# THE CITY OF ALEXANDRIA
# COMMON INTEREST COMMUNITIES
# EDUCATION SERIES

# CAMERAS & SECURITY

## NOVEMBER 21, 2026


**PRESENTED BY**

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# Program Overview

- Association Responsibility
- Cameras
- Committees
- Coordination with Law Enforcement
- Evaluations & Common Recommendations
- Limiting Liability
- Other Considerations
- Resources





# Association Responsibility





# Association Responsibility

- Associations *generally* not responsible for resident security.
- No statutory requirement to protect from criminal activity.
- *Generally* not liable for third-party criminal acts.
- ***Special relationships or assumption of duty may create liability.***





# CAMERAS





# Purpose & Precautions

- Cameras may assist in documenting criminal activity.
- Evaluate risks ***before*** installing cameras on common area.
- Installation may create expectations of increased security.
- Cameras should not be represented as preventing crime or protecting residents.
- Avoid a duty to intervene or dispatch assistance.

# Camera Placement

- Focus cameras solely on common area.
- Avoid recording areas with a reasonable expectation of privacy:
  - Bathrooms
  - Locker rooms
  - Private property interiors
- Review camera positioning and field of view.
- Inadvertent recording may create liability.

# Posted Signage

- Install appropriate signage near cameras.
- Continuous or motion-activated?
- Disclose active monitoring, if applicable.
- Avoid suggesting immediate response, continuous monitoring or crime prevention.

# Cameras with Audio Recording

- Unlawful interception of communications prohibited - ***Virginia Code § 19.2-62***.
- Inadvertent audio capture may -
  - Expose the Association to liability
  - Constitute a Class 6 felony
- Signage or notice does not necessarily establish consent to record.
- Cameras with audio recording are ***not*** recommended.





# Federal Wiretap Act

- Prohibits unlawful interception of wire, oral or electronic communications.
- Restricts use or disclosure of unlawfully intercepted communications.
- Potential criminal liability and civil remedies.

***18 U.S.C., § § 2510–2523***





# Civil Remedies

- Court may order unlawful recording to stop.
- Court may also award monetary damages at the ***greater*** of:
  - Actual damages suffered and any profits attributable; or
  - Statutory damages calculated at the ***greater*** of $100 per day of violation or $10,000.00.
- Punitive damages may also be available, as well as reasonable attorneys' fees.

***18 U.S.C., § 2520***





# Footage – Book & Record

- Retained footage is treated as an association book and record.
- Owners may request examination and copying, subject to statutory exemptions.
- No obligation to produce footage if no longer retained.
- Consider retention requirements when selecting a camera system.

***Property Owners' Association Act § 55.1-1815***
***Condominium Act § 55.1-1945***





# Policies & Resolutions

- Address camera footage in a records policy or adopt a separate policy.
- Define retention, storage and routine deletion practices.
- Establish access restrictions and identify authorized reviewers.
- Set procedures for requests from third parties - law enforcement and insurers.





# Communicating Limitations

- Clearly communicate camera purpose and limitations.
- Association is not responsible for ensuring personal safety.
- Do not promise continuous surveillance or immediate response.
- Owners and residents should be reminded to contact law enforcement directly.

# COMMITTEES





# Purpose & Responsibilities

- Encourage -
  - Resident participation in community safety
  - Reporting suspicious activity to law enforcement
- Gather and communicate security concerns
- Coordinate crime prevention programs with local police
- Identify potential security improvements
- Provide recommendations to the Board

# Purpose & Responsibilities

## ***Not* Security Enforcement**

- Serves only in an advisory capacity
- Does not investigate crimes, confront individuals or enforce laws
- Refers suspicious or criminal activity to law enforcement

# Board Considerations

- Committee effectiveness depends on resident participation.
- Evaluate resident interest ***before*** establishing a committee.
- Consider alternatives to a formal committee
  - Periodic resident communications
  - Educational programs
  - Designated police liaison
- Adopt a resolution or charter ***clearly*** defining responsibilities and limitations

# Coordination with Law Enforcement





# Coordination with Law Enforcement

- Maintain ongoing communication with local law enforcement
- Invite police representatives to Board meetings
- Request updates on local criminal activity and security concerns
- Explore local police department resources
  - Neighborhood Watch
  - Crime prevention programs
  - Community policing resources

# Designated Police Liaison

- Designate a representative to serve as the primary point of contact with local police.
- Communicates concerns and coordinates police participation.
- Reports law enforcement recommendations to the Board.
- ***Clearly*** define liaison responsibilities and limitations.
- **No** responsibility to investigate or intervene in criminal activity.

# Evaluations & Common Recommendations





# Security Evaluations

- Law enforcement or independent security professionals may evaluate common area to provide security recommendations.
- May evaluate access controls & visibility - cameras, lighting, landscaping, etc.
- Findings and recommendations in writing.
- Review recommendations to determine next steps.

