

Surveillance cameras in Dubai

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The safety of individuals as well as commercial interests is a priority for many. The use of CCTV can be beneficial as it is the eyes and ears of public and private areas when no one else is present, and can act as a deterrent to criminal acts.

Recent reports in the local Dubai press touch on the issue of the use of CCTV in Dubai, and specifically refer to a new Dubai law which amends Dubai Law No. 24 of 2008 'Regarding Security Service Providers and Users'. Law No. 24 of 2008 requires "important commercial sectors" of Dubai to meet and satisfy security specifications under the Executive Regulations of Law No. 24 of 2008 ("Executive Regulations"). These important commercial sectors include hotel, financial institutions, large department stores, and essentially all places that are highly vulnerable to risks or threats due to the type or value of commodities they deal in or services they provide.

The security specifications under the Executive Regulations specify that surveillance cameras (CCTV) need to be deployed. More specifically, Annex 1 of the Executive Regulations includes incredibly detailed specifications on how and where CCTV systems (including the recording devices and cameras) should be provided and in what conditions. For example, cameras should be stable, fixed and clear, and should be fixed at emergency exits, lobby areas, elevators, and reception areas. Additionally, camera views, lighting and the technical requirements for each camera vary depending on the subject matter that the CCTV system will be monitoring. There is a requirement that footage be retained for at least 31 days. These are just a few of the many requirements.

However, it is not always the commercial sector that is vulnerable to security risks. Law No.10 of 2014 Amending Provisions of Law No 24 of 2008 ("the New Law") aims to amend the provisions of Law No. 24 of 2008 to address this issue. The New Law includes having security surveillance for what is referred to in the New Law as "Important Complexes", which are areas that are an aggregation of residential units or offices which includes buildings, towers and villas.

The New Law was issued on 4th of June 2014 and came into force from that date. It is compulsory for owners of residential buildings and offices in Dubai to install security surveillance as per the requirements of the New Law. Owners will have three months from the date of issuance to comply with the New Law. If they fail to comply, they may receive a fine of up to AED 10,000 for the first warning; AED 20,000 for second warning; and AED 30,000 for the last warning, after which their license may be cancelled.

Law No. 24 of 2008, the Executive Regulations and the new Law only apply to areas in the Emirate of Dubai including all free zones and special development zones. Some Freezones in Dubai also have their own regulations regarding the use of CCTV.

For the remainder of the UAE, the use of CCTV specifically remains largely unregulated. However this is not to say that CCTV may be used in the UAE without regard to the UAE laws and regulations more broadly. Quite the contrary. Depending on the circumstances in which CCTV is being used, a person's right to privacy may need to be considered in accordance with Articles 378 and 379 of the UAE Penal Code

(Federal Law No. 3 of 1987) and the UAE Cybercrimes Law (Law No. 5 of 2012). This may require appropriate signage to be displayed if CCTV is deployed in a certain area, or require that prior written consent be obtained from individuals who may be recorded by CCTV in a particular area.

These are just some of the issues that arise with the use of CCTV. Should you have any specific queries, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Al Tamimi & Company's [Technology, Media & Telecommunications team](#) regularly advises on privacy issues, and issues relating to security and monitoring. For further information, please contact Anita Siassios (a.siassios@tamimi.com) or Ahlam Al Tamimi (a.altamimi@tamimi.com).