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Best Practices

Video Review, Investigation, and Retention in Gaming Environments

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The International Association of Certified Surveillance Professionals has issued this consensus-based and peer-reviewed Best Practice for the guidance of and voluntary use by businesses and individuals who deal or may deal with the issues addressed in the context of video review, investigation, and retention in gaming environments.

PURPOSE

In Gaming environments, the use of Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) Systems is not only recommended for the protection of people and assets; it is typically mandated by the regulators of the jurisdiction where the gaming property is located. There are two basic areas of CCTV, which are gaming and non-gaming at any gaming facility, also typically defined by regulations. Gaming areas are highly regulated, whereas non-gaming areas are not depending on the jurisdiction.

CCTV in gaming facilities provides some deterrence to cheating at gambling, advantage play, internal and external theft, fraud, and other criminal events merely by the obvious cameras located throughout a casino and mounted in ceilings or on walls in the regulated gaming areas. Non-gaming area CCTV cameras are manned and operated either by the physical security department or included in the surveillance function. Non-gaming areas include parking lots or garages, back-of-house areas, hotel and associated facilities, convention and meeting spaces, entertainment venues, food and beverage outlets, and retail spaces.

In most jurisdictions, surveillance is staffed by personnel (agents) who monitor gaming operations and money-sensitive activity using video monitors and other technology in a

secure location with highly restricted access. Hotel, retail, and back of the house may be monitored by either the surveillance or security departments. This monitoring is done live with the agent having access to hundreds or even thousands of camera views. The agents are looking for unusual or suspicious behavior that is not routine for the environment. Agents watch for illegal activity, procedural violations, and regulatory compliance. The agents also conduct specialized investigations or reviews of recorded videos.

A good portion of what a surveillance agent or security officer assigned to a monitor location does is to review previously recorded video. Most gaming environments record on a one-to-one format, or every camera in a facility is recorded to either analog or digital video recorders or a combination of both. Not all camera views are monitored live by surveillance agents.

From a regulatory standpoint, at most casinos and gaming facilities, the surveillance department will report to a commission or a higher-level company executive independent of the physical security department. Based on the sensitivity of the gaming area, observations, and compliance audits may include observation of the physical security department. The security department will typically report to a high-level executive at the property level independently of the surveillance department.

Using recorded video to review an incident or event that has already occurred for the purposes of investigation to determine what occurred and what persons were involved is a critical skill for a gaming or security surveillance agent, loss prevention personnel, gaming regulators, or law enforcement investigators.

The review of video is also a necessary skill that should be taught, developed, and used consistently and professionally by all appropriate personnel to ensure the review is completed according to industry common practices and specific to the property. It is also critical to document the process of review through surveillance or security logs and to secure the video in tape or digital media using a formal chain of custody for criminal prosecution and civil litigation.

In almost all cases of video review, the result will be used to affect someone's life in a substantial manner to provide information as to what actually occurred in an infinite variety of situations or to defend against litigation and claims. The result of the review can be anything from loss of employment, other disciplinary action or arrest, prosecution, and incarceration if convicted. The result could also be used to defend in civil litigation.

While the review of video is a serious matter, it is also one of those skills that receive little, if any, attention in formal surveillance training programs. In many cases, the lack of video, lack of complete or thorough retention of video, and/or lack of documentation in the form of review logs or reports can cause the case under review to fail in a formal application for action.

It is the intent of this paper to recommend best practices and protocols for the review of

surveillance video and the security of video evidence for use, when necessary, in gaming facilities.

DEFINITIONS

Agents: Personnel assigned to a secure monitor room who conduct live observation and video review of prerecorded video.

Back of House: All non-gaming areas where there is no form of gaming device, table, or activity.

CCTV: Closed Circuit Television system utilized in gaming environments.

Chain of Custody: A process that tracks the movement of evidence through its collection, safeguarding, and analysis lifecycle by documenting each person who handled the evidence, the date/time it was collected or transferred, and the purpose for the transfer.

Cheques: A house-negotiable item used on gaming tables with a specific value.

Claim: A legal process that involves some form of allegation and demand for some remuneration.

Commission: A regulatory agency that oversees and assures compliance with gaming activity.

Compilation Video: Also known as a composite of various views of an incident used for criminal prosecution or internal presentation.

Digital Media: Digitized content that can be transmitted over the internet or computer

networks. This can include text, audio, video, and graphics.

