



CCTV Systems

The importance of an operational CCTV system on Licensed, Retail and Commercial premises cannot be over emphasized. The ability to produce visible images of real time events and positive identification of persons involved in those events not only greatly enhance the likelihood of convictions in criminal proceedings but also provide a strong deterrent to criminal offences on such protected premises.

Areas for consideration:

The availability of effectively managed, fit for purpose and correctly sited CCTV has the potential to significantly assist in:

Detection of crime:

- 1) Identify an offender(s) at a scene(s).
- 2) Identify an offender(s) route to and from a scene(s).
- 3) Identify an offender(s) activity prior, during and post incident.
- 4) Identify a victim(s).
- 5) Identify any witnesses.
- 6) Identify any vehicles connected to an incident
- 7) Indicate when an event or reported activity has **not** occurred.
- 8) Confirm or dispel an individual's participation in unlawful activity and prevent ambiguity with regard to interpretation of an individual's activity.

Prevention of crime:

- a) An awareness of the presence of CCTV by potential offenders has a deterrent effect in relation to the commission of crime and anti social behaviour.
- b) Facilitates intervention to deter repeat crime.

Public and community reassurance:

The presence of a CCTV installation assists in the creation of an environment perceived by the public to be safe and secure. It also reduces concerns that they will be the victims of, or witnesses to, crime or disorder.

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CCTV - Ancillary benefits:

- a) The availability of CCTV also has the potential to:
- b) Safeguard users/owners, particularly with regard to defending malicious complaints of a criminal or civil nature.
- c) Meet any requirements imposed by Insurers or negotiate a reduction in premiums.

These benefits are such that it is now not only subject of best practise but both an agreed and imposed condition on many Licensed Premises.

The CCTV industry is vast and Systems range from the relatively cheap 'Do-it yourself' kits costing a few hundred pounds, more complex systems costing several thousand pounds including installation, and rental systems which for a set monthly fee include maintenance. The Constabulary cannot recommend any one provider over another and there are so many different systems we are unable to likewise recommend an individual system. However there follows some sources of Guidance which are available and a Crime Prevention officer can attend your premises, by appointment, to assist in relation to a professional view of your requirements.

The Home Office in association with the Association of Chief Police Officers has produced some Guidance available on the following web site - www.homeoffice.gov.uk/UK - Police Requirements for Digital CCTV Systems (is available in a downloadable PDF file 224K- adobe acrobat reader).

If you are new to the world of CCTV or just considering upgrading from an aging previous VHS format system of Video cassette recorder and cameras the technology has advanced quite significantly in recent years and in preference the Police would ask that your system is Digital. i.e. images are recorded on to a Hard drive in the machine. However this MUST then be transferable on to a CD, DVD or digital tape.

The following document **SS1** provides guidance as to what the Constabulary and enforcement agencies consider as a minimum acceptable standard for the system to be 'Fit for Purpose' and meet the criteria of conditions for operation.

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CCTV systems - fit for purpose

It is suggested that in relation to the installation of any CCTV system, the following requirements are a minimum acceptable standard:

- **The system should incorporate an exterior mounted camera for each public entry/exit, to or from the premises. The camera must be aimed towards the doorway(s) and its environs (i.e. the footpath outside the doorway).** Things to consider are height, angle and lighting. A good picture of those entering or leaving your premises will prove vital in identification. Facial recognition is important. Poorly sited cameras provide poor evidence so pictures which are obstructed by objects or showing the tops of peoples heads are a waste of your time and money.
- **All archived material must be capable of being copied to another medium on site (i.e. CD, DVD, digital tape etc) which can be taken from the premises. The owner/user of the system must be capable of downloading or copying archived material. If available the system 'user's manual' should be kept readily available together with contact details of installer/manufacturer.** Make sure someone knows how to operate your equipment and produce recorded copies quickly. Any system is worthless if no one knows how to use it correctly.
- **The system must display the correct time and date on both live and recorded material if available (Dial 123 for speaking clock to establish G.M.T.) Users must remember to adjust for British summer time.** Accurate Time and Dates are vital to a criminal justice case. Incorrect details can cause confusion, doubt and may cause a prosecution to fail.
- **The system should be regularly serviced at agreed intervals, perhaps every 12 months and a service record kept on site.** All machinery deteriorates over time, camera lenses need cleaning as well as parts of the recording system so don't be caught out by a failing system providing poor quality images or worse **none** at all.

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- **If the system is digital (i.e. records direct to a hard drive): the system must be capable of archiving recorded material for a minimum of 28 days.**
If a VHS format is being used: 31 x videocassettes numbered 1 to 31 consecutively should be used on the corresponding day of the month and not used again until the corresponding day of the following month(s). In ideal situations recorded evidence will be required as soon as possible after the event. In more serious incidents there can be some delay before this evidence can be viewed and collected.
- **The recording equipment and tapes/discs should be kept in a secure environment under control of the Owner/user or responsible named individual.** Security of the system and evidence is an important consideration and a tamper proof cabinet could prove a valuable investment. Offenders will attempt to destroy this evidence or damage your equipment if given a chance.
- **Appropriate signage indicating an operative CCTV system in conspicuous positions.** The preventative effect of such notices to offenders should not be underestimated and is a legal requirement of the DATA Protection Act. You need to specify who is responsible for recording/holding these images.
- **Written Records.** In addition to Service and maintenance records, already mentioned, training records for staff, operator logs or schedules and requests/provision of copies relating to incidents should be kept in writing and available for examination by Authorised officers.

All of which go to establishing an organised well run premises with a partnership approach to Crime prevention.