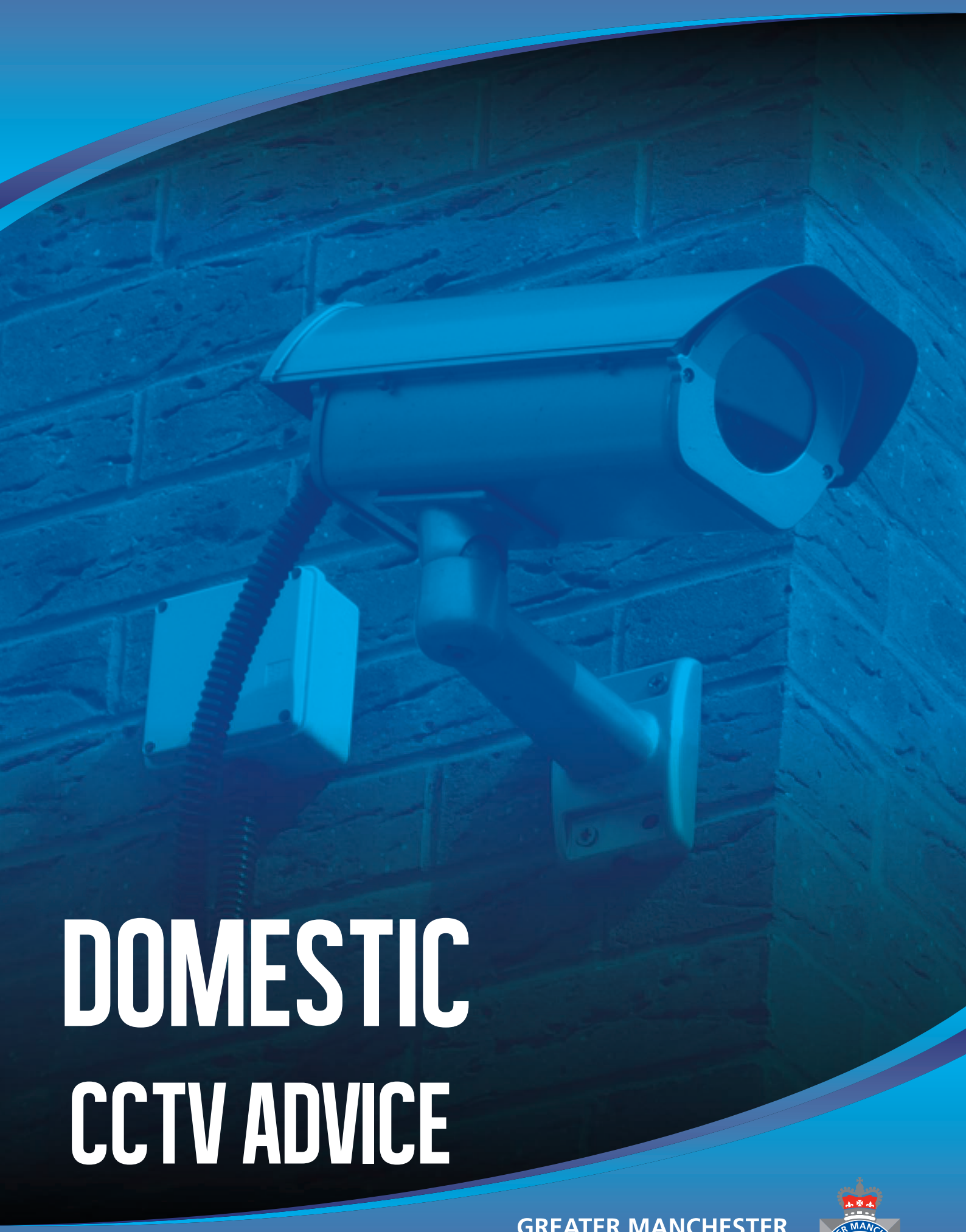


# DOMESTIC CCTV ADVICE

GREATER MANCHESTER POLICE

# CCTV ADVICE
# DOMESTIC

Greater Manchester Police is committed to the prevention and detection of crime and considers all measures that have the potential to assist in this commitment.

The provision and use of Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) systems within domestic premises can be one possible solution to crime reduction although it should be considered as the last line of defence. Domestic CCTV tends to be provided from the 'cheaper' end of the market and as such generally provides little or no useful or useable identifiable images.

This is primarily due to the lenses being for wide-angle viewing and providing images over a large area, persons therefore appear as very small images within this.

## DETERMINING THE NEED FOR CCTV

It is essential that a detailed survey of the domestic premises is undertaken to identify the key factors affecting the opportunity for crime or antisocial activity. A CCTV system is not on its own a solution to Crime and or Antisocial activity.

At this stage it is important to consider all available measures that could have a positive effect on the level of crime and antisocial activity and in doing so increase the feel-safe factor for the occupants of the premises.

It may be that other less expensive crime prevention measures could be just as effective, depending on the circumstances. It is also true to say that CCTV can only be effective if it is used in conjunction with other crime prevention measures. CCTV systems are only as good as the reaction or response to what is seen on the screen at the time or in post incident reviewing.

Please remember if you record images that you cannot see persons or easily identify them, do not expect that a Police officer will be able to either. When setting up cameras, identification of persons is the crucial factor.

## ESTABLISHING A SYSTEM

The development of an Operational Requirement Statement is essential; this document is unique to each system and will be used by a contractor or person setting up the system, for the design, performance specification and functionality of the system.