Digital Video Recorder (DVR): A device that records audio and video input, typically from a television signal, onto a hard disk.

Documentation: Material that provides official information or evidence or that serves as a record.

Metadata: Structured information that describes, explains, locates, or otherwise makes it easier to retrieve, use, or manage an information resource such as a case number, incident number, or date/time marker.

Network Video Recorder (NVR): A software program that records video in a digital format to a disk drive, USB flash drive, SD memory card, the cloud, or other mass storage device. An NVR contains no dedicated video capture hardware.

Physical Security: The protection of personnel, hardware, programs, networks, and data from physical circumstances and events that could cause serious losses or damage to an enterprise, agency, or institution. This includes protection from fire, natural disasters, burglary, theft, vandalism, and terrorism.

Plot Map: A drawing, diagram, or print of the area where an incident or event occurred, such as the casino floor or a parking facility, that depicts the location and views of surveillance cameras. It may also include positions of employees such as security officers.

Review: The systematic review of recorded video by surveillance, security or law enforcement personnel to locate an

individual to ascertain his or her activities in a work or public environment or an incident or event to determine its nature, time of occurrence, and duration, those involved, how it evolved, and was managed and resolved by responding personnel.

Review Log: A log documenting components or clips of a video depicting certain activities, actions, or movements of a subject, incident, or event.

Ticket In-Ticket Out (TITO): A voucher received from a slot machine as payment for credits won or purchased.

Video: A sequence of images processed electronically into an analog or digital format and displayed on a screen with sufficient rapidity to form a moving picture.

Video Analytics: The capability of automatically analyzing video to detect and determine temporal and spatial events.

Video Area Network (VAN): An all-inclusive term for CCTV, NVR, Analytics, Cameras, etc.

Video Cassette Recorder (VCR): Video recording device used prior to the introduction of digital video recorders. Some VCRs are still in use today.

Video Review: A review as defined previously. Performed to locate a specific incident, occurrence, individual, witnesses, or suspects.

OPERATIONAL CHALLENGE

Those protective personnel responsible for reviewing video with a need to locate an incident, individual, vehicle, or any other type

of issue, including a criminal event, do not always receive adequate training in how to do so, nor is there typically a written guideline or procedure to follow other than to review the video from one point in time to another.

While this approach may suffice in capturing the significant event, it does not take into account the concerns and issues that may arise as the information or case is reviewed by others for its merit, accuracy, its ability to prevail internally or in a court of law or arbitration with an outside state or federal agency, or union representatives.

A practical, effective, accountable, and verifiable system that can be used by surveillance and security practitioners to conduct video reviews properly and thoroughly should be utilized. The system should allow for consideration of potential concerns and future litigation, provide documentation of how the review was performed, and preserve the essential video evidence.

SOLUTION

It is the IACSP's recommendation that surveillance and security professionals reviewing video perform the following:

FIRST STEP

The first step is to determine the nature of the review and investigation. The theft of a TITO (Slot machine jackpot slip) does not rise to the same level of review as a homicide in a hotel or parking garage. The time and resources applied to the investigation of a minor theft should differ considerably from what is used in a serious criminal event. Each incident should be reviewed; however, the

depth and scope of that review should be considered prior to a review. The decision for the review category is a property-level decision and should be commensurate with the event being investigated.

MINIMUM LEVEL REVIEW

Minor incidents or events (such as TITO theft or lost items) or requests from other departments (such as a guest service complaint or theft of an employee's tokens) may only require a minimum-level review. A minimum level review is one that is purposely limited to the location of the subject, items, or issue involved with the intent to report findings for response by other departments or later response by the surveillance department (for example, the suspect has left the property, a photo will be taken of the suspect to assist in his apprehension when he returns).

A minimum-level review will not usually attempt to determine all the movements, activities, and whereabouts of the subjects involved. Additionally, reviewing and retaining video preceding and after the event is usually not necessary. Should there be any questions or concerns about the incident, these steps should be considered.

MEDIUM LEVEL REVIEW

When reviewing an incident or event that may rise to the level of severe discipline (written warning, suspension, and/or termination), misdemeanor arrest, injury to a guest or employee, arbitration, or litigation, begin at least one hour prior to the event and continue through to at least one hour after the event.

Consideration should be made that reviewing video one hour prior to and one hour after for all cameras may not be necessary in all events. This recommended practice is for the primary camera(s) involved to be reviewed and retained for one hour prior to and one hour after the event, and other cameras added to the level only as necessary based on their pertinence to the event and their ability to provide supplemental information.

