

# GENERAL ORDER



**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

<b>Title</b>		
<b>Closed-Circuit Television Cameras</b>		
<b>Topic</b>	<b>Series</b>	<b>Number</b>
<b>OPS</b>	<b>603</b>	<b>07</b>
<b>Effective Date</b>		
<b>March 28, 2024</b>		
<b>Replaces:</b>		
GO-OPS-603.07 (Closed Circuit Television Cameras), Effective Date December 19, 2002		
<b>Rescinds:</b>		
EO-22-008 [Amendments to MPD's Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) Policies], Effective Date May 26, 2022		
SO-06-12 (Enhanced Use of CCTV to Combat Crime), Effective Date August 9, 2006		

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## I. PURPOSE

The Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) employs strategic placement of an internal network of closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras to augment the efforts to prevent and investigate crime. MPD recognizes the use of CCTV cameras has the potential for diminishing the perception of privacy and is, therefore, subject to regulation and careful implementation. The purpose of this general order is to govern placement and use of CCTV cameras.

## II. PROCEDURES

### A. General

1. The CCTV camera program operates in accordance with District of Columbia Municipal Regulations (DCMR) [Title 24 \(Public Space and Safety\) Chapter 25 \(Metropolitan Police Department Use of Closed Circuit Television\)](#) and all local, federal and case law applicable to the use of surveillance cameras in public space to prevent, detect, deter, and investigate crime in the District of Columbia. CCTV camera technology shall not be used to replace current policing techniques nor used where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy.
2. MPD may enter into agreements with private entities to access their live external video feeds for discrete purposes and only in exigent circumstances, including, but not limited to reported crimes, crimes in progress, and as part of pre-approved operations plans authorized by a bureau head.
3. The CCTV software system shall be used only to observe locations that are in public view and where there is no reasonable expectation of

privacy.

4. CCTV cameras accessed by MPD shall not capture audio unless appropriate court orders are obtained.
5. Signage shall be posted and maintained indicating the presence of an MPD CCTV camera.
6. CCTV software systems shall be protected against unauthorized access. An official the rank of sergeant or above or a civilian supervisor shall be present to supervise and monitor CCTV live monitoring at all times.
7. Only certified operators shall operate the CCTV software system. All operators of the CCTV software system shall sign a certification that they have read and understand CCTV camera regulations and acknowledge the potential criminal or administrative penalties associated with unauthorized use or misuse of the system.
8. Any member suspected of unauthorized use or misuse of the CCTV software system shall be subject to investigation pursuant to [GO-PER-120.20 \(Administrative Investigations\)](#).

**B. MPD CCTV Camera Placement**

1. District commanders and their police service area (PSA) lieutenants shall consult with Advisory Neighborhood Commissioners (ANC) and civic or community organization officials to coordinate proposed camera requests, ensuring the proposed use of CCTV camera is consistent with a comprehensive and unified approach to neighborhood law enforcement strategies. Prior to requesting a CCTV camera within a district, district commanders shall assess the following CCTV camera placement considerations to ensure that the request meets the requirements of this order.

<b>CCTV Camera Placement Considerations</b>
a. The number and type of calls for service;
b. Any crimes committed;
c. Any requests or recommendations made by the ANC and/or civic or community organization;
d. Any other objectively verifiable information from which the chief of police may ascertain whether the health, safety, or property of residents who live in the area are endangered by crime or other illegal activity;
e. Whether the area falls within a hot spot (i.e., a location targeted for additional crime prevention surveillance and/or tactics based on crime data); and
f. Other practical factors such as effectiveness in combating crime, ensuring placement does not infringe on individual privacy rights, safety of the equipment, and viewable area of the camera.

2. District commanders recommending a new CCTV camera shall prepare a memorandum to the chief of police, through the chain of command, detailing: the proposed location for deployment, purpose, placement considerations, and an objective justification.
3. The chief of police shall, absent exigent circumstances or when deployed

pursuant to a court order, provide public notice of new CCTV cameras. At a minimum, this shall include, but is not limited to, publication in the DC Register, posting on the MPD website, written or verbal notification to the relevant councilmember, written or verbal notification to the relevant ANC commissioner, and issuance of a press release.

