



Surveillance Systems

Surveillance systems can help the Minneapolis Police Department with investigations; but only if they are turned on. In addition, it is important that the individuals who are at a business at the time of a crime know how to operate the system.

If your business has a security surveillance system, please:

- Make sure you know how to use it.
 - How long does it record?
 - What happens when it runs out of space on the tape or hard drive?
 - How many days does it record before it loops and records over itself again?
 - How do you access different cameras if you have more than one?
 - How do you zoom in, zoom out, or move the camera if your system allows this?
 - How do you save still pictures?
 - How do you record/extract video?
- Teach managers or other trusted employees how to use the system so someone at all hours of the day can provide surveillance to officers or investigators
- Consider upgrading to digital if you are using a videotape/VHS system.



Resolution and Compression

The quality of resolution is important. Digital systems often compress videos in order to save space, which means you can get many days of footage in your storage. But too high of a compression rate can result in loss of data. The live video can look very clear, but when the same scene is put to video it can be pixilated and blurry. The original images cannot be recovered. Alternatively, a low compression rate can mean the files are much larger and the quality of video will be very good, but it will take fewer days of recording before your storage can fill.



Many vendors have systems that allow you to change the quality rate and other settings even after you have purchased it. Some vendors may require a fee to change the system. In order to increase the efficacy:

- Determine your specific needs while you are deciding which system you will purchase.
- Conduct several tests of the system while the vendor is setting it up to ensure that the quality of the videos match your needs; both live on screen as well as retrieved as a video file.

To ensure you are getting the best quality for your money consider the following:

- What is the compression rate and resolution of the system?
- Can you change the settings if you need to later?
- What do you need the system for? Are there times of the night that you don't need full quality recordings? If so, consider a motion activated system which will typically record at a lower rate during off times (for example, 5 frames per second) and switch to the normal high quality rate if there is motion (for example, 30 frames per second).
- Is the system user-friendly? Can you actually use and navigate the system you have bought?
- Look at the system when it is installed. Ensure the little things you may not think to check:
 - Are there odd angles?
 - Should you consider infrared or night vision for night recording where there is little lighting?
 - Look at the location of lighting near the cameras. Is a light creating glare?
 - Is the camera located in an area that may see glare when the sun rises or sets, and a slight adjustment of the location can remedy that?
 - Can you move the camera from inside via a control? Do you need to be able to?
- Where is the information stored? Do you have enough space for it? Should you consider upgrading your hard drive to get more storage?
- Note that some systems allow the information to go over the internet so you can view the system from an alternate, secure location. Ask your vendor for more information and to determine if this is right for you.

After you have purchased the system, remember to:

- Maintain the system, including cleaning the lens.
- Train employees so they know how to provide officers with video in case of a crime.
- Turn the equipment on.
- Place the recording equipment out of sight to the public so it is not damaged or taken by someone who commits a crime.
- Record the make, model and serial numbers on your cameras and system in case of damage or loss.

The Minneapolis Police Department recommends that you complete a Business Information Report which is kept on file at the precinct and includes business information and contact information, so the police can reach you when your business is closed. Call the precinct or your Crime Prevention Specialist to obtain the form. (Call 311 or (612) 673-3000).



English: Attention. If you want help translating this information, call 612-673-3737
Spanish: Atención. Si desea recibir asistencia gratuita para traducir esta información, llame 612-673-2700
Somali: Ogow. Haddii aad dooneyso in lagaa kaalmeeyo tarjamadda macluumaadkani oo lacag la' aan wac 612-673-3500
Hmong: Ceeb toom. Yog koj xav tau kev pab txhais cov xov no rau koj dawb, hu 612-673-2800
Sign Language: TTY 612-673-2626
If you need this material in an alternative format, please contact the Minneapolis Police Department at 612-673-2912.