Taking the time to see how an incident developed, progressed and ended may provide new or additional information, make a determination of a behavioral pattern, or identify witnesses or suspects not previously known. Additionally, the extended video may assist in countering potential challenges to the investigation by the subject or his/her defenders. It may also rid you of a confirmation bias or preconceived idea about how the incident happened and who was or wasn't involved. Examples of such incidents/events are employee policy or procedure violations, petty theft, employee misconduct, and guest or employee medical issues or claims.

Consideration should be given to demonstrating a security officer's presence prior to a fight or disturbance to show security presence in the area and mitigate allegations of inadequate security in civil litigation.

COMPREHENSIVE LEVEL REVIEW

Serious or potentially serious incidents will usually require a comprehensive review. These incidents could be cheating at gaming, felony crimes, deaths or injury, or significant loss, guest (or employee) injury, events that could cause significant damage to company

reputation, or a disaster affecting the lives and/or health of employees and guests.

A comprehensive review begins with a thorough and comprehensive assessment and review of all cameras in any area that may provide any coverage of the event, or those individuals involved. In such incidents, enough personnel, time, and other resources should be used to accomplish the full review.

By their very nature, serious incidents/events require strict attention and special handling. How the incident/event is reviewed and investigated immediately after its occurrence will determine its final result, identification of those involved, their arrest and prosecution, if applicable, and the extent of liability, if any, to the property and its ability to mitigate that liability.

The components of a comprehensive review are:

FIRST STEP

Identify and review all cameras within a one-hundred-foot radius of the event for pertinent information or activity associated with the event.

Within the one-hundred-foot radius, review all ancillary cameras, such as those placed in kiosks, ATMs, and those positioned in other areas or departments that may provide potential evidence or information.

Continue the review of all cameras, including ancillary cameras, within a one-hundred-foot radius as those involved and/or the incident itself shift locations, changes, or progress, and/or involved subjects enter or exit the area. The one-hundred-foot radius moves

with the incident and those involved as the incident moves.

Consider reviewing at least eight hours of video from each camera, including ancillary cameras, to obtain potential information/evidence that may pertain to the incident. An eight-hour review considers sufficient time to cover one shift change, determine prior presence of employees, suspects, or victims, and demonstrates reasonable investigation of more serious incidents for criminal prosecution and civil litigation.

Be cognizant that it may be necessary to expand the review and investigation in time, by camera, by area, and by those determined to be involved and/or due to information received.

The video review should include the entire response of personnel, including any agency (e.g., Fire, ambulance, EMT, security officers, police, gaming regulators). This response should include all the way through until they leave the premises.

As an example, it is important to document through video the presence of uniformed security personnel in instances of assaults, serious injury, or death. The frequency of their presence will prove beneficial in any potential civil litigation involving a charge of inadequate security. The video may also discover other pertinent information as to the cause of an extended event.

SECOND STEP

A review should include all camera angles available that may pertain to the incident. Video from each camera in the area should be reviewed for the recommended time

period and saved. Such review may provide additional information or may determine that a particular camera and angle do not provide any further information. Both are important and should be saved for potential litigation regardless of whether they contain specific incident content. This will mitigate accusations of negligence of saving video or spoliation of video claims.

THIRD STEP

Identify, collect, or cause to collect (as applicable) and secure physical evidence. Items touched, damaged, or discarded by persons of interest could be valuable to the investigation. Close-up photos of environment/elements that may have caused (or been stated to have caused) injury in civil claims.

FOURTH STEP

Video from all pertinent cameras and camera angles should be retained, in its native format, until well beyond the end of the pertinent statute of limitations, or as stated in the company's retention policy or at a minimum, as defined by regulation. Whichever policy is used to retain video should be followed consistently in every case.

Most state gaming regulations mandate for retention that video related to gaming is to be retained for a minimum of seven full days, and the video should be saved and maintained in the custody of the surveillance or security department. These regulations were formulated in the days of VCRs and did not consider the development and deployment of digital/IP systems and their ability to store video for extended periods of time. Many surveillance and security departments using digital and IP systems now maintain their video for up to fifteen or thirty

days or longer. Storage may also be extended to sensitive areas such as the cage and count rooms or those exposed to consistent risk and liability, e.g., slip and falls and other guest or employee claims. The period of time video is retained should be based not only on what is minimally required but should be considered in the overall risk assessment and security/surveillance plans.

