

DOMESTIC CCTV



FIRST PRINCIPLE

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Top Tips

- Is CCTV the best answer
- Is it likely to affect other people's privacy
- Are there alternatives you could consider
- Have you looked at our Home Security Leaflet

The Surveillance Camera Commissioner (SCC) does not regulate the use of domestic CCTV systems, nor does he have powers which enable him to inspect or audit CCTV systems, enforce laws or otherwise impose a financial or other sanction.

Under the provisions of the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012, relevant authorities must pay due regard to the Surveillance Camera Code. However, the SCC also encourages other organisations operating CCTV systems and those operating domestic CCTV systems, to adopt the Surveillance Camera Code on a voluntary basis.

You can contact the SCC at scc@sccommissioner.gov.uk

General Guidance

An individual has the right to protect their property and this can be done by using a CCTV system where it is necessary, such as a security measure. However, the SCC recommends that users of CCTV systems should operate them in a responsible way to respect the privacy of others.

A CCTV system to protect a domestic dwelling from acts of crime and anti-social behaviour is now commonplace. Although this seems a reasonable use, there have been a number of complaints to the police, Information Commissioners Office and the SCC from neighbours and other members of the public who believe that cameras are being used to spy on them and their families.

The following is a short set of considerations to guide you through steps for ensuring that your CCTV security system reduces the risk of intruding on the privacy of others, including neighbours.

Reasons for getting a CCTV system

Think about the following questions before getting a CCTV system:

- Why do I need CCTV?
- Could I use another means to protect my home, such as improved lighting?
- What do I want my CCTV camera to view and record? (this could be the front door, a parking space, the back yard, a shed, and so on)

How your CCTV system affects others

It is important to consider the privacy of others while setting up your system. Ask yourself:

- Where will I position the CCTV to ensure minimal intrusion into my neighbour's and other people's privacy?
- Will the range of the cameras overlook my neighbour's property, gardens, pavements and other areas? (if so, consider

ways to reduce intrusion such as using privacy filters)

- How will my neighbours feel about my CCTV?

You also need to be aware that if your camera captures images outside the boundaries of your household, then the GDPR and DPA will apply to you, and you will need to ensure your use of CCTV complies with these laws. Please see the [Information Commissioner's Office website](#) for more information about domestic cameras covering areas other than your own property.

Letting people know about your CCTV system

Ensure that you are transparent to those around you when installing your CCTV system. You can do this by:

- informing your neighbour(s) about your system
- putting up a notice informing people that recording is taking place

If you already have a CCTV system

If you already have a CCTV system installed, you should check that:

- Your system is still needed
- You are complying with the GDPR and the DPA if your camera captures images outside the boundaries of your home
- You regularly delete the recordings and do not keep them for longer than is necessary for the protection of your property

Please note that if your camera is pointing directly at a neighbour's property, you should take steps to reposition it to avoid complaints, or in some cases accusations of violation of privacy or harassment.

Taking responsibility for your CCTV system

If you are thinking of installing a CCTV system on your property, you should be aware of your responsibilities:

- It is your responsibility to make sure that the CCTV system is installed correctly
- You are also responsible for all the information that is recorded by your system
- You must make sure that the information is not used for any other purpose than protecting your property

It is vital that you understand how your system works, so please make sure you read the manual and if necessary ask your installer to show you how to operate it and how to export footage if required

Storing the recorded information

Ensure you follow the steps below when storing the information you record on your CCTV system:

- you should make sure that the date and time on your system are accurate
- it is important to check that you have enough recording space
- you should not store any information or images for

longer than is necessary to protect your property which means you should delete the information once it is no longer required

- you should make sure that the information recorded is used only for the purpose for which your system was installed (for example it will not be appropriate to share any recordings on social media sites)
- you must keep the recordings secure and keep access to them to a minimum (remember that you are responsible for what happens with the information)

After installation

Once you've installed your CCTV system, you should consider the following:

- It is important that you check your system regularly (at least annually) to make sure that it is working properly (this may include cleaning any debris affecting the camera and wiping it down after bad weather)

- You should also check the position of your camera from time to time to make sure it still captures the right images and does not overlook someone else's property or public space, such as walk ways.

Using information as evidence

In certain circumstances, the information you record may be used as evidence. You should bear the following in mind:

- If your system captures information of an incident, it could be use by the police to aid an investigation
- It is important that the information you record can be used as evidence, if required

- If you are not sure, check with your installer or your local police authority

Further reading

[Surveillance Camera Commissioner's website](#)




[Surveillance camera code of practice](#)

[Information Commissioner's Office website](#)

[ICO guidance on domestic CCTV](#)

[Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 \(PoFA\).](#)

One of the most common failings in a CCTV system is having image sizes that are too small to enable identification and recognition. The pictures below demonstrate how large a person should look on screen, depending on the purpose you are using the camera for.

		
<p>Identify (100% screen height)*</p>	<p>Recognise (50% screen height)*</p>	<p>Observe (25% screen height)*</p>
<p>Sufficient picture quality and detail to identify an individual beyond reasonable doubt.</p>	<p>Viewers can say with a high degree of certainty whether or not an individual shown is the same as someone they have seen before.</p>	<p>Some characteristic details of the individual, such as distinctive clothing can be seen.</p>
<p>Screen height is how much space vertically a 1.7m tall figure would occupy, as shown in the diagram above</p>		

*on a standard definition image

Use this page to make a note of your requirements

First Principle: Related links

Ask the Police

Official Police Resource. The Ask the Police website provides you with information on a wide range of non-emergency policing matters.

askthe.police.uk

Secured by Design

Official UK Police initiative that combines the principles of 'designing out crime' with physical security.

securedbydesign.com

Sold Secure

Dedicated to reducing the risk of crime by assessment of security products.

<https://www.soldsecure.com/>

Crimestoppers

An independent charity that gives people the power to speak up to stop crime 100% anonymously, by phone 0800 555 111 or online.

<https://crimestoppers-uk.org/>

Victim Support

Covering the whole of Norfolk and Suffolk, a free, confidential support service specifically designed to help victims and witnesses of any crime.

Contact us on:

Phone: 0300 303 3706 (weekdays between 8am-5pm)

Email: nsvictimcare@victimsupport.org.uk

Web: www.nsvictimcare.org

Socials: @nsvictimcare

Call us on 101. Always dial 999 in an emergency

To see the full range of information go to:

suffolk.police.uk/firstprinciple or

norfolk.police.uk/firstprinciple

Or alternatively use your mobile phone to scan this QR code.

