

Town of Stowe  
Selectboard Policy  
VIDEO SURVEILLANCE SYSTEMS

SECTION 1 – PURPOSE

This policy provides guidance for the placement and access to live monitoring of video surveillance equipment, as well as the access, storage, retention, and release of the recorded data.

SECTION 2 – SCOPE

- a. This policy applies to any video surveillance systems owned or operated by the Town and the captured images.
- b. It does not apply to body-worn camera systems employed during law enforcement activities or other surveillance cameras or systems used as part of an on-going police investigation.

SECTION 3 – PLACEMENT

- a. Video surveillance cameras will be placed on the exterior of public buildings and in outdoor spaces on Town property with the expressed purpose of protecting the property by enhancing security and discouraging criminal activity. In determining placement, care should be taken to reasonably protect library patron and voter privacy. Any location where video surveillance is employed will have signage notifying the public of such.
- b. Exceptions to this are;
  - i. The use of surveillance equipment in the Public Safety Facility for law enforcement purposes
  - ii. The use of surveillance equipment in the Public Safety Facility to monitor the storage and access of controlled substances.
  - iii. The use of surveillance equipment in the Treasurer's office to help prevent fraud and theft, and to enhance employee safety while conducting financial transactions.
  - iv. Video equipment placed in the Stowe Arena for livestreamed events, which is governed by a separate policy.
- c. Aside from the exceptions noted above, neither video surveillance nor audio recording will be conducted in any area where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy.

SECTION 4 – SYSTEM ACCESS

- a. The video surveillance system will only be accessed from Town owned and managed devices using domain credentials. Access to live and recorded images shall only be for bona-fide municipal and public safety purposes. The Town Manager will determine and assign the level of system access, access to specific cameras,

- and the ability to view live or recorded images based on need as it relates to the employee's responsibilities.
- b. The Town Manager may authorize a department head or third party to review recorded images for purposes of investigating complaints against the Town or employees, suits or liability claims against the Town, and violations of Town policies or ordinances,
  - c. The Police Department will have access to all live images for the purposes of protecting public safety.
  - d. When recorded data is accessed all information pertaining to that access event will be logged, and those logs will be made available to the Town Manager monthly, or as requested. Information that will be logged includes, but is not limited to;
    - i. Date and time of access
    - ii. The user accessing the system
    - iii. What cameras were accessed
    - iv. Date and time range of recorded data that was accessed
    - v. Whether or not recorded data was exported or saved external to the video surveillance system
  - e. Access to the physical data storage media and video surveillance server(s) will be controlled by electronic, carded access and granted only to those who require such access to perform the duties of their job.
    - i. This includes, but is not limited to; the Town Manager, the Police Chief, the Police Detective, the Police Department Technology Officer, and the Information Technology Director
  - f. All system access rights, login events, system activities, and data room access will be logged with periodic audits to ensure compliance.
  - g. No unauthorized recording of video footage through cell phones, portable devices, or any other means is permitted.

## SECTION 5 – RETENTION

- a. All recorded surveillance video will be retained until obsolete, but no longer than 45 days with the exception of specific surveillance cameras in the Public Safety Facility related to law enforcement activities that may require longer retention periods for investigatory purposes.<sup>1</sup>
- b. Any recorded surveillance video that becomes part of a criminal investigation must be retained in accordance with applicable regulatory requirements.
- c. The Town reserves the right to retain recorded surveillance video longer than 45 days if the recorded surveillance video contains recordings of events that are potentially relevant to any actual or potential legal claims involving the Town.
- d. The Town shall retain recorded surveillance video that is relevant to a potential legal claim against the Town upon the Town receiving a credible threat of litigation of that potential claim for a period of one day past the statutory limitation period for the claim.

## SECTION 6 – RELEASE OF RECORDED DATA

- a. All requests for release of recorded images will be handled in accordance with the State of Vermont Public Records Act.

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<sup>1</sup> See Secretary of State Retention Schedules: SRS-1819.1103.145; GRS-1000.1103.145.

- b. The Town reserves the right to refuse release of recorded data if the custodian of the requested recorded data finds the Vermont Public Records Act does not require its release.
  - i. A decision of the custodian to deny access to records may be appealed in writing to the Town Manager by the requestor.
- c. The released recording may be redacted at the Town's discretion in accordance with Vermont's Public Records Act and as may be advised by legal counsel.