A chain of custody log is utilized to enter the incident, report number, who placed it into secure storage, the date and time, and any other pertinent information for easy identification at a later date when needed. If the video is not collected from the surveillance system and saved within the retention period, permanent loss of that video will occur.

FIFTH STEP

Review the video for the entire incident. This includes the arrival on the property or general area of the involved individuals or vehicles and all activity before the incident and continuing through the incident to its termination. You should provide or be able to provide the entire story of the event. There should not be any surprises or any questions that you can't answer or haven't attempted to answer.

SIXTH STEP

When reviewing video to locate an incident, person, or item in which little is known as to where it occurred, when it occurred, or who was involved, it is best to begin your review using one of the two methods: outside and work in, or inside and work out. Think of the review in concentric circles. The target or incident is the common center.

In most cases, the common center will be the source of the review. For example, when cheating at gaming occurs at Blackjack (BJ) No. 1, the video review would begin at the logical common center, BJ 1. From that point the investigator can work their way out through concentric circles of cameras to locate when each suspect arrived at the game, whether individually or as a group, how the suspects arrived at the property, and using what mode of travel. Additionally, the investigator can then work their way out to determine when the suspects left the game, how much cash or cheques they left with, in what direction, singly or in groups, and what mode of travel was used.

In other cases, the suspect or subject will be the only thing known to the agent and should be used as the common center. In such a case, locating that person(s) entering the property or an area (outside/in) and tracking him/her to the event or issue.

For example, if an elderly man was beaten in his hotel room and robbed, it is suspected that someone had observed him cashing out and had followed him to his room. Because there is no camera coverage in the hotel areas and room corridors and the man couldn't describe his assailants, nor could he remember where he played, the victim had to be first located on the casino floor, and then his movements and interactions could be tracked during the review process.

Using this method to follow the victim through the video review of his activity and movements, the suspects who followed him to his room were ultimately found, followed as they exited the hotel and as they left the property in their vehicle. Because of the video, the suspects were identified and arrested by the police on the same day.

SEVENTH STEP

A video review log should be completed for any review involving more than five minutes of subject activity or for any video of a significant nature. A recommended practice is to use a video review log for any incident or event that will be reviewed by another person, department, or agency. The video review log should be a standard document with appropriate places to list:

- A. Date of review and time initiated.
- B. Name or identification number of the agent performing the review.
- C. Applicable internal report number, incident subject, or name of subject.
- D. Time period reviewed.
- E. Camera numbers being reviewed, DVR or NVR number and sequence times.
- F. Monitor numbers of cameras, if applicable.
- G. Location of digital media storage, DVR or VCR, if applicable.
- H. Results/notes from review of the camera/area.
- I. When the video from a camera/area/review provides nothing that pertains to the case, it should be described as such using "nothing pertinent to the case." A photo of the scene that does not pertain to the case may be taken and combined with the plot map to illustrate that camera's view. Video from such cameras should be saved.
- J. Video review logs should be summarized and included in the case file for later reference. Personal opinions or comments should not be included in the review log or any formal report or summation.

- K. Incidents that may require considerable time to review should be assigned to one individual who would serve as a case manager responsible for ensuring all pertinent video, reports, witness statements, and other evidence is identified, reviewed, and secured. The case manager should also manage the assignment of reviews to individuals on each shift and that all information is passed on to each shift and detailed in the video review log.

EIGHTH STEP

Resources such as time, personnel, and equipment, etc., should be considered and documented. Intermediate and full reviews can be time-consuming and will remove personnel from other duties and responsibilities and should only be performed after careful thought and for the appropriate level of review. It is also suggested that in arrest situations or criminal prosecution, the surveillance function of review should be documented and submitted to the prosecutor for possible restitution and reimbursement of personnel time and resources.

NINTH STEP

The video reviewed should be retained as described in step four. Pertinent video may be copied and compiled into a summation, compilation, or "presentation video" for the purposes of presenting the case to internal departments and executives, law enforcement, or other outside individuals or agencies. Original video used to compile the presentation video evidence should always be retained in its native format.

A presentation, summation, or compilation video is used to present the event and/or evidence in a timely, convenient, and easily understood form. Only video that is directly related to the case is used in the presentation video for prosecution purposes. Video that does not provide information about the case is not placed to allow an easy review of the key elements of the case.

