

Using CCTV at Home

Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) equipment has developed enormously in recent times, and prices have fallen considerably, so many people are now adopting this technology as a part of their household security measures. CCTV is also being used in the home to provide remote monitoring of pets, young children and people requiring care. Many houses now have smart doorbells with CCTV cameras fitted, which can be used to remotely respond to deliveries and callers to the home, even when the occupier is away.



In the UK, the use of such equipment is governed in law by the Data Protection Act and other legal provisions. This is overseen by the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) who have the power to impose significant penalties on those who do not follow the rules. The ICO's guidance for the private use of CCTV can be found [here](#). The guidance is common-sense and hopefully should not be difficult to follow provided you've read and understood it properly. Some of the key points are summarised below, but please refer to the full [ICO guidance](#) for further clarification.

1. Be clear about the reason why you are installing the CCTV equipment (for example for the detection of crime, managing remote deliveries, recordings of wildlife etc.) and ensure that any recordings you make are purely in support of that purpose. Take care to avoid unnecessarily infringing the privacy of neighbours and other members of the public.
2. You are **not** breaching of data protection law by using recording equipment, such as CCTV or smart doorbells to capture video or sound recordings outside your property boundary *providing* this is done with care and consideration, and following certain rules:
 - a. Let others know that you are using recording equipment, for example by putting up signs, and/or by informing your neighbours.
 - b. If asked by someone whose images have been captured, be prepared to show them or provide them with some of the recording and delete recordings if they ask you to do so.
 - c. You must stop recording a person if they object to being recorded, but only if it is possible to do so, for example, if you can point the camera in a different direction but still use it for the same purposes, e.g. when protecting your property.
 - d. Regularly delete old footage. CCTV systems can often be set to do this automatically.
3. When recording images and audio outside of your property, consider how intrusive this may be and place cameras carefully to avoid unreasonably intruding on others. Many systems now have filters or privacy blocks which can be set up to limit the areas viewed or captured. Use these to avoid unnecessary intrusion. Take particular care to avoid viewing or capturing sensitive areas such as schools, playgrounds, lavatories, changing rooms etc.
4. If you are using an external service provider for storing your recordings (for example a cloud-services provider), take care to ensure that they are reputable, adequately protecting your data, and are not sharing it elsewhere without your authorisation. Check their data protection policy before signing up to their services (this will usually be available on their website).
5. If you are unable to correctly install the equipment yourself, engage a qualified CCTV installer to set it up. Explain to them clearly the aims and purpose of your equipment at the outset and ask them to ensure the equipment complies with current data protection law.