

**BELLINGHAM/WHATCOM COUNTY HOUSING AUTHORITY.**  
**SURVEILLANCE CAMERA POLICY- Section, 10.01**

**Purpose and Scope:**

The Bellingham Housing Authority (BHA) is committed to protecting the safety and property of the community while respecting the privacy rights of our residents, staff, and visitors. Surveillance cameras provide a visual deterrent to crime, assist with overall security measures, and increase the potential identification and apprehension of person(s) who breach the policies and/or commit criminal acts. Cameras are not a guarantee of safety; however, they do serve as deterrents and can assist security and law enforcement personnel in investigating incidents that have occurred. The primary use of surveillance cameras is to record video for future identification of individuals and activity in the event of violations of law or policy. Video monitoring/recording at BHA properties are limited to locations that do not violate the reasonable expectation of privacy as defined by law. The video surveillance equipment used by BHA does not record audio.

**Procedures:**

- Cameras are not actively monitored and are viewed only for BHA official business or upon reports of a safety and/or security concern that may constitute a threat to the property or its residents. Recorded events are stored for a maximum of 30 days on the local recorder unless retained as part of an incident report, criminal investigation or court proceeding, or other bona fide use as approved.
- This policy regulates the use of surveillance cameras to protect the legal and privacy interests of BHA and the community. Only authorized personnel and/or business partners, as determined by this policy and/or authorized by the Executive Director or their designee, will be involved in or have access to surveillance camera data.
- When an incident is suspected to have occurred, only authorized personnel may review the images from surveillance camera data.
- The recording of audio for surveillance purposes is prohibited.
- Video monitoring/recording will be conducted only in areas where the public does not have a reasonable expectation of privacy.
- Monitoring shall be based on suspicious behavior/criminal activity, not individual characteristics. Personnel will not monitor individuals based on characteristics of race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, or other classifications.
- All information and/or observations made in the use of security cameras are considered confidential and can only be used for official BHA and law enforcement purposes.
- For privacy, confidentiality and security purposes; the public, residents and/or their guests will not have access to view or request surveillance video, unless a court subpoena is obtained.
- Video Media will be stored in a secure location with access by authorized personnel only.

**Appropriate Use and Confidentiality:**

Video management system users are prohibited from using or disseminating information acquired from BHA surveillance cameras, except for official purposes. All information or observations made in the use of surveillance cameras is considered confidential and can only be used for official BHA and law enforcement purposes.

**Requests for footage:**

BHA residents, and stakeholders requesting the review of footage will be asked to submit a formal request containing the following information:

- Requestor's full name and contact information.
- Reason for the request (e.g., criminal activity, property damage, personal safety).
- Date and time of the incident (please note, the request must include a specific timeframe for review).
- Location of the incident (specific area within the property).

Requests must be submitted to the applicable property manager via email or at BHA's Administrative Office, located at 333 N. Samish Way, Bellingham, WA.

BHA will review each request generally within 2 business days but up to 10 business days, prioritizing requests that are time sensitive and notify the requestor of the decision. BHA will only consider requests related to legitimate safety or security concerns, criminal activity, or property damage. BHA will only consider requests for incidents on BHA property. BHA does not record audio. BHA will not disseminate footage to the requestor or provide any details related to the footage. As applicable, BHA will engage law enforcement, and/or enforce the terms of the lease.

Review of requests is a courtesy. Denials are made at BHA's sole discretion and are not grievable under BHA's Grievance Policy. All video footage is the property of BHA and is managed in compliance with applicable privacy laws and regulations. By adhering to this policy, BHA aims to balance the security needs of the property and its residents while maintaining residents' right to privacy.