Civil cases should not use a presentation, summation, or compilation video as it can be used by a plaintiff to demonstrate only the negative events that help their case. Presentation, summation, or compilation video should be clearly labeled or titled as being intended only for the purposes of criminal investigation.

For example, video from a garage camera that depicts a suspect vehicle entering and leaving a garage before and after an incident may be presented to show the vehicle entering and exiting the garage only and not the lapse of time between the two occurrences. This is to allow ease of review only. The video used to compile the presentation video should be saved in its entirety as evidence.

TENTH STEP

Surveillance videos that may be needed for evidentiary purposes are of utmost importance. It should be properly stored and maintained for potentially long periods of time, be easily retrieved, be in its original format when needed, and/or capable of producing exact copies, if needed. Additionally, a formal and demonstrable chain of custody of the evidence secured and its handling is necessary.

Presently there are two types of videos in use today within the gaming industry: analog and

digital. While most surveillance departments have converted to digital systems, there are still several properties that continue to use analog systems that record video using video cassette recorders (VCRs). There are some fundamental differences in the securing of these different types of videos that should be considered.

Video evidence obtained through an analog system using VCRs as the recording medium requires the videotapes of the activity to be removed from the VCR and/or from the tape rotation. Any video that is to be saved should be pulled and retained in its original form. For example, an incident occurring on the casino floor may, during the incident, involve many locations and different cameras. Based on the type of incident, it may be necessary to save each videotape that pertains to the incident. If each of the involved cameras is recorded on an individual VCR (or on any type of multi-input recording device), the number of videotapes to be saved can be significant but is necessary to retain each of the videotapes that may be used as evidence as stated in step 4.

Video obtained from digital cameras and their recording systems should be isolated from active recording, saved, and stored. Video media being retained should be placed onto a separate storage drive used exclusively for video storage.

A strict and written policy controlling who can access removable digital media such as USB or DVD drives should be considered to prevent unauthorized removal of retained media.

Digital media, when released internally to outside agencies or individuals, should be placed on appropriate recording discs, flash

drives, or other portable devices. Video evidence is exported in its native, uncompressed format with the system viewer, preserving original time stamps and metadata. Source operating and encryption code should be embedded into the disc or storage device. All original videos should be retained.

CONCLUSION

Surveillance personnel should use a standard system to review video when conducting an investigation of an event, incident, or person. The recommended best practices to use when performing a review are:

- Determine priority of review: minimum, medium, or comprehensive.
- Consider the necessary resources to complete the review.
- Based on the determined priority, review all pertinent angles and cameras that are present at a one-hundred-foot radius or that may have coverage of the event, incident, or person before, during, or after the occurrence. Video from all pertinent cameras and camera angles should be retained for a defined time period or as stated in the company's security/surveillance plan, retention policy, or as determined by legal action.
- Utilize a plot map that can be attached to the review log or report that identifies camera location in relation to the subject or object of review. Drawing the path taken or specific locations is very helpful during criminal or civil litigation, when appropriate.
- Ensure you obtain and review the entire set of circumstances, and those individuals involved that tell the story of occurrence. This may require you to ascertain the location, movements, and activities of suspects and victims, other significant persons, or items for the entire period of time each is on the property.
- Review in concentric circles from a common center (inside/out) or to a common center (outside/in). Concentric circles with a perimeter of one hundred feet should be reviewed one at a time. Based on determined priority, review cameras within the one-hundred-foot perimeters, each in turn, as one circle is completed and another initiated, until all pertinent video is located, reviewed, and documented.
- List all pertinent details of observations on a video review form, including time, location, monitor/camera, subject(s), and a description.
- Memorialize the contents of the video review log in the formal investigation report in a complete and concise manner without listing any opinions or conclusions.
- Establish a chain of custody for all involved video, maintain video in a secure location, and release only with proper format.

We encourage surveillance directors and others responsible for the training of surveillance agents and investigators to incorporate the above best practices and guidelines into their video review process.

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generation of surveillance agents, supervisors, managers, and directors. Surveillance departments are continuously being challenged to protect properties more effectively. The need for highly trained personnel has never been greater. The IACSP addressed this issue through training; a certification program developed by surveillance directors.

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ABOUT IACSP

Founded in 2001, the International Association of Certified Surveillance Professionals (IACSP) is a growing organization established by peers and colleagues throughout the industry to develop and provide training to prepare surveillance personnel for the future. IACSP's mission is to train existing and future surveillance agents in the core skills of their profession and also to develop the next