



Video Surveillance Maintenance Tips

- Keep a record of maintenance/repairs performed in separate record books.
- Record the make/model/serial numbers of all system equipment; including cameras, multiplexers, DVR's, Time Lapse VCR's to be readily available for police reporting when and if required. If possible, keep manuals with your equipment.
- Review camera position setups to ensure optimum location and camera focus. An additional camera may be in order to capture "fill-the-frame" images of suspects as they enter premises, or stand at counters. This is in addition to cameras that try to cover the whole scene with one camera only. *(an example being a tight area of an entry/ exit door to capture facial images)*
- Camera focus should be adjusted on the area most likely to capture a suspect image, (such as counter area). Holding a card with large numbers at the counter area focal point will assist in checking the focus.
- Ensure that the crucial areas, (on which the cameras are focused), have sufficient lighting to illuminate the suspect. Likewise, ensure light sources aren't improperly aimed at the camera, or that a ceiling mounted camera is not too close to an adjacent ceiling light. These will cause interference, or "white out".
- "Back lighting" is another lighting situation to consider when adjusting camera angle. This will cause the subject to appear as only a dark outline, obscuring any identifying detail. This often occurs in locations with sunlight streaming through windows directly into to the camera lens. Either re-position the camera, or consider installing light reducing window shades.
- Institutions should consider the placement of advertising posters which are sometimes attached to ceilings, and hang directly in view of the camera, obstructing a clear view. *(cigarette displays have often been the cause of obstructing the view of a suspect- the camera should be repositioned)*
- On a monthly basis, clean camera lenses with approved lens cleaner fluid and paper.
- Place a few drops of cleaning fluid on the paper and wipe in a circular motion. Don't put the fluid directly on the lens.
- If you use a Time Lapse VCR, clean the recording heads on a monthly basis by using a high quality wet-tape cleaning cassette, which will also clean the entire tape path inside the VCR.

- **Annually, have the VCR serviced professionally. Purchase one additional VCR for back-up purposes.**
- **Daily, ensure that the correct date & time are generated by the multiplexer, DVR, or VCR and is displayed on the monitor. Brief power outages might require it to be reset.**
- **As with any clock, make sure to take into account the change in time during Standard and Daylight Savings Time.**
- **Purchase a large wall mounted clock, and a large single numbered calendar, and position them so that at least one camera clearly captures it in the background.**
- **If using a Time Lapse VCR, purchase 40 new high quality videotapes. Label them 1 to 31, using them only on that day of the month. This will always permit the previous 30 days of videos to be available, in case investigators need to review incidents which may have occurred in several days prior to them being reported, such as fraud incidents. The 9 spare tapes are for replacement purposes. This is based upon 24 hour recording mode. Other recording modes would require additional tapes to be purchased. Each tape should be used no more than 12-15 times for optimum recording. On the tape label, record each new date that the tape is used. This will help keep track of the total number of times the tape is used.**
- **If at any time a crime occurs, remove the “record-tab” on the tape to prevent accidentally erasing of the evidence. Several surveillance VCR models automatically begin recording when a tape is inserted; removing the record tab will prevent accidentally “recording-over” of the evidence.**
- **When using a DVR, try to set the capture rate to 30 frames per second. When only recording 1 or 2 images a second, valuable data will NOT be recorded, even though it is viewed on a “live” monitor. Depending upon your hard drive, this may decrease the number of days you have access to. Typically, a 30 day record over rate is sufficient. It is better to have good video from a week ago, then poor video from a year ago.**