The Operational Requirement is a statement of problems, not solutions, and highlights the areas to be covered by the system and the times and description of the activities giving cause for concern.

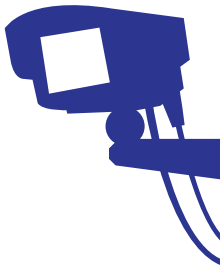
At this stage it is also very important to decide what standard of image is required. This is very much dictated by the use the system will be put to, whether it is intended to monitor, detect, recognise or identify persons. Identification for court purposes will be a head and shoulders image of a person on screen.

## LEGAL ISSUES

In December 2016, the Court of Justice of the EU made a notable ruling in a case on how data protection law applies to individuals using surveillance cameras to protect their property.

The judgment ruled that a household's usage of a CCTV camera that filmed both their own driveway and the street outside their house was not covered by the domestic exemption for images recorded of people outside their property.

Therefore under Data Protection legislation (Data Protection Act 1998) CCTV installations within domestic premises are required to be registered with the Information Commissioner, formerly the Data Protection Registrar.



There is therefore now a requirement to keep records of recordings and place appropriate signage around the premises where CCTV is being used. However, under Human Rights Act legislation, every effort must be made to ensure that 'collateral intrusion' of adjacent premises or Public areas are minimised.

This may require the camera to be placed and angled in such a way to ensure that adjacent premises do not appear on the 'on screen' image. It should not be considered hugely problematic if this cannot be achieved in entirety.

## RECORDINGS

Where a digital system is installed, ideally provision should be made to allow downloading to data CD or DVD that can be used for evidential purposes at Court. The disc must contain the relevant video data and a proprietary viewer attachment in order for the data to be viewed.

1. Do the entry / exit points to the premises require to be covered by a fixed CCTV camera?
2. Cameras should be installed out of reach to prevent unauthorised tampering.
3. There should be appropriate lighting at each camera to ensure that useful, useable images are obtained. Uniform, white light sources are best.
4. All installed cameras should be recorded. If digital video recording (DVR) is used - a minimum 6 images per second setting. The recording device should also be set for the resolution rate at a minimum 2 CIF and compression to 'low'.
5. The system should be audited and checked regularly to ensure consistent quality recording and that the time / date stamp is on and correct.
6. Images should be retained for not less than 7 days in order to ensure that effective downloads / copies can be made.
7. The download should be made to one or more of: - Data DVD, Data CD, USB2 compatible pen or drive, or PAL compatible DVD (MPEG 2 or VOB files).
8. If the download is to a CD / DVD or pen drive, a Windows (XP, Vista 7,8 etc) compatible playback software file (licence free) in the original recording format, must accompany the data.
9. A reviewing point should be available to enable visual playback from any of the cameras.
10. A suitable and appropriate maintenance contract should be in place for the system, which should include annual maintenance visits and a fault rectification timetable.

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**Q I wish to install a CCTV system in my premises. How do I go about it?**

**A** The primary question you should ask yourself is 'Do I really need CCTV?' then 'How will CCTV assist me or the Police in managing or reducing crime or anti social behaviour at the premises?'

If CCTV is definitely your preference, formulate an 'Operational Requirement' (O.R.) which outlines exactly what the camera(s) are required to see, how it will be recorded and how the data will be stored and ultimately copied to data disc etc. for evidential purposes. If you do not intend to install the CCTV yourself, the O.R. should be provided to 3 or more CCTV Contractors who will specify and quote for a system.

It will be your decision, which quotes best meets your requirements, and it will be advantageous to have a contractor 'prove' the system prior to awarding a contract.

**Q I have a CCTV system in my premises. Do I need to register with the Police or Information Commissioner?**

**A** Yes. The Information Commissioner has indicated that CCTV systems installed on domestic dwellings are required to be registered and compliant with the eight principles of Data Protection. You do not need to register your system with the police, but we will note you have one if you wish.

**Q Do I need to display warning signs if I have a security CCTV system on a domestic dwelling?**

**A** Yes. Signs are now required for domestic security CCTV systems; to comply with the DPA they should contain information about the purpose of the system, the Data owner and their contact details.

**Q What am I allowed to point the cameras at?**

**A** Anything within the curtilage of your own premises, and your car parked on the street. You should try not to be viewing adjoining properties or premises opposite.

**Q How long should I keep recordings?**

**A** The Information Commissioner states that 28 days retention of data is required or for no longer than is necessary. If you can respond to incidents and copy / download the data within 7 - 14 days this could be considered not longer than is necessary.

**Q Will the Police take recordings from my CCTV System?**

**A** Police Officers are duty bound to obtain evidence, however, in many cases of home CCTV, the quality of the recordings and the 'authenticity' of the evidence can be called into question in criminal cases.

**Q Will Police Officers be able to help me download recordings from my system?**

**A** It is very unlikely. There are hundreds of different CCTV systems available, which are in some cases quite complex. You should not expect a Police Officer to download video data from your system.

**Q Can my neighbours complain about my use of CCTV?**

**A** Yes, however, it is a civil matter not criminal so the complaint would have to be through a solicitor about concerns of their own privacy or anonymity. You should consult a solicitor if you receive a complaint.

**Q Can I post footage from my CCTV system to YouTube or Facebook etc. on the internet to help catch criminals?**

**A** NO. Any identifiable images of perpetrators MUST be passed to the Police for identification and etection purposes. As an individual, if you post identifiable CCTV images (even for the right reason) into the Public domain you may be liable for a breach of right to anonymity and a civil action may be commenced against you. The Police can use the Public domain to obtain the identity of persons if required.

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