



# Domestic CCTV

Before installing CCTV, ask yourself

- Is CCTV the best answer?
- Are there alternatives you could consider?
- Is it likely to affect people's privacy?

## The Biometrics and Surveillance Camera Commissioner

The Biometrics and Surveillance Camera Commissioner does not regulate the use of domestic CCTV systems, nor do they have powers which enable them 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 The Biometrics and Surveillance Camera Commissioner also encourages other organisations operating CCTV systems and those operating domestic CCTV systems, to adopt the Surveillance Camera Code on a voluntary basis.

For information and contact, go to the OBSCC at:

**Biometrics and Surveillance Camera Commissioner - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))**

Or email [enquiries@obscc.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@obscc.org.uk)

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE  
**POLICE**

Fighting Crime. Protecting People.



## 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, 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.**

Using 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, fencing or gates?
- What do I want my CCTV camera to view and record? (this could be the front door, a parking space, the back garden, a shed etc)

### How will your CCTV system affect 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 a 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 or already have one 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 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 make sure you read and understand the manual. If it was professionally installed ask your installer to show you how to operate it and how to export footage if required.

## Storing the recorded information

You must follow the steps below when storing the information, you record on your CCTV system:

- The date and time on your system should always be 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. This means you should delete any 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)

## Further reading

Surveillance Camera Commissioner's Buyers Toolkit ([publishing.service.gov.uk](http://publishing.service.gov.uk))

For the public | ICO

Domestic CCTV systems | ICO

Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 ([legislation.gov.uk](http://legislation.gov.uk))

## After installation

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

- It is important that you check your system regularly to make sure that it is working properly (this should 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 used by the police to aid an investigation
- It is important that the information you record can be used as evidence, if required