

County of Santa Clara
Office of the District Attorney Annual Use Report
Video and Audio Surveillance and Recording System for REACT Task Force
Office

July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023

1. Description

The Santa Clara County District Attorney's Office (SCCDA) maintains an off-site law enforcement investigative unit called the Regional Enforcement Allied Computer Team (REACT) Task Force. The task force investigates high technology and sophisticated crimes. The task force works with various law enforcement agencies and is not open to the public. The task force utilizes a video and audio surveillance system to verify the identity of guests of the REACT office and to capture footage from inside the office to be viewed in the event of an intruder. Video footage from the four-camera system does not capture sound, but the intercom system at the reception desk can transmit live audio (not captured) between visitors and staff.

During fiscal year 2022-2023, the surveillance system was used in compliance with the Board-approved Surveillance Use Policy (SUP). Only supervisors and the office manager are authorized to access live surveillance video while off-site and such access is used when Sonitrol receives an alarm activation. Several alarm activations were received during the current reporting period, but they were due to equipment error. The four-camera system does not monitor public areas in the office complex. Instead, the cameras are aimed toward the exterior and interior of the two locked entry/exit doors. A computer monitor at the reception desk shows a live video feed of anyone who approaches/knocks on the locked office doors. This monitor is only used to determine if it is safe to allow guest access. The surveillance system's use did capture video of some members of the public who were not suspected of engaging in unlawful conduct.

Only supervisors and the office manager can access and download archival footage. Any such request must conform with the Board-approved SUP, and requestors must complete an access log documenting the authorized reason for the retrieval.

2. Data Sharing

No data collected by the surveillance system was shared or downloaded during fiscal year 2022-2023.

3. Community Complaints or Concerns

The District Attorney's Office did not receive any complaints regarding the REACT task force surveillance system during fiscal year 2022-2023.

4. Audits/Policy Violations

There was one audit during this reporting period. There were no detected violations of the Board-approved SUP.

All new hires and newly assigned staff are trained on the County's Surveillance Technology Ordinance and required SUPs. All current District Attorney's Office investigators and REACT Task Force members received training on the County's Surveillance Technology Ordinance, and District Attorney's Office investigators electronically read and acknowledged the ordinance and SUPs as required by the District Attorney's Policy & Procedures Manual.

Data obtained by the surveillance system was retained in conformity with the Board-approved SUP.

5. Effectiveness

The task force utilized the video and audio surveillance system during the current reporting period to verify the identity of guests of the REACT office, deter crime, and capture footage from inside the office to be viewed in the event of an intruder. Members of the task force have been hacked, harassed at home, and "swatted" by criminal suspects under investigation, so office security remains essential. During the current reporting period, two people were seen recording the exterior of the office complex buildings and local police were requested to conduct premise checks of the area. Several alarm activations were received during the current reporting period, but they were due to equipment error. Supervisor access to the camera system during these alarm activations was critical because supervisors were able to quickly confirm that the premises had not been breached while waiting for the alarm system to reset. The surveillance system has been effective and has increased the safety and security of task force personnel.

6. Public Records Act Requests

The District Attorney's Office did not receive any Public Records Act requests regarding the REACT task force surveillance system during the current reporting period.

7. Costs Incurred

The State of California completely funded the costs for REACT's surveillance system during the current reporting period. The State transmitted funds to the County's Trust Fund, and the County transferred those funds to the REACT Trust Fund so they could be used to compensate vendors for products and services. The County is not expected to incur expenses in fiscal year 2023-2024.