

Surveillance Systems 101

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Based on the recent survey results, many of you wanted to learn more about surveillance systems, so I thought I'd start with an introduction for those considering whether such a system would be a wise investment for their own theft and fraud deterrence programs. This month, we'll start with a simple guide to help you think through whether surveillance cameras are right for you.



The Role of Surveillance in Safety and Security Programs

Surveillance plays a unique role in the timber industry. Our work includes several hand-off processes, oftentimes with different suppliers and different management as wood moves through the fiber supply chain. This exposes the timber to possible theft and fraud. Complicating the problem, most of the hand-offs are done in remote locations which can only add to the temptation. Your first step is to consider the entire fiber supply chain and your role in the process. Once you have fixed your position in the chain, you can then assess your company's exposure to potential theft and fraud. Focus on areas where you have little control or oversight for the work and where there is a transition from one process to another. Those areas should be monitored for red flags. If you don't have control over much of the process or you have some glaring exposures, perhaps surveillance is right for you.

Five W's of Surveillance Systems

Each business has common elements to consider in selecting a surveillance system depending on the size of the operation, the location, and even the budget available. At the same time, each is unique in its processes, exposures and level of control. The five W's help you think through the decision about whether to include

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a surveillance system as part of your own theft deterrence program. If there is a decision that some type of surveillance is appropriate, the 5 W's will also direct you through the decision process to ensure you have the right level of equipment and technology to bring the greatest value for your investment. Asking these questions up front can save headaches and regret later on. Too little or too much are both poor decisions.

Here are the questions you should be asking yourself:

Why?

Why have surveillance cameras? This is an important question for you to ask yourself. By first defining the purpose for having a surveillance system and identifying how it fits into your total security program you will be better prepared to select the right equipment for the job. Remember that you are looking to establish a security culture that includes prevention as well as detection. Cameras can support both. A well-thought out and comprehensive solution considers cameras as an independent source of information and a tool that communicates that you are serious about theft and will take action if needed. If cameras are the only element of your program, you ultimately create a "gotcha" mentality that can undermine your efforts to build a supportive climate for honesty.

Where?

- Does your operation dictate a need for surveillance at remote locations, e.g., contractors and gates, or in the wood yard or scale house?
- Do you want the cameras visible as a deterrent or hidden to provide an independent source of information?
- Where is the best placement to ensure activity is adequately monitored?
- Where cameras may be placed dictates the appropriate power sources.

Who?

- Who will deploy the system? Employees or independent contractors?
- Will there be one person available all the time or will it be passed among different individuals?
- Who is the subject of the surveillance - contractors,

employees, vandals, etc.?

When?

When should the cameras be set up? After a vandal strikes? After a tip that you're missing something? After your suspicions are aroused? Or, before there's a problem as part of a systematic approach to fraud prevention?

What?

- What kinds of surveillance equipment should be considered with regards to installation? Consider factors such as ease of installation, sensors vs 24-hour recording, repeatability, power utilization, serviceability, and system flexibility. Once the other W's are answered, you will be better able to address these questions.
- What type of documentation capabilities will be needed? Consider factors such as Evidence Integrity (Watermark), Night vision abilities to ensure clarity 24 hours per day and archival requirements and ease of footage review.
- What is the right amount of money to spend? Determine your budget considerations and overall program and plan equipment needs appropriate to your situation. Consider budgets for surveillance systems to range from \$1000 to \$10,000, with a wide variety of options in between. Buy only what you need to support your program or outsource your camera surveillance audits to qualified individuals.

Answering these questions allows you to think through your own security needs so you can make a thoughtful and planned decision about how surveillance fits into the total picture. It's a decision you might have to consider periodically as you strive to continuously update and improve your fraud and theft prevention efforts. Once you've established your needs, you can begin evaluating the wide variety of equipment that is available and select what is right for you and your budget. More about that next month.

Give me a call if you want to talk about your own situation. I'd be happy to answer any questions that will help you answer the five W's.

DRM, Inc.

With over 21 years' experience in the forest products industry, Dendro Resource Management, Inc. (DRM) is a leader in timber audit services. DRM is committed to supporting the integrity of the forest industry by providing independent analysis and recommendations regarding internal controls as well as actively detecting and documenting theft and fraud incidents.

Custom Programs can be tailored with your company's needs in mind. With DRM you are guaranteed independence and confidentiality.