

CCTV's Greatest Hits: 10 top tips for movers, shakers and upgraders

Tips for reviewing CCTV systems to make
protection more effective and improve value



Introduction

At home or in a business the subject of security is likely to be of paramount importance. Insurance may enable you to mitigate the financial risks that result from security or safety-related incidents, however, for protecting people, property and premises, placing the emphasis on prevention is a much better approach.

In the case of fire safety, compliance sets a minimum standard to which businesses must conform. Security may be a little more discretionary, but it cannot be ignored. Specific systems have their own compliance requirements.

Larger organisations, or those in the public sector with bigger estates may have safeguarding considerations for members of the public, children and vulnerable people, such as the elderly and the disabled, as well as staff and assets.

Over time, businesses and organisations change. They grow, shrink and relocate. For businesses moving premises, or those that wish to shake up security, or those upgrading systems, it's a good idea to review your security arrangements to make sure they continue to meet the needs of the business.

Whether you have an up to date, integrated solution, a legacy security system or are considering an upgrade, in this guide we provide some top tips to help you get more effective protection and better value from your investment.

1. Go digital!

Don't even think about buying an analogue system, even if it is upsold with the 'benefit' of digital video recording. Such systems are low resolution and offer grainy imaging. HD cameras with appropriate digital recording provides crystal clear video and the ability to see fine detail.

2. You don't have to necessarily junk your existing investment

The advent of a new generation of CCTV might leave you thinking that you have to junk what you have and start from scratch. However, this is not necessarily the case. It is possible to preserve existing investment in cameras by upgrading ones that are suitable with digital encoder cards. These provide the digitisation that makes older cameras compatible for integration with more recent IP HD CCTV systems.

3. Simplify camera installation with wireless

IP cameras network via computing technology rather than traditional video protocols. This means they can use secure wireless networking to transmit video imaging to the wired part of your network. This massively simplifies installation, lowering costs, accelerating installation and reducing disruption. Also, cameras may be put in places that were previously deemed too challenging for installation.

4. Think about how to maximise storage

Today's fairly standardised digital technology can deliver 30 frames per second (fps) from a 2MP camera. Capturing video 24 hours a day would require something of the order of 500GB of storage for 7 days of imaging. 30 fps is actually overkill for most security situations. The frame rate could be halved to cut the information storage requirement by 50%, effectively doubling the number of days that can be stored to 14 on a 500GB storage device.

Introducing motion sensing makes storage stretch even further. Depending on where the camera is positioned, it might only record for 12 hours, effectively doubling the days that could be stored on a 500GB storage device to 28. Essentially, you might only need a quarter of the storage you think you need.

5. Make sure you get the insurance discounts to which you are entitled

Businesses with CCTV systems often qualify for a discounted rate and enjoy reduced insurance premiums. An insurer's decision matrix on whether to offer a discount is likely to factor in the credentials of the security service provider as well as the performance of the system.

Each insurer and each business is different, so it is difficult to say what a discount structure may look like. For domestic environments, some insurers may reduce premiums by between 2% and 15% on contents policies where professionally maintained intruder alarms are installed.

Maximise any potential insurance premium reduction by selecting suppliers with accreditation to the National Security Inspectorate (NSI) and the British Standards Institution (BSI) Quality Management standard ISO9001:2008. It might be worth establishing the discounts available from different insurers before choosing either a policy, a security provider, or deciding how much to invest in security.

6. Light areas properly to reduce shadows

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) is the strategic practice of identifying areas of weakness and designing security countermeasures to mitigate any inherent risks in the area you are trying to protect.

Although modern cameras have reasonable low-light performance, the contrast between brightly lit and dark areas in any scene may undermine image quality. Ensuring adequate lighting is provided so that scenes are evenly illuminated is an elementary CPTED principle.

7. Maximise deterrence by advertising CCTV

For those with premeditated criminal intent or opportunists, the presence of CCTV cameras is often enough to act as a deterrent. To maximise this, make sure you advertise the presence of the system properly.

Vandalism, anti-social and otherwise undesirable behaviours that threaten people, property and premises are actively discouraged when it is clear the area is under video surveillance.

Appropriate CCTV warning signage is a compliance requirement. As you have to do it anyway, you might as well make sure you maximise the benefits by increasing the number or optimising the positioning of signs to maximise visibility and raise awareness of the system.

8. Integrating CCTV to enable intervention

Integrating CCTV with other security systems provides the ability to better protect people and assets. Consider a CCTV system operated in conjunction with a public address (PA) system.

This enables security personnel to intervene before trespass or more serious crimes are committed. The security monitoring team is able to issue a verbal warning when it detects those behaving suspiciously. This might also be integrated with audio monitoring to enable the security team to understand any verbal communications and the intentions of those under CCTV surveillance.

9. Confirmation of alarm activation with CCTV

Another popular and exceptionally useful application of CCTV is in providing confirmation of alerts from fire and intruder alarms. CCTV provides visual confirmation of fire or burglary events. Remote monitoring by approved and compliant service providers enables the correct escalation and prioritisation by police or fire and rescue responses.

Verification of activation events like this prevents 'false positives', such as burglar alarms triggered by animals or bad weather. The police may withdraw response for attending repeated false positive alarm activations, so confirmation eliminates false alarms and protects the guarantee of a police response. Other CCTV integrations include access control systems, such as doors, turnstiles, gates and barriers to maximise protection against all unauthorised access threats.

10. Use wireless devices to monitor footage and keep security staff safer

An IP CCTV system supports wireless computer networking, enabling connection to mobile devices such as tablets and smartphones. This lets security personnel physically investigate while monitoring live CCTV from the scene.

Fire and burglar alarm activations may or may not be false. However, without visual confirmation it may be impossible to establish this quickly. With live, mobile CCTV, security personnel on-route to investigate have a much better idea of what to expect on arrival at the camera position. Ultimately, such an approach means emergency response can be accelerated, potentially saving lives and property.

SUMMARY

Get the full benefits of CCTV with iC2

iC2 is a leading mid-market security systems provider and was established in 2001. The business is owned and managed by a team with a collective experience of over 100 years in the electronic security business. iC2 holds CCTV and security and quality accreditations with NSI and BSI respectively.

It is our firm belief that the appropriate and compliant use of CCTV is an invaluable asset to businesses and organisations of all types that need to protect people, premises and property. In doing this, the technology also plays a significant role in helping to support a safer society.

A prestigious client list including luxury international boutique brands, top flight sporting venues, retail developments and educational and social environments demonstrates how solutions are deployed to meet a variety of requirements.

From deterring theft of high value luxury goods, to sports fan and public safety and child protection, solutions are deployed to meet a range legitimate purposes for which they are appropriate and fit for purpose.



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About Us

Keeping you safe and secure at all times

ic2 provide you with innovative solutions tailored to you and your sector. We are London-based with a national team of surveyors and engineers that work closely with our clients throughout the UK and internationally.

Our unique consultative approach allows us to tailor bespoke systems to your individual requirements, ensuring that your operational requirements are met.

We appreciate the need to demonstrate the best value to you every time and as a technology-led company, you can expect our cutting-edge and ground-breaking approach to serve your needs for many years to come.

Please feel free to contact us to discuss any requirements you may have. We are happy to give you impartial advice, should you have any queries.

