



Video Surveillance Systems

6 Tips for Combining your Alarm Systems with Video Surveillance Systems for Effective Intrusion Detection

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Alarm systems and video surveillance systems have many benefits when used alone, but when combined they act as a more powerful deterrent and detection method for intrusions by unwanted persons and other criminal acts.

Traditional alarm systems have evolved from burglar alarms that sounded a bell to attract attention to alarms that are monitored by 24 hour central alarm stations to provide immediate assistance when alarms are activated. However, even with central alarm stations there still persists a major problem with false alarms. Normal procedures require the central alarm station to call a predetermined phone number to "verify" the alarm. This is successful if the client is at his/her restaurant and can verify it is a false alarm. However, if the premises are being broken into it is highly unlikely the phone can be answered in the process of a criminal act.

If the central alarm station does not receive an answer, the alarm is considered unverified except in limited cases such as silent alarms in banks. Unverified alarms are a very low priority for law enforcement agencies and response times are typically extremely slow. In some areas, such as in Las Vegas, law enforcement does not ever respond to unverified alarms.

So what is the answer to ensure your restaurant is properly protected? Adding a video surveillance system that is integrated with the alarm system ensures that the alarm can be verified. When the alarm system is activated a camera is also activated which allows the dispatcher to verify if there is an intrusion. An alert along with the camera's video feed will appear on the dispatch screen, allowing the dispatcher to see what is happening in real time. The dispatcher can then alert the police to a verified criminal act and track the incident until they arrive.

When combining your alarm system with a video surveillance system there are several things to consider:

- 1) Does the digital video recorder (DVR) that comes with the video surveillance system have the ability to integrate with your alarm system, another alarm system, on an individual sensor basis? For example, can a specific camera be programmed to start recording when a specific door or window is opened and the alarm is activated?
- 2) Does the video surveillance company provide 24 hour monitoring and alarm verification? If not, does your alarm company? If the alarm company does, is the video system compatible with their requirements?
- 3) Does the video surveillance company provide 24 hour technical support? Can they monitor the system to know when there is a technical problem or when a camera is not working? If not, how will you know if your system is working properly and your property is being protected?
- 4) Can the video surveillance system send automatic email or text alerts to you when a camera is activated? This will allow you to take immediate action.

5) Can you access the system efficiently from anywhere on the internet? Can you access the system from handheld and mobile devices? This will allow you get real-time information when and alert is received.

6) What is the quality of the images recorded by the video surveillance system? The images must be a quality that law enforcement will be able to use to help identify the intruders.

Combining your video surveillance system with your alarm system can help to create a safe and secure environment not only against unwanted intrusions, but also to deter other types of liabilities and losses such as inventory shrinkage and personnel liability claims. Billions of dollars are lost to these types of claims each year, so it may be time to look into adding or upgrading your current video surveillance system as a way to protect your restaurant.