

## Co-op Coalition Survey: Security Cameras

Thanks to the members who took the time to respond to this survey. The amount of details and experiences you provided are very helpful! The original e-mail request containing the question follows along with a table containing the individual responses.

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In a message dated 8/15/2015 4:11:36 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time, CooperativesDC@aol.com writes:  
Dear Presidents, Managers, and Coalition Representatives,

Below are a series of questions almost every co-op should have an interest: Security cameras. The questions come from one of the Coalition members. As we all have seen, the ability to see and record via cameras have become universal and are used for many purposes from "seeing" who is at an entrance before admittance to their recordings helping to apprehend miscreants, documenting accidents, or simply serving as a deterrent for possible mischief. If your co-op uses cameras-- for any purpose-- please take a few minutes to answer as many of the questions you can, pasted below. Please reply with your answers by Friday, August 28, at 5pm. I'll share the results with everyone after compiling the responses. Thanks, again, helping one another.

Mike O'Dell, Director  
DC Cooperative Housing Coalition

*You are receiving this e-mail blind-copied to protect your privacy.*

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Our Co-op needs help. One of the shareholders has requested the Board to consider installing security cameras at the front entrance and the bike room. We have had a few problems with packages tampered with or taken especially when the UPS person left them outside; we've had a few bike thefts. It's not like we've had a lot of crime occur in or around the building so the gut reaction is that installing cameras is like trying to kill a mouse with a nuclear bomb. However, I might be mistaken and the Board can't just NOT discuss this idea, so we'd like to know:

1. Do other buildings of our size (under 40) have security cameras or are they only for larger buildings?
2. For what purpose(s) are cameras used?
3. Does the camera record what it sees and, if so, how is that footage reviewed and how often?
4. How much does it cost to install and to maintain cameras?
5. Was the time and money invested in installing and monitoring cameras worth it-- i.e., did they make a difference?
6. How big and what type(s) of problems was the co-op trying to solve/anticipate?
7. Do you believe the camera(s) helped eliminate/reduce the problem(s)?
8. Was any crime solved by what was recorded on the cameras?

<50 units	We have no security cameras.
<50 units	Unfortunately [our co-op] does not. As president, I tried to have a system installed, but the board would not approve.
<50 units	We do not have cameras.
<50 units	Our coop discussed this issue after we had a break in through our rear door. We decided not to install security cameras for several reasons: the first

	<p>line of defense is making our doorways secure with strong locks. We currently have two set of doors in the front entryway and we are installing another door in the rear so that there would be two sets of doors in the rear entryway. Secondly, since we have no way of continually monitoring the cameras, they would only be valuable as a possible but weak deterrent, and in trying to identify the persons involved in a crime after the fact. We did not think cameras were worth the expense at this time.</p>
<50 units	[Our co-op] does not use security cameras.
<50 units	We do not have any security cameras. The possible need for one or two cameras has been discussed from time to time, but so far no decision to install cameras has been made. We'd be interested to see the results of the survey.
<50 units	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Our Co-Op of [30+] units has 4 security cameras.</li> <li>2. The cameras were installed following some intrusions and bicycle thefts and are all located in the vicinity of the front entrance.</li> <li>3. Our cameras record for up to 21 days before being recorded over.</li> <li>4. It cost us, in 2009, \$4,215.00 for 1x17" monitor, 1 DVR, 4 color cameras with 4 channel video interface, cable and installation. It also provides the ability for remote accessing of the cameras. We pay ADT \$212.37 per quarter to maintain the system. It is currently also costing \$79.99 per month to maintain the required DSL phone line with Verizon.</li> <li>5. They did make a difference when we were able to identify the bicycle thief for the police. We also identified another intruder and how she made entry into the building.</li> <li>6. We were trying to stop intrusion and theft issues.</li> <li>7. The cameras have been a deterrent, but it still requires vigilance on the part of all residents.</li> <li>8. Yes. See 5 above.</li> </ol>
<50 units	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Our building, which has just under 40 units, does use security cameras and an electronic entry system.</li> <li>2. The cameras primarily monitor our exterior entrances and surface parking lot. We also have a camera in the laundry room.</li> <li>3. We use motion-sensitive infra-red cameras that record to a digital recorder. The disc space is limited, and records over old footage when it reaches the end of its storage capacity. For us, this means that we have available 45 - 60 days. We a front desk attendant on weekdays from 9-5, with a monitor (cheap TV) on her desk. She can see what is happening in real time, and can review anything that is recorded as needed.</li> <li>4. Maintenance cost is only electricity. Our equipment cost was \$275 per camera, \$2000 for the recorder, \$200 for the TV. Installation was \$125 per camera and \$10 per foot for the cable runs. Prices are from 4 years ago.</li> <li>5. My sense is that it has been worthwhile. The cameras are visible and anyone who visits or delivers to the building sees that the cameras are monitored, which is a deterrent to any experienced criminal.</li> <li>6. A halfway house nearby brought a criminal element to our otherwise good neighborhood. We had problems with B&amp;E thefts from parked cars, and some unsuccessful attempts had been made to break in through windows. Our handyman had taken to sleeping in our laundry room, which we wanted to stop.</li> <li>7. Definitely.</li> <li>8. On several occasions we have provided camera footage (on a flash drive) to the police that has helped to identify scofflaws breaking into cars and attempting to break in through our windows. We have also provided footage to construction foremen from nearby projects when their workmen have damaged or dumped unwanted materials on our property. I would be happy to</li> </ol>

