



OFFICE OF THE
INFORMATION &
PRIVACY COMMISSIONER
for British Columbia

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News Release

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Public agencies need a strong business case for video or audio surveillance

VICTORIA—Public agencies must make a strong business case and establish the proper legal authorities before implementing audio or video surveillance, according to guidelines issued today by the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner.

British Columbians are increasingly subject to routine and random surveillance of their ordinary, lawful public activities. Video and audio surveillance systems are particularly privacy intrusive because they often subject individuals to continuous monitoring.

Just because surveillance technologies are readily available doesn't mean it is lawful to use them. Public bodies should only proceed with surveillance if they can establish that the surveillance is authorized under a specific section of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and that other less privacy-invasive options will not be effective.

The guidance document also recommends public bodies complete a Privacy Impact Assessment and submit it to the OIPC for review and comment well before a public body decides whether to implement surveillance. This will help public bodies assess how the project will affect the privacy of individuals, and identify measures to mitigate identified privacy risks.

For those public bodies that determine surveillance is both lawful and necessary, the guidance document contains best practices for the use, storage, and disposal of personal information. To download the guidance, click here: <http://www.oipc.bc.ca/guidance-documents/1601>