# Common Recommendations

## *Visibility*

- Improve visibility around entrances, parking areas and walkways
- Repair, replace or adjust existing lighting fixtures
- Identify & address vegetation obstructing visibility

# Common Recommendations

## *Access Controls*

- Regularly inspect and maintain locks and access systems
- Consider controlled entry points
- Restrict access to appropriate facilities
- Establish procedures for issuing and replacing keys
- Deactivate lost, stolen or outdated access credentials





# Limiting Liability





# Assumption of Duty

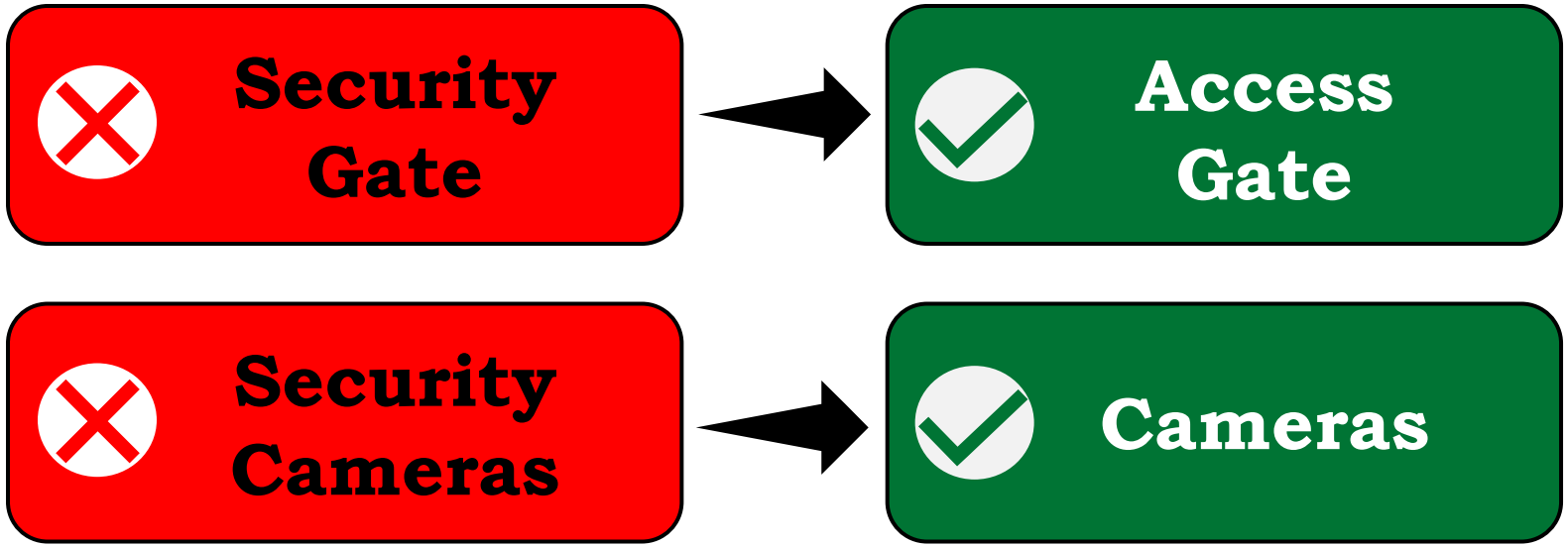
- Avoid creating expectations of responsibility for personal safety.
- Clearly define & communicate association's limited role in safety and security.
- Avoid performing security functions or law enforcement.





# Terminology

Avoid terminology that may imply security services are provided.



# Managing Expectations

- Clearly define Association role and limitations.
- Communicate limitations to owners and residents.
- Post proper signage when necessary.
- Encourage residents to report criminal activity directly to law enforcement.

# Limiting Potential Liability

- Carefully evaluate resident requests for additional safety measures.
- Promptly maintain and repair common area doors, gates, locks and equipment.
- Notify residents when equipment is temporarily out of service.
- Document maintenance, repairs and corrective actions.

# Other Considerations





# Insurance Coverage

- Evaluate adequacy of Association insurance policies -
  - General liability
  - Directors and officers liability
- Confirm coverage for -
  - Camera systems & equipment
  - Board and committee activities
  - Other proposed security measures

# Consultation

- Consult Association insurance carrier ***before*** implementing security measures or establishing committees.
- Disclose proposed camera operations, procedures and safeguards.
- Determine potential effects on existing coverage and premiums.
- Inquire about additional coverage or recommended safeguards.
- Carrier responses and recommendations in writing.





# Costs & Maintenance

- Evaluate initial installation and implementation costs.
- Account for ongoing maintenance, repair and replacement.
- Consider increased energy consumption.
- Include recurring fees for access systems, monitoring, software and professional services.
- Assess available funds and long-term sustainability.





# Rules & Resident Participation

- Consider rules addressing entrances, gates, locks and access credentials.
- Provide procedures for reporting security equipment concerns.
- Encourage community awareness and shared responsibility.
- Effectiveness depends on resident participation and voluntary compliance.





# RESOURCES





# Virginia Resources

- **Crime Prevention Training & Publications**, including *Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design* assessments and guidance -
  - Virginia State Police Crime Prevention
  - Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services
- **Community Associations Institute** offers Association-specific publications and educational resources addressing security measures, risk assessments, vendor selection, risk management, and potential liability.

# Discussion





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