



Users' guide to CCTV

Closed circuit TV, or CCTV, can help prevent crime and anti-social behaviour, and can also help identify and convict offenders. However, for CCTV to be most effective it must be planned, fitted and used correctly. This means you as the householder or business owner need to tell the CCTV supplier what you need, rather than for them to tell you.

If you're thinking of using CCTV, the following advice will help you start to plan what kind of system you need.

- It's vital you know what your CCTV system is there to achieve – is it to watch for intruders in your home, monitor your driveway, garden or gates, or identify anyone who enters your home? Once you decide what you need CCTV for, you can tell your supplier who can then advise what type of system is best suited
- There are four main CCTV image categories:
 - **Monitoring** – cameras provide a wide-angle view of an area, showing what people within it are doing. It does not allow for identification of those people
 - **Detection** – this shows people at a size where they fill approximately 10 per cent of the screen, allowing details such as clothing colour and type, and vehicle colour and make to be seen
 - **Recognition** – here people will fill not less than 50 per cent of the screen, allowing for recognition by those who know them well
 - **Identification** – people fill not less than 100 per cent of the screen, at a picture quality that enables their identity to be established beyond reasonable doubt
- Installing CCTV to protect your property against intruders and trespassers within the footprint of your domestic property is entirely legal. However cameras must not cover part or all of any neighbouring properties
- Modern systems using internet-based, or IP, CCTV mean footage can be delivered to mobile phones and accessed worldwide. Cameras can be motion activated, can deliver remote alerts to your phone, and be monitored remotely by professional companies
- All cameras should be fitted with robust anti-tamper housing to reduce interference and vandalism
- Regular maintenance is required to keep your system working properly, including cleaning lenses every two months and regularly checking image quality to check they are correctly adjusted to the conditions
- If the system you choose allows images to be recorded, they must be time and date stamped, and the system should include a CD or DVD burner
- Recording equipment should be kept in a secure area with restricted access. The hard drive where footage is recorded must be protected against theft or any evidence gathered would be lost
- Your hard drive needs to be big enough to store seven days of footage. Any discs of CCTV recordings should be stored in a secure place
- Software should allow for searches at specific dates and times, and for a stand-alone video player to be included on each disc burned
- Signs stating the use of CCTV act as a deterrent and should be large enough to be easily seen

- If you want your CCTV to function at night, you must specify this to the supplier so suitable lighting options can be installed alongside the cameras
- Always use a reputable company to install your CCTV – both the National Security Inspectorate (www.nsi.org.uk) and Security Systems and Alarms Inspection Board (www.ssaib.org) list companies that meet the essential standards
- As with alarms, CCTV alone cannot fully protect your property – you also need to ensure you have good security habits and physical security measures. Read our home security guide for more information

To speak to our crime prevention team about protecting your property with CCTV email crimeprevention@northants.pnn.police.uk