	answer follow up questions if needed. Feel free to suggest that the individual contact me directly.
<50 units	We are a small coop and don't have security cameras; however, it is something we would consider.
<50 units	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Yes we have [40+] units and installed cameras in 2014.</li> <li>2. The cameras are used for security only. We do not review the coverage unless there is a serious issue. Loss of packages is not one of them unless it is a serious loss.</li> <li>3. Yes the camera records about 30 days' worth of footage and is automatically written over if we have no need for it. One camera faces the front entrance and street area.</li> <li>4. We spent about \$6,000 for three cameras at our entrance/exits. There is no cost to maintain the camera. There is a secure room with the computer and screen in it that came with the system.</li> <li>5. Yes. We think it has made the building more secure and the residents feel safer.</li> <li>6. We had two break-ins and caught the criminal with the cameras on the second one. He was prosecuted and our footage was used to put him behind bars.</li> <li>7. Yes. The camera are an added component to a secure building. Although they cannot completely keep thefts from happening, we had no issues after the camera caught the burglar. Also our missing packages have gone to nearly zero.</li> <li>8. Yes a burglary and footage was provided to the police and prosecutor. We do not view the footage unless two Board members are present and there has been an active issue. We have approved a clear privacy statement from the Board.</li> </ol>
50 – 99 units	[Our co-op] does not use security cameras in any area of the building nor parking lot. However, we would be very interested in the results of this survey.
50 – 99 units	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. We have cameras. We are a 50+ unit building.</li> <li>2. If there is an incident (robbery, theft, vandalism, assault, etc.) we use the cameras to provide evidence to the police.</li> <li>3. The cameras do record. The recording is maintained for about two weeks, after which the system records over it. Footage is only after an incident is reported.</li> <li>4. Cost to install 7 cameras plus dvr plus flat screen = \$3,020.</li> <li>5. Yes.</li> <li>6. See answer to #2 above.</li> <li>7. I don't know if they are a deterrent. But they help us understand events after they occur.</li> <li>8. Crime was not solved, but perpetrator was filmed and new security measures installed.</li> </ol>
50 – 99 units	<p>Our building (50+ units) has had security cameras inside the building for years, the initial reason for installation isn't known to the current board, but potentially since it was previously a rental building before becoming a coop. The cost of this basic system, which we upgraded about 3 years ago, was in the \$4000 range, without installation. We do not have cameras connected to the entry system, but covering the doors, hallways, bike room, and laundry room. They are connected to a DVR that stores footage for at least a month. Cameras are infrared, so they pick up activity in bike/storage rooms and laundry room when the lights aren't on.</p> <p>We have had the cameras as a deterrent, but that hasn't necessarily been effective, as we have had ongoing thefts of items from the common areas (packages, bikes from the bike room). Footage has been used in these</p>

