

Public Safety Camera System

333.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Best Practice MODIFIED

The State of Office of Protective Services (OPS) - Department of State Hospitals (DSH) operates a public safety camera system for the purpose of creating a safer environment for all those who live, work and visit the state hospitals. This policy explains the purpose of the cameras and provides guidelines for their operation and for the storage of captured images.

333.2 POLICY

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Cameras may be placed in strategic locations throughout the state hospitals at the direction or with the approval of the Hospital Police Chief. These cameras can be used for detecting and deterring crime, to help safeguard against potential threats to the public, to help manage emergency response situations during natural and man-made disasters and to assist DSH in providing services to the community.

333.3 PROCEDURE

Best Practice MODIFIED

The following procedures have been established for the effective operation of the public safety camera system.

333.3.1 MONITORING

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Images from each camera will be recorded on a 24-hour basis every day of the week. These images will be transmitted to monitors installed in designated locations. When activity warranting further investigation is reported or detected at any camera location, the dispatcher may selectively view the appropriate camera and relay any available information to responding units. OPS employees are authorized to adjust the cameras to more effectively view a particular area for any legitimate public safety purpose.

The Hospital Police Chief may authorize video feeds from the public safety camera system to be set up at a location other than the designated locations for monitoring by other than hospital employees when the provision of such access is in furtherance of this policy.

The cameras only record images and do not record sound. Recorded images may be used for a variety of purposes, including criminal investigations and monitoring of activity around high value or high threat areas. In addition, the public safety camera system may be useful for the following purposes:

- (a) To assist in identifying, apprehending and prosecuting offenders.
- (b) To assist in gathering evidence for criminal and civil court actions.
- (c) To help emergency services personnel maintain public order.

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- (d) To monitor pedestrian and vehicle traffic activity.
- (e) To help improve the general environment on the public streets.
- (f) To assist in providing effective public services.

333.3.2 TRAINING

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Employees involved in video monitoring will be appropriately trained and supervised.

333.3.3 PROHIBITED ACTIVITY

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Video monitoring will be conducted in a professional, ethical and legal manner. The public safety camera system will not be used to invade the privacy of individuals, to look into private areas or areas where the reasonable expectation of privacy exists. All reasonable efforts will be taken to protect these rights. Video monitoring shall not be used to harass, intimidate or discriminate against any individual or group.

333.3.4 CAMERA MARKINGS

Agency Content

Except in the case of covert operations or confidential investigations, all public areas that are monitored by public safety cameras shall be marked in a conspicuous manner with appropriate signs to inform the public that the area is under hospital surveillance. Signs shall be well lit to ensure visibility.

333.4 MEDIA STORAGE

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All media will be stored in a secure area with access restricted to authorized persons.

Recordings not otherwise needed for official reasons shall be retained for a period of not less than one year and thereafter should be erased with the written consent of the Chief Counsel. Any recordings needed as evidence in a criminal or civil proceeding shall be copied to a suitable medium and booked into evidence in accordance with current evidence procedures. (Gov. Code, § 34090.6.)

333.5 REVIEW OR RELEASE OR OF VIDEO IMAGES

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The review or the release of video images shall be done only with the authorization of the Hospital Police Chief or his/her designee and only with a properly completed written request. Video images needed for a criminal investigation or other official reason shall be collected and booked in accordance with current OPS evidence procedures.

333.5.1 PUBLIC AND OTHER AGENCY REQUESTS

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Requests for recorded video images from other government agencies or by the submission of a court order or subpoena shall be promptly submitted to the Communications Supervisor, who will promptly research the request and submit the results of such search through the Hospital Police Chief to the Chief Counsel's office for further handling. Every reasonable effort should be made to preserve the data requested until the request has been fully processed by the Chief Counsel's office.

Video images captured by public safety cameras that are requested by the public or media will be made available only to the extent required by law. Except as required by a valid court order or other lawful process, video images requested under the Public Records Act will generally not be disclosed to the public when such video images are evidence in an ongoing criminal investigation in which a disposition has not been reached.

333.6 ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE PUBLIC SAFETY CAMERA SYSTEM

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The Hospital Police Chief or designee will ensure an annual review of the public safety camera system is conducted by OPS and Plant Operations employees.