



Superior Court of California County of Merced

Policy Name: Court Facilities Security Camera Recordings

Policy Category: Facilities

Revised June 27, 2023

I. Background and Purpose

The Superior Court of California, County of Merced utilizes a closed-circuit television (CCTV) monitoring system at all court owned facilities in Merced and Los Banos. This CCTV system and data contained within are owned or leased by the Court with monitoring/viewing permissions granted to the Merced County Sheriff's Department – Court Services Bureau. This viewing permission allows the Court Services Bureau to monitor and investigate safety and security issues within the courthouses. The CCTV system at the Juvenile Facility is owned and operated by Merced County Probation.

II. Policy and Guidelines

The camera equipment installed in the Merced and Los Banos Courthouses are the property of the Superior Court of California, County of Merced. As such, the court has the authority to adopt a policy and practices regarding the use and operation of the camera/CCTV system. This document sets forth policy and guidelines regarding the ownership, use and retention of security camera recordings in the Merced Courthouses, Los Banos Courthouse, and Traffic facility. This includes camera activities and/or issues related to the following:

- Ownership of the security cameras and recordings
- Access (live and recorded) and operation
- Retention schedules of recordings
- Downloads or copies of recordings
- Storage and retrieval

III. Ownership of Recordings

Except for the recordings downloaded/copied in response to a subpoena, all recordings in the Merced and Los Banos Courthouses are the property of the Court. Copies provided to the Court Services Bureau may not be duplicated or provided to others without the express permission of the Court.

IV. Access to Live Security Surveillance Video

1. Sheriff personnel assigned to Court Security and designees the Court Executive Officer.
2. Security surveillance video is not routinely retained by the Court and overwrites itself, at least every 14 days, depending on the amount of activity recorded.

V. Downloads/Copies

Recordings will be downloaded/copied for only the following reasons:

1. Criminal, safety, and security investigations
2. Evidentiary purposes (criminal or civil)
3. In response to a subpoena or public records request
4. Training or enhancing public safety purposes

VI. Determining when a recording will be downloaded

The Court will determine if a recording will be downloaded and the parameters of the download. In considering a request for a download, the Court will consult with the Court Security Sergeant and/or Lieutenant as appropriate. The Court Security Sergeant, Lieutenant or Captain are the designees authorized to request a recording to be downloaded. An email or short memo from the Sheriff's Department designee to the Court Executive Officer to support the request will suffice.



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VII. Disclosure to public, external agency, or party

The court will determine which recordings, if any, to disclose in response to a subpoena.

It is the policy of the Court not to make or release copies of recorded court security surveillance video for any non-court security purpose except in exceptional circumstances. All requests, other than the Court Security Bureau requests for camera footage, including crimes or security incidents committed within the court facilities or on the court grounds, must be submitted by subpoena. Requests and subpoenas for downloads/copies must specify the date, exact times to be downloaded and camera that recorded the date.

Requests for external camera footage may also be considered when submitted using a court provided form. Forms can be requested from the Court Administration office located at 627 W. 21st Street, Merced, CA 95340.