	<p>cases, and in several instances, showed that someone from the outside was prying open our main doors to enter the building, alerting us to the need to better secure the doors.</p> <p>A challenge is that, unless you have a security company or management company to manage the system, someone needs to know how to use the system and view and download footage when needed. Viewing footage can take a significant amount of time, even when viewed at 6x normal speed. Therefore, we require that for any missing items, the time frame be narrowed down to a 24 hour period in order to take the step of reviewing footage.</p>
100 – 299 units	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. We have 100+ apartments and 15 cameras.</li> <li>2. To watch what is going on at different locations in the property. Access control from loading dock.</li> <li>3. The cameras record movement. The footage is reviewed as needed.</li> <li>4. Depends on the camera.</li> <li>5. They are a deterrent to crime.</li> <li>6. From outsiders - Bike thefts and trespassing. For residents - After hour moves and other bad behavior.</li> <li>7. The cameras help identify those that are breaking the rules.</li> <li>8. The quality of the film was not good enough to identify the person who stole the bike; the footage was too grainy. Those cameras have been upgraded.</li> </ol>
300+ units	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. We have security cameras in our lobby, side lobby, gym, by the elevators, and ballroom. We are a 300-unit building.</li> <li>2. Primarily the guards use them to monitor areas of the building remotely. We can also use them after the fact to investigate instances of vandalism or reported violations of the building rules.</li> <li>3. Yes the footage is recorded and reviewed when we receive complaints about stolen items, intruders, or damage being done to portions of the building.</li> <li>4. No idea but the DVR we use to store the footage was recently replaced for \$5,000. We have debated adding even more cameras to have greater coverage inside the building.</li> <li>5. The cameras were installed when the building was still apartments but I think they are necessary in a building as large as ours.</li> <li>6. Intruders on the property and vandalism to the building. Also allows the guards to monitor the entire building from a central location.</li> <li>7. Yes, we've caught owners violating the building rules and vandalizing the building.</li> <li>8. No. The one occasion we caught a suspect on camera, they were wearing a hoodie and sunglasses. The photos were basically useless.</li> </ol>
300+ units	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. We have [300+] units. We have about 30+ security cameras onsite.</li> <li>2. Crime deterrent and for documentation for any incidents. We are also a controlled access building.</li> <li>3. Yes, but the footage is only reviewed if there is an incident. Otherwise front desk periodically monitors live feed.</li> <li>4. Initial cost was six figures and we recently replaced all 3 DVR's for about \$10k. No monthly maintenance fees.</li> <li>5. I think the cameras are very helpful when there is an incident. The up-front cost is significant however.</li> <li>6. Crime / incidents</li> <li>7. I believe they serve as a good deterrent and they've been helpful in reviewing incidents.</li> <li>8. Yes, earlier this year a stolen laptop was caught on camera and when the person entered the building again later that week, he was identified by the front desk (photo of culprit was circulated via email to all residents and staff).</li> </ol>

