

# **NEEDHAM HOUSING AUTHORITY VIDEO SURVEILLANCE POLICY**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The safety and well-being of Needham Housing Authority (“NHA”) tenants and staff is a top priority. One component in furthering that goal is the use of a video surveillance system (“VSS”) to observe public areas on NHA property. The surveillance of public areas is intended to protect the safety and property of the NHA community by deterring crime and assisting in the prosecution of crimes that have occurred while also ensuring that camera locations are minimally invasive to the privacy of NHA tenants.

## **2. GENERAL PRINCIPLES**

The NHA is authorized to select, coordinate, operate, manage, and monitor all VSS pursuant to this policy. VSS monitoring will be conducted in a professional, ethical and legal manner. NHA personnel using the VSS will be appropriately supervised in the responsible use of the system.

Footage and related information gained through VSS shall be used exclusively for law enforcement and/or official business purposes as determined or approved by the Executive Director of the NHA.

## **3. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

This policy applies to all NHA personnel and departments. VSS cameras are or may be installed in situations and places where the security and safety of either property or persons would be enhanced. Currently, there are cameras at the maintenance shop and the administrative building.

To ensure the protection of individual privacy rights in accordance with the NHA’s core values and state and federal laws, this policy is adopted to formalize procedures for the installation of surveillance equipment and the handling, viewing, retention, dissemination and destruction of surveillance records.

The existence of this policy does not imply or guarantee that the VSS will be live monitored by personnel in real time twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

Cameras will be limited to uses that do not violate the reasonable expectation of privacy as defined by M.G.L. Chapter 214. The functions of all cameras fall into three main categories:

- A. Personal Safety: Where the primary intent is to monitor and/or capture video and store it on a secure device so that it may aid in the investigation of any crimes against the person or deter a potential threat thereof.

- B. Property Protection: Where the primary intent is monitor and/or capture video and store it on a secure device so that it may aid in the investigation of any crimes against property or deter a potential threat thereof.
- C. Extended Responsibility: Other official uses as determined or approved by the Executive Director of the NHA.

#### **4. APPROPRIATE USE AND CONFIDENTIALITY**

All VSS images and captures are the sole and confidential property of the NHA. No footage shall be shown, disclosed or disseminated to the media, public, internet or any other unauthorized person(s) without prior written approval from the Executive Director.

All information and/or observations made available through the VSS shall only be used for law enforcement purposes or other official purposes as determined or approved by the Executive Director.

#### **5. RESPONSIBILITIES AND AUTHORITY**

Responsibility for oversight of the VSS and associated policies, standards and practices is delegated by the Executive Director. These responsibilities include:

1. Procurement, deployment and use of the camera systems.
2. Coordinating evaluation and analysis of the most effective placement of cameras.
3. Authorizing the placement of all cameras.
4. Authorizing the purchase of any new camera systems.
5. Reviewing existing camera systems and installations and providing feedback and recommending required changes to bring them into compliance with this policy.
6. Creating and approving NHA standards and procedures for cameras and their use.

#### **6. MONITORING AND REVIEW**

1. Authorized NHA personnel may monitor and review live camera feeds and bookmark footage as needed to enhance public safety or for other official purposes.
2. The Executive Director of the NHA may assign select police personnel to review live camera feeds, bookmark footage and access and/or record and/or download archived footage in order to aid in investigations or enhance public safety.

## **7. USE OF CAMERAS FOR CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS**

In addition to the fixed VSS cameras, the use of mobile or hidden video equipment may also be used in criminal investigations by the Needham Police Department or other local, state or federal law enforcement agency. Covert video equipment may also be used for non-criminal investigations of activities which may constitute a lease violation or pose a significant risk to public safety, security, and/or property as authorized by the Executive Director.

## **8. VIDEO REQUESTS**

VSS recordings shall be kept on the NHA secure server for a minimum of thirty (30) days pursuant to Massachusetts Public Records Law.

- A. All video capture requests from personnel within the NHA must be forwarded in writing or electronically to the Executive Director for approval. Note: authorized personnel are available to provide testimony relative to a video capture's authenticity but cannot otherwise participate in disciplinary and/or administrative matters unrelated to public safety.
- B. No footage shall be authorized for release that may compromise a potential or ongoing criminal investigation or is otherwise detrimental toward the interest of public safety as determined by the Executive Director.
- C. Any video capture request not containing the following information may be denied:
  - a. Location to include specific information about address, hallway, floor, exit or elevator, as applicable;
  - b. Date(s) of interest;
  - c. Time period(s) of interest;
  - d. Detailed reason(s) for interest.

## **9. EXCEPTIONS**

This policy does not address the use of privately-owned cameras by individuals or Webcams for general use by or within the NHA. This policy also does not apply to the use of video equipment for the recording of public performances or events or educational purposes.