

Security Cameras: It's the big city, not Big Brother!

By Crime Prevention Officer, Constable Jonathan Morrice, TPS Div 55

Theory:

It's not "Big Brother". The cameras are not the property of the "state", police, or government agency. They are owned by the individual businesses. They are there to protect their own properties. If a crime occurs to the property or near their property, the police will ask for the footage to assist the investigation.

I would like to emphasize that when police seek footage, the actual crime does not have to be in the footage. Police are looking for evidence that puts a person in a place at a certain time. Or a vehicle used by the suspect before or after a crime. Or one businesses' footage can help solve a crime to another business because a suspect might cover his face while committing a break-in but remove the face cover down the street when he walks past a camera.

Placement:

The cameras should be strategically placed. Entrances and exits are probably most important. They should be placed so that the footage of suspects is most useful. Footage of a person's knee is not as useful as a person's face. So an overhead camera that might catch a person's bald spot are not as useful.

Obstructions

Ensure the location of the camera will not be effected from obstructions. Things that may obstruct a cameras view are trees/bushes, vehicles, surrounding light that causes glare, and furniture. A camera might be placed in the Winter might have a clear sight line, but in the Spring when trees bloom they may block the cameras intended view. Delivery trucks may park overnight blocking the view, or furniture and/or awnings that get cleaned up at the end of the business day.

Operation

Become familiar with how to operate the equipment. Ensure it is turned on, recording, and has a clean lens, and most importantly, how to get the footage to police if necessary. Don't have the access locked by CIA passwords etc.

For more information, please feel free to contact your local crime prevention officer:

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