



Request for City Council Committee Action from the Department of Regulatory Services, Licenses & Consumer Services Division

Date: July 21, 2005

To Dan Niziolek, Chair
Public Safety & Regulatory Services Committee

Subject Surveillance camera

Recommendation: Approve ordinance amendments to Title 13, Chapter 259 updating surveillance technology requirements and to clarify minimum standards to assist the MPD Crime lab for retrieval of clear photo evidence, and to add new license types (Off sale liquor types, Tobacco Dealers, and Food Confectionary) to install surveillance cameras.

Prepared or Submitted by Julie Casey, License Inspector, 673-3905

Approved by:
Ricardo Cervantes, Deputy Director
Rocco Forté, Assistant City Coordinator

Permanent Review Committee Approval _____ Not Applicable _____

Policy Review Group (PRG) Approval _____ Date of Approval _____ Not Applicable _____ Note: The Policy Review Group is a committee co-chaired by the City Clerk and the City Coordinator that must review all requests related to establishing or changing enterprise policies.

Presenters in Committee: Ricardo Cervantes, Deputy Director, Licenses and Consumer Services; Julie Casey, License Inspector, Licenses and Consumer Services; Cliff Johnson, Forensic Video Analyst, Minneapolis Police Department Crime Lab; Officer Judy Perry, Minneapolis Police Department RECAP unit.

Community Impact (use any categories that apply)

City Goals X Increase safety and assist Police in crime prevention and

apprehension of criminals.

Background/Supporting Information Attached

259.230 Surveillance cameras

Minimum Standards Background:

Due to the proliferation of surveillance equipment technology now being used for security by Minneapolis businesses, there became a need to clarify the Minimum Standards section of this ordinance. The goal was to better inform business owners of their responsibility under this ordinance. The following lists the main responsibilities of these businesses:

1. Maintain in working order their specific equipment.
2. The standards necessary for their equipment to produce the highest quality images.
3. Identify the different types of equipment acceptable under the ordinance for new businesses.
4. Clarify the enforcement actions for noncompliance.

First, for the non-video systems, there has been some misconception on the part of businesses pertaining to fines for "false trips". The Minneapolis Police Crime Lab / Robbery Camera Unit installs these units for a fee, and maintains them at no additional cost, except for the cost of a roll of film when the camera is tripped. These camera systems are inexpensive for the business and produce quality images when activated properly. They are still a great asset for the public and the City of Minneapolis.

Second, for analog video systems (VHS recorders), there was a large problem in several areas. The first was the fact that many systems were not recording. The systems were turned off or had cameras that did not function. The new standards addresses the businesses responsibility to maintain the systems.

The second was the camera placement, showing only the business employees and not the customers or the perpetrators of an offence. The new standard requires one

camera to capture the entrance to the business only. This camera must also capture clear images in all lighting conditions.

A third problem was with the videotapes that were being used to record in these systems. The industry standard for videotape life when recording is that after 12 records, noticeable distortion can occur. To solve this problem, the new standard requires the business to have 32 videotapes, marked "one" to "thirty two", one for each day of the month and one additional tape for replacement should an incident occur. The videotapes are required to be changed daily, and replaced each year.

Also addressed for analog systems was the maximum/minimum recording length of 24 hours, and the accuracy of the time/date stamps. The use of quad video systems was deemed inadequate under the ordinance. Quad systems do not comply because of their poor quality due to frame size.

Third, the new standard addressed digital video systems. At this time, there are no industry standards for digital systems, therefore, each system can use its own proprietary formats. In many cases, these formats are not compatible with the forensic video analysis systems used by the Crime Lab or any other entity. For this reason, the new standard requires the business to supply any necessary player and equipment to the Police Department when submitting video evidence.

Digital images for identification purposes need to be recorded at the highest resolution native to the equipment being used. They also need to download at the same resolution, and these issues are addressed in this standard.

The length of retention was addressed along with the time/date information.

All three of the systems covered in this ordinance are capable of producing quality images for investigative purposes, and offer reasonable solutions for existing businesses to correct previous problems.