

Policy Statement

Closed Circuit television (CCTV) can be effective in reducing or preventing crime if it is part of a broader crime prevention and community safety strategy. CCTV can bring benefits to the community through a reduction in crime which can lead to enhanced perceptions of safety in a particular area.

As a registered community housing provider, Pacific Link Housing (PLH) is party to the Record of Understanding with NSW Police that allows police to request information in investigation of an alleged offence, emergency or routine exercise of community protection.

The additional protection provided by surveillance cameras is beneficial in maintaining the lawful and safe use of PLH properties and for workplace health and safety of our employees. The use of video surveillance must balance the personal privacy of individuals with the safety and security of individuals, property and the community.

Purpose

This policy details PLH's approach to the use and management of CCTV cameras and video surveillance footage. Surveillance camera installations may be used to benefit the safety and security of PLH staff and volunteers, tenants, contractors, visitors and PLH property. The objectives of the CCTV installations are:

- to reduce crime levels by deterring potential offenders;
- to reduce fear of crime;
- to assist in the detection and prosecution of offenders; and
- to help secure a safer environment for those people who live in, work in and visit the properties.

Scope

The policy applies to all tenants, households, visitors, employees, contractors and volunteers. The policy is applicable to the CCTV surveillance systems installed at a number of PLH properties (both owned and leased from government), including cameras, recording devices and the footage recorded. A separate Company Policy (*CP20 Workplace Monitoring and Surveillance*) applies for the CCTV installation at PLH offices.

Principles

The following key principles for operation of the CCTV installations apply:

- Will be operated fairly, within applicable law and only for the purposes outlined in this Policy.
- As owner, PLH has primary responsibility for compliance with the policy, installation, maintenance, management and security.
- PLH will cooperate the NSW Police Force in accordance with the Community Housing Record of Understanding (refer Policy: *CP19 Privacy & Confidentiality Policy and CP37 Tenancy Responsibilities, Disputes and Behaviour Policy*).
- Will install clear signage as to ownership and operation of the installations and provide information to relevant parties on request.
- PLH will respect privacy and confidentiality obligations in location of cameras, restricting access to recorded material to authorised managers and protecting it from unauthorised access.

- PLH will conduct regular audits of the operation and sharing of recorded material by testing its compliance against relevant policy, legislation and procedures.
- PLH will address and respond to complaints through its usual processes.

CCTV Camera Location

Video surveillance systems are installed at multi-tenancy sites that currently include :

- Dunbar Way Estate, Kendall Village, Peek Way and Glennie Street, North Gosford
- Wallis Avenue, Canton Beach
- Main Road, Glendale
- Captain Cook Crescent, Long Jetty
- Copnor Avenue, The Entrance,
- Chambers Place, Woy Woy.

These locations are determined on the basis of crime statistics reported by the NSW Police Force, data collected by PLH, dwellings constructed and owned by PLH and assets of high value. Where possible and practical, community consultation on the installation of CCTV will be conducted. Cameras are carefully positioned so that they will not record or intrude on the personal affairs of an individual. Camera positioning should minimise privacy intrusions and be installed to monitor only those spaces that have been identified as requiring surveillance. These include public thoroughfares, open grounds, community centres and common areas including children's playgrounds. At the start of and during a tenancy tenants will be informed of the use of CCTV surveillance where applicable. Maps of camera locations and their range of vision is available from PLH on request.

CCTV is also installed at the PLH office at Gosford.

Signage

Prominent and appropriate signage will be permanently displayed in the general location of the camera coverage advising of the presence of CCTV cameras. Signs will advise that the cameras are in constant operation and provide contact details for PLH, as the system owner.

Camera Operation

Cameras are of colour resolution, night-vision enabled, motion-activated and are fixed. The cameras are not capable of being panned, tilted or zoomed. No sound is recorded. State of the art technology has been used to ensure maximum resolution and picture quality. Each camera is housed and positioned in a manner that protects the camera from unauthorised access. PLH will establish and resource a regular maintenance program, by suitably qualified operators, of the cameras and systems to ensure effective operation.

Recorded Material

There is no real time monitoring of camera footage. Cameras are connected to central, locked control facilities and material is recorded on digital video recorders. Recorded material is retained for varying periods depending on the capacity of the storage device and securely deleted when no longer required. Images where an incident has occurred may be retained until resolution of the incident or indefinitely, depending on the circumstances. As the owner of the CCTV installations, PLH retains ownership of, and has copyright in all equipment, recorded material and documentation.

Management of Recorded Material

To comply with privacy and confidentiality obligations, the circumstances in which police or other relevant agencies are able to access the recorded material will be carefully controlled.

Appropriate security measures will be taken against unauthorised access to, alteration, disclosure, accidental loss or destruction of recorded material.

As part of its normal operation, Pacific Link has:

- a procedure which makes plain to employees that they risk disciplinary proceedings (including dismissal) if they breach any of the provisions of the Policy and PLH's Code of Conduct;
- a requirement of confidentiality which can be enforced during and after termination of employment; and
- systems of monitoring and supervision that ensure compliance with the Policy.

All requests for access to recorded material must be authorised by either the CEO, Executive Manager, Tenancy & Support Services, Tenancy Manager or Tenancy Team Leader.

In order to protect the privacy of tenants, staff and contractors, any footage captured with CCTV surveillance will not be available to tenants, their support workers or advocates. In the event of a criminal activity occurring and where CCTV surveillance may provide crucial evidence, tenants should contact the police who can make a formal request to access the footage.

Access will be limited to:

- NSW Police, in circumstances where:
 - It is reasonably believed there is a serious and imminent threat to the life, health or safety of an individual;
 - The information is reasonably necessary for law enforcement purposes; or
 - To assist a police investigation into a missing person
- Authorised Pacific Link employees in relation to legal proceedings, including proceedings in the NSW Civil & Administrative Tribunal (NCAT),
- Department of Communities and Justice in relation to mandatory child protection reporting obligations,
- Authorised contractors for maintenance and training of the system, and
- Other statutory agencies where PLH has a mandatory reporting obligation.

Full details of the Record of Understanding with NSW Police are in *Policy : CP19 Privacy & Confidentiality Policy*. Under no circumstances shall master recorded footage leave the custody of Pacific Link unless it is delivered into the custody of the Police or courts in response to a subpoena, search warrant or relevant legal process.

PLH may refuse to provide footage in circumstances provided by privacy legislation, including :

- where it is reasonably believed that giving access would pose a serious threat to the life, health or safety of any individual, or to public health or public safety; or
- giving access would have an unreasonable impact on the privacy of other individuals; or
- the request for access is frivolous or vexatious.

Complaints Handling

For tenants and visitors, complaints may be raised using PLH's Complaints Policy. Employees may raise concerns via the Employee Complaint and Dispute Resolution Procedure.

Breach of Confidentiality

Prime responsibility for ensuring the Policy is adhered to rests with Pacific Link. This responsibility includes ensuring that breaches of the Policy are investigated and remedied to the extent that breaches of the Policy are within the ambit of Pacific Link's power to remedy. Breaches of confidentiality will be managed by PLH in a fair and compassionate manner respecting the privacy of the individuals affected.

Audit & Review

Regular monitoring and auditing of the CCTV program will be undertaken to identify whether the purposes of the policy are being achieved and the principles being complied with.

Policy Owner	Executive Manager, Governance & Compliance
Approval Authority	Board
Approval Date	September 2021
Next Review	September 2024
Website published	Yes