

BEST PRACTICE CCTV OPERATIONS: Addressing anti-social behaviour and intruders — a proportionate deterrent

By Richard Jenkins, Chief Executive, NSI. UKAS accredited, National Security Inspectorate (NSI) is the UK's leading certification body within the security systems, guarding and fire safety sectors, helping to protect homeowners, businesses and the general public through rigorous audit of more than 1,800 security and safety providers nationwide.

In 1949, one of Britain's most esteemed novelists, George Orwell, published his dystopian masterpiece *1984*, with its grim warning: “*Big Brother is watching you*”. As unsettling as that may have seemed, it was also in 1949 when an American company released the first commercially available CCTV system.

70 years on, recent press coverage is inflaming the debate on the potential ubiquitous intrusion of surveillance cameras, citing examples of the use and misuse of CCTV in taxis and in and around privately owned and managed residential buildings. The public may rightly be concerned. Four years ago, a survey by the British Security Industry Association estimated that in an urban area on a busy day, a person could have their image captured by around 300 cameras on 30 different systems. No one would doubt that figure has grown substantially in the last few years — increasing capability to capture, record and monitor the activity of individuals, and retrieve it as evidence of actual incidents.

THE SURVEILLANCE CAMERA COMMISSIONER (SCC)

The first Surveillance Camera Commissioner was appointed in 2012. Initially in post to provide the public with a channel to challenge the use of surveillance, the Commissioner's role has expanded dramatically with the seemingly conflicting demands and desire to maintain balance between the fundamental rights and freedoms of citizens on the one hand, and their safeguarding on the other.

Anyone operating surveillance cameras capturing footage in the public domain should be working to best practice standards. Compliance with the Surveillance Camera Code of Practice issued

by the Home Office in 2015 is a valuable symbol of trust in the public eye.

The Surveillance Camera Code of Practice raises standards by enabling surveillance providers to benchmark themselves, encourage continual improvement, and ensure surveillance is robust and fit for purpose. This in turn helps secure public confidence.

The code sets out 12 guiding principles with regard to the use of surveillance cameras: a comprehensive structure that enables sound, transparent decision-making. Since being appointed, the SCC has created a series of tools to support the operators of public space surveillance camera equipment. The self-assessment tools cover use of not only CCTV but automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) which may be used in some private car parks, body worn video (BWV) and automated facial recognition technology (AFR).

The practical application of good guidance for public spaces can be found in the Surveillance Camera Code of Practice: www.gov.uk/government/publications/surveillance-camera-code-of-practice.

MANAGEMENT AND OPERATION OF CCTV

CCTV is often installed to protect residents by deterring anti-social behaviour and/or potential intruders. The British Standard Code of Practice BS 7958 outlines the principles and practice involved in the management and operation of CCTV. Amongst other things the standard provides a framework for the detailing of clear policy and objectives in the use of a system, the secure storing of recorded/images and the release

of information — to statutory prosecuting bodies, including the Police and members of the public.

The standard BS 7958 can then be used as a management framework for ensuring best practice in all aspects of management and operation of CCTV systems. It includes guidance on working conditions, appropriate use of equipment, the management of recorded information, and legal considerations including privacy and disclosure.

Installers can gain NSI approval against the full provisions of BS 7958 if they are fully compliant. It is an assurance of professionally and competently run operations, symbolised by the award of the NSI medal and logo.

Residential managing agents can also use, or advise their clients to use, contractors that hold NSI approval against specific Annexes to BS 7958. These point to fully trained and security screened contracted staff to working in in-house control rooms and sub-contracted CCTV monitoring services in external control rooms.

Whether outsourced or managed in-house, CCTV managed and operated in accordance with BS 7958 provides security managers with significant confidence that operations are fit for purpose.

SECURITY INSTALLED AND MAINTAINED

NSI recently upgraded its own code of practice (NCP 104 Issue 3) for the design, installation and maintenance of CCTV systems. The newly revised code of practice is based on BS EN 62676-4 and provides installers with a structured approach to determining user requirements through appropriate risk assessment and site survey.

With modern digital

camera systems providing high definition images, better accuracy in the recording and retrieval of information, and increasingly facial recognition, quality management and control systems must be in place. These ensure the correct use of CCTV surveillance and recording for the intended purpose, the security of recorded data, a guarantee that rights to privacy are protected, and that latest security software updates are applied to protect from cyber threats.

TOGETHER RAISING STANDARDS

Companies demonstrate commitment to good practice by the approvals they hold.

NSI Gold approval includes certification to BS EN ISO 9001 (for a company's Quality Management System) as well as its adherence to the relevant product standards such as BS 7958 and/or NSI code of practice NCP 104.

NSI is accredited by the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS), the UK's sole National Accreditation Body, responsible for determining, in the public interest, the technical competence and integrity of organisations such as those offering certification services. UKAS accreditation signifies NSI operates its certification schemes and issues Certificates of Approval in accordance with International Standards for Accredited Certification of Quality Management Systems (ISO 17021) and Product Standards pertinent to security and fire safety such as BS 7958 for CCTV (ISO 17065).

Companies which benchmark themselves against NSI approval schemes, demonstrate commitment to the highest standards of competence in the delivery, monitoring, management and operation of CCTV and security services delivering deterrence of anti-social behaviour and unwanted intruders, and effective evidence sharing with law enforcement bodies when the need arises.

NSI approval provides assurance to businesses that installers, operators and the management of CCTV systems and control rooms deliver consistent best practice in surveillance that protects individual freedoms as much as it can help keep people safe.