

This guide has been prepared to assist committees in their evaluation of whether to install security cameras.

First and foremost, we recommend that your starting point be to create your list of reasons that you are considering this course of action, and your list of intended use.

The aim of this guide is to provide you with points of consideration to assess against your lists, prior to a decision to install.

FAKE OR REAL

Whilst there have been no court cases to-date in Australia, there is general agreement that creating a false sense of security would be considered “contributory negligence” were a situation to arise. This means an individual or entity could hold a scheme partly responsible for damages they have suffered.

There is also general agreement that criminals know how to identify fake cameras.

DEEMED ADVANTAGES

- ✓ Identification of responsible parties.
- ✓ Visible cameras can deter crime. Repeat vandalism is an obvious scenario where this might be useful.
- ✓ Enables assessment of whether “suspicious” activities are occurring, thus reducing the risk of fabrication.

POTENTIAL DISADVANTAGES & RISKS

- ✗ **Identification of parties might not be possible even with clear footage.**
- ✗ **When the focus is *not* common property**
Any cameras that are on common property, but are recording private activities that are *not* on common property, risk an invasion of personal privacy. An obvious example is carparks where both common property and private property exists. A breach of the Privacy Act results in fines and / or other penalties.
- ✗ **Notification of use**
Pending the purpose of the cameras will determine the adequacy of notification of use of the cameras. Every care should be taken through signage, written notification etc. If considering recording a meeting, then a statement of full disclosure needs to be made on the Notice of meeting.
- ✗ **Treatment of objections**
It is not uncommon for individuals to voice their objection to the recording of visual and/or voice recordings. Thus consideration needs to be given before such a situation arises.
- ✗ **Costly to purchase and maintain**
There is a dollar cost that is associated with the purchase and installation. Assessing wiring requirements is vital. In addition there are costs associated with the running and maintenance of the equipment, as well as the storage of resulting records.
- ✗ **Experienced criminals know how to deactivate and / or steal security equipment.**

EQUIPMENT & RECORDS BECOME COMMON PROPERTY

Consideration needs to be given to

- + The costs associated with purchase, installation and ongoing maintenance as part of the budget process.
- + Recordings are to be made available if needed for inspection of the books and records. If the recording is outsourced, with someone other than the managing agent, then how will arrangements be made and costs be covered.

OTHER OPTIONS

Consideration should be given to whether there are other options to resolve the specific reasons the committee is looking at CCTV. Improved lighting or other more specific security measures may present better value options.

If your scheme concludes that you are interested then we recommend obtaining legal advice so as to ensure:

- + proper recording of the reasons for the decision to install the equipment; and
- + creation of a sound policy that protects the scheme should anyone wish to challenge the legalities of how the equipment has been used.

If you have any questions, simply contact your Strata Plus strata manager.