate means of access control. Whilst the customer might be comfortable with the cost of the gate itself and the associated installation fees, are they aware of the additional investment required to ensure the safety of the gate, ie the cost of photocells or light curtains or laser scanner and safety edges and associated labour costs? No responsible installer should be prepared to install any automated gate without the requisite – and legally required - safety features.



And equally important, is the customer aware of the requirement for the gate to be regularly maintained (minimum of six months) by a competent and suitably trained installer? Once again, no installer should be discussing the relevance of an automated gate system if the client is not willing to uphold its continued safety via regular maintenance checks. These checks are a legal requirement for any commercial installation – which would of course include gates on a residential housing block. It is also worth remembering even if the property is officially a residential dwelling, if it is also used as a place of work, for example, if the client works from home, it will be deemed a commercial setting.