<p>300+ units</p>	<p>I do not think the size of the property should be a driving force when deciding what security measures should be taken.</p> <p>We have cameras at the entrances to each of our four towers – all monitored at the front desk. We have other cameras that have been placed in areas where we now there are problems, similar to those below – service doors left open, residents leaving bulk trash in the corridors, etc. We do not have cameras in our exercise rooms – a bit of an invasion of privacy.</p> <p>See other comments below:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. We have [nearly 400] units and have 16 cameras.</li> <li>2. Primarily entering/exiting the four towers and the two levels of the garage.</li> <li>3. Reviewed when a problem has been reported.</li> <li>4. Varies. With a monitored system, you have to have electrical needs satisfied. With the stand alone, it is about \$1,000 per camera.</li> <li>5. Absolutely.</li> <li>6. Prevention of potential problems.</li> <li>7. Absolutely.</li> <li>8. Yes. Invasion into our garage was captured on the camera; the tape presented to the DC Police Department; they recognized the invader and arrested him. We have found beds, furniture in our corridor – we used to camera to identify the culprit – and rightfully charged the resident.</li> </ol>
<p>300+ units</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I know of condominiums of less than 100 units that have surveillance cameras. I currently manage a large (400+ unit) cooperative and we have surveillance cameras. I recommend using the term “surveillance” rather than security because of the connotation to residents.</li> <li>2. We have cameras at building and garage entrances, the outdoor pool, in the parking garage although not complete garage coverage, the loading dock drive, parking area and building entrance, the fitness center, the library, the bicycle room.</li> <li>3. Our cameras are set to record on motion and they record to a PC internal hard drive, actually multiple hard drives. Depending upon the activity in the field of view we have between 15 to 24 days of recording per camera before the program begins overwriting the files.</li> <li>4. There are too many variables to provide a meaningful answer. You can expect to pay several thousand dollars up to as much as \$12,000 for a building our size for installation of a system. I recommend contacting a surveillance camera company to schedule a site visit and make some recommendations and price alternatives. Use that information to speak to other companies and get their ideas and prices.</li> <li>5. We have a monitor with all cameras visible at the front desk. Any camera picture can be enlarged to full screen with a mouse click. However, we do not “monitor” the cameras. If there is an incident in the field of view of a camera and it is brought to the attention of management we review the recording to assist in resolving the matter. If the incident was recorded by a camera the outcome is always satisfactory to the Cooperative or to the aggrieved party.</li> <li>6. Wanted to be able to check areas in the parking garage, at building entrances to identify persons before providing remote access, the pool deck, the bulk trash area and loading dock area, visitor parking areas. Also wanted to provide video of library and fitness center where telephone extension can contact the front desk for assistance.</li> <li>7. No, the cameras cannot stop incidents, even theft, from occurring although they did help resolve most issues when the incident was recorded and retrieved and played in front of the affected parties.</li> </ol>

	<p>8. Yes and no. We had video recording of two different persons with video proof of theft and the police could not identify the persons and never apprehended them and never returned the articles that were taken. We have resolved several minor accidents in the parking garage and accidents involving vehicles damaging the garage roll-up doors. We have also identified contractors using the Cooperative's bulk trash dumpster rather than removing the construction debris from the property.</p>
<p>300+ units</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. We are a large building (500+) but have found that many residential buildings/communities have cameras – regardless of size.</li> <li>2. Mostly reactively, as in to find evidence of an incident after it occurred. We would like to use it more proactively though in order to respond to incidents as they occur. Monitor entryways and public areas such as lobbies, laundry room, and bike storage.</li> <li>3. Yes it records up to 15 days. We review at need, when issues reported.</li> <li>4. \$15,784 for 21 cameras and \$268 annual maintenance.</li> <li>5. Installation time was one afternoon. The community next to us was able to identify an arson in their laundry room and react to it. That potential makes it worth it.</li> <li>6. Laundry theft, bike theft, barring people from property.</li> <li>7. I think they are a deterrent</li> <li>8. Yes, laundry theft, recorded stolen moped, used for barring people from property.</li> </ol>
<p>300+ units</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. We have 4 bikes rooms (500+ units) and have installed cameras at those and every entrance</li> <li>2. Staff can see who is at the doors or in bike cages and if theft occurs or other incidents we can review the tapes</li> <li>3. It saves 3 days and we only review it if someone reports an incident</li> <li>4. For us, large installation was \$30K. Minor maintenance maybe \$1,000 a year at the most.</li> <li>5. Yes we felt it did – we were having regular incidents of bikes being stolen and now we have a better idea of who is getting access</li> <li>6. We had a very serious problem with an armed robbery. It was felt that it was an “inside” job but no one was ever charged or arrested.</li> <li>7. I do – it also really helped ease concern of the residents.</li> <li>8. No</li> </ol>