

Foundations of Surveillance

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February 2001

Introduction to Surveillance: When many people think of surveillance, they usually think of CCTV (closed circuit television) or hidden cameras watching their every move. There is much more, though, that goes into surveillance.

Surveillance could be a camera in the corner of a room, or it could be an officer outside patrolling the perimeter of an area. It is the means that one uses to gain information of what is going on, and with this knowledge, protection of assets becomes much easier.

There are many types of surveillance and/or reasons to engage it. Surveillance is starting to be used more and for many different reasons and its presence is now more prevalent in areas where it was once unfamiliar.

Reasons to incorporate surveillance

- Crime Prevention: people are less likely to commit acts of theft if they feel that they are being watched.
- Observance of employees/patrons: to prevent theft of time/goods or other unwelcome acts.
- Safety: observance of a particular area (possibly dangerous) to ensure no accidents/problems occur.
- Access Control: by knowing and observing who is in the area it can be determined who and who not to allow into the area.
- Damage to property/vandalism: if an area suffers constant damage observation is often necessary for prevention/protection from such acts.

Objectives that surveillance can accomplish

- Identify subjects or suspects in a crime scene situation.
- Record movement and locations of suspects or subjects in crime scene situation.
- Identify patterns or reoccurrence of criminal or unauthorized activity.
- Collect information to be used as evidence for prosecution.
- Locate, identify and apprehend suspects.

Types of Surveillance

Stationary - does not involve following a subject

- plant surveillance- surveillance is to be done from one place.
- stakeout- often involves waiting for a subject to appear; usually from a distance (often from a parked car).

Mobile - involves following a subject from place to place, possibly waiting for a subject to commit a certain act.

Contact - object or substance that comes in contact with a subject and enables him to be followed, tracked, or identified.

- electronic tracking devices (bugs)
- ultraviolet invisible dyes

CCTV

All CCTV systems are made up of several components that the user should be familiar with. The following is a list of necessary components to fulfill a complete CCTV system.

- Cameras
 - ¾ Vidicon-low quality, requires good lighting.
 - ¾ Newvicon-high quality, requires no lighting.
- Housings
 - Aesthetic- pleasing to look at often unnoticeable.
 - Environmental- fit into the area they are in, do not seem out of place within their surroundings.
 - Hidden/Disguised- cameras are often placed inside of something else to camouflage their appearance and prevent people from knowing they are being watched.
- Monitors
 - Color
 - Monochrome/B&W
 - High Resolution-provides a better image. High resolution monitors are often used when great detail is required in a video.
 - Low Resolution-provides a lower quality image. Better for scanning cameras, image is often grainy and not as clear as desirable. Low resolution monitors are used if detail is not a necessity in the surveillance operation.

Contracting For Surveillance

Guidelines to follow when contracting out for surveillance to help prevent any problems or misunderstandings:

- Define the limits of the surveillance.
 - How much time to spend on the case
 - Should be confirmed in writing by the agency
- Determine the approximate cost up front.
 - Sometimes utilization of multiple investigators is necessary
 - Price/cost should be discussed/agreed upon in advance
- Don't wait until last minute to assign the surveillance
- Understand the difficulties of surveillance
 - wrong subject may be filmed
 - investigator may lose subject
 - subject may be inactive
 - investigator's presence may be made known
- Be specific when stating the purpose of the surveillance
- Provide agency with all information possible

- name
 - address
 - phone number
 - DOB
 - SS #
 - Physical description
 - Vehicles
 - Any known activities
- Understand investigative terms.
 - Surveillance- most intense form of investigation & involves physically watching subjects
 - "Activities Check" or "Preliminary Report"- refer to factoring information related to a subject's location and present activities
- Any cancellations or changes to your assignment should be confirmed in writing

Recording activity

Recording of activity during a surveillance must be done carefully. A sample log for a stationary surveillance is as follows:

- Location/Objective (an introductory paragraph):
- Date:
- Time (all activity occurring at a specific point in time is detailed):
- Attachments (photographs, sketches, etc.):
- Summary (brief concluding comments on observations):

Suggestions on using surveillance tapes

Guidelines on using videotape as a negotiating tool as well as in the courtroom:

- Never edit or tamper with the contents of the tape. Its contents must remain intact.
- Inconsistency is the key word. If the tapes show a subject's activity is inconsistent with their statements, their credibility will be an issue.
- Do not tell the subject or attorney 100% of the contents of the film. Subjects will often change their story to fit the contents of the tape.
- The investigator who testifies on a surveillance case should be objective and impartial.
- Instead of showing actual videotapes to the subjects, show photographs taken from the tapes.

Legal aspects of private surveillance

The difference between what is legally acceptable in private surveillance and in public surveillance are not as great as they may seem. In fact, from an operational aspect, they are minimal. The unfortunate circumstance at hand is that since private surveillance is still in its rapid growth state, the regulations are still in the process of being developed. Use of parameters established for the public sector can be used as a guideline for what may and may not be done. What is being done today has a strong impact on what will be shaped for the field of private security tomorrow.

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