- a. Notice shall include the general capabilities of CCTV cameras, their use in department operations, and the duration of the deployment. Public notice will also identify the viewing area, but not necessarily the precise location of the camera. The precise location of a camera may be disclosed if the chief determines that disclosure will not undermine the security of the camera and the efficacy of deployment.
  - b. The chief shall allow 30 days for comments.
4. The chief of police shall make the final determination for new CCTV camera placements. Upon the chief of police's approval of a camera placement, the camera is authorized for activation and recording.
  5. Within 10 business days of January 31<sup>st</sup> and June 30<sup>th</sup> of each calendar year, district commanders shall prepare a report to the chief of police, through the appropriate chain of command, providing an evaluation of the CCTV deployments including whether the deployments were effective at preventing, detecting, or solving crime. The evaluation shall also consider whether the presence of cameras served to displace criminal activity and include any significant events or unusual incidents that occurred during CCTV deployment.
  6. District commanders may request termination of a CCTV camera via memorandum to the chief of police through the chain of command. The chief of police shall determine when to suspend, interrupt, or terminate a CCTV camera placement.
  7. District commanders shall maintain an electronic CCTV camera file including each CCTV camera placement, including the chief of police request and written decision, substantiating documents relative to the request, the chief of police's decision to terminate the CCTV deployment, and all reports submitted to the chief of police pursuant to this order.
- C. CCTV Recordings
1. Generally, CCTV recordings shall be passively monitored (i.e., video feeds shall be recorded without live monitoring).
  2. All CCTV camera recordings shall be maintained in the CCTV digital evidence management system for 90 calendar days after which time they shall be purged unless manually retained due to evidence of criminal activity, an occurrence that may subject MPD to civil liability, an internal administrative investigation, or for training purposes.
  3. Members may request CCTV camera recordings when there is reason to believe that the footage may help solve a crime or assist in an internal

administrative investigation. Requests shall be made through the digital evidence management system or by contacting the Technical and Analytical Services Bureau (TASB). Recordings retained for criminal or civil purposes shall be secured as evidence and maintained until final case disposition in accordance with [GO-SPT-601.02 \(Preservation of Potentially Discoverable Material\)](#). Access to such recordings shall be appropriately limited and documented.

4. Recordings retained for training purposes shall be retained in accordance with the department's retention schedule for records maintained by the Metropolitan Police Academy.

**D. Live Monitoring**

1. Live CCTV camera monitoring is strictly limited and requires prior written authorization by the chief of police. The only exceptions to this requirement are:
  - a. For demonstration purposes; and
  - b. During exigent circumstances, including, but not limited to reported crimes, crimes in progress, and as part of pre-approved operations plans authorized by a bureau head.
2. Every live CCTV camera monitoring shall be documented. Personnel shall document the disposition of any observed incidents, a copy of any written authorizations pertaining to each instance of live monitoring, the names of any persons activating the system, a general description of the activity being monitored, if any, and documentation of when live monitoring began and ended. Operations plans authorizing live monitoring and all other documentation pertaining to live monitoring shall be forwarded to and maintained by the Real Time Crime Center (RTCC) commanding official.
3. CCTV camera operators shall not target/observe individuals arbitrarily or solely based on race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, or other classifications protected by law.
4. CCTV camera operators shall not focus on hand bills, fliers, or other material being distributed or carried pursuant to the exercise of First Amendment rights.

**E. Oversight and Maintenance**

1. The TASB Information Technology (IT) Infrastructure and Engineering Division shall ensure safekeeping, maintenance, and service of all CCTV camera equipment and the CCTV software system.
2. The Risk Management Division (RMD) director shall ensure monthly audits of CCTV cameras are conducted to ensure compliance with this directive. On a quarterly basis, RMD shall submit the audits to the chief of police who shall ensure submission to the mayor and the Council of the District of Columbia.

- 3. MPD will provide information about the CCTV system and its usage in its annual report pursuant to [24 DCMR 2502.9](#).

**III. DEFINITIONS**

When used in this directive, the following terms shall have the meanings designated:

	<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
1.	Closed circuit television (CCTV) camera	Any live video link that is electronically received into any MPD property.
2.	Deployment	Permanent or temporary installation of a CCTV camera to combat crime.
3.	Deployment area	Area generally around and including the viewable area of CCTV cameras deployed to combat crime.
4.	Demonstration purposes	Temporary presentation of the capacity of the CCTV system to visitors of the MPD.
5.	Exigent circumstances	Unanticipated situations that threaten the immediate safety of individuals or property within the District of Columbia; provided, that the cameras have no greater scope or capabilities than reasonably necessary to achieve a legitimate law enforcement purpose.
6.	External video feeds	Video feeds transmitted to the MPD on a live basis from outside sources to include other law enforcement agencies, Department of Transportation, Washington Metro Area Transit Police (WMATA), DC Public Schools, as well as some private entities in exigent circumstances.



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