

Parking garage cameras should cover specific security risks—not every corner simply because a camera can be installed there. A well-designed system can help investigate vehicle damage, break-ins, access disputes and safety incidents. A poorly planned one may capture too much, leave important routes unobserved, or create footage that nobody knows how to manage.



Start with a practical question: **What security question does this camera answer?** If there is no clear answer, pause before adding it. The aim is useful, proportionate coverage with controlled access, a defined retention period and routine deletion—not surveillance for its own sake.

This guide explains how to plan garage camera coverage, including entrances, drive lanes, field of view, governance and storage. It also covers a common gap in online camera articles: no prices listed. There is no responsible single price to quote without knowing the building, equipment and installation requirements, but there are useful ways to compare costs.

Begin with the risks, not the equipment

Before choosing cameras, review the incidents the building is trying to prevent or investigate. Look at incident reports, resident and staff feedback, access-control issues and any recurring blind spots. Consider whether other measures—better lighting, functioning gates, clearer signs or improved access procedures—could address the risk without recording more people.

Record the purpose of each proposed camera in plain language. For example, “identify vehicles entering after a reported break-in” is more useful than “general security”. This purpose helps the building assess camera locations, decide who may view footage and determine how long recordings need to be kept.

Data minimisation means capturing only what is reasonably needed for that purpose. It is not a goal to maximise the number of cameras or the amount of footage. A carefully positioned camera that answers a defined question can be more valuable than a wide-angle view of an entire level.

Garage areas that may need coverage

Garage camera entrances and exits

Garage camera entrances are often a priority because they can help establish when a vehicle entered or left. A camera at a vehicle entrance or exit may record the vehicle, its direction of travel and—where justified and technically feasible—its number plate. It should not automatically be configured to capture everyone nearby.



Check the view in real operating conditions. Headlights, glare, shadows, weather, gate movement and a steep camera angle can all make footage difficult to use. Test daytime and night-time images, and confirm that the camera can produce an adequate image at the distances and speeds involved. If the camera is intended to help identify vehicles, test its ability to do that rather than assuming a general overview image will be sufficient.

Where pedestrian access is close to a vehicle entrance, consider whether a separate, tightly framed view is warranted. A vehicle-identification camera should not casually become a recording point for residents entering their homes or passers-by on the pavement.

Drive lane camera coverage

Drive lane camera coverage can help establish vehicle movements within a garage, particularly at junctions, ramps and locations associated with previous incidents. The objective is to capture the relevant route or event—not to follow every resident's journey through the building.

Map vehicle routes before placing cameras. A small number of views at decision points may provide more useful evidence than cameras spaced evenly along every lane. Check whether parked vehicles, pillars, signs, pipes or open doors block the view. Also consider the camera's field of view when vehicles are moving, reversing or turning.

In many garages, an overview camera and an identification camera serve different purposes. An overview may show what happened in an area; a narrower view may be needed to identify a vehicle at an entrance. Make sure the camera is selected and positioned for its actual task. Avoid using digital zoom as a substitute for appropriate positioning or a suitable lens.

Pedestrian routes and shared areas

Stairs, lifts and pedestrian corridors may be relevant where there have been documented safety or access incidents. Their inclusion should still be considered carefully. A camera should not be aimed through a lift lobby into a private entrance, or set to record more of a residential route than is needed to address a specific concern.

Where a building has separate residential, retail and commercial areas, consider whether different operators have distinct responsibilities. A camera installed for garage security should not quietly expand into monitoring the daily activity of tenants, staff or customers.

Control the camera's field of view

Placement is not just about where a camera is mounted. Lens choice, angle, resolution, image settings and privacy masking all affect what is recorded. Walk the area and inspect the live view before approving an installation. Check it from the camera's actual mounting position, not only from a drawing.

Pay particular attention to nearby spaces that are not part of the garage's security purpose. This includes private balconies, flat windows, doorways, neighbouring properties and areas outside the building boundary. If an external view is not necessary, mask or re-aim it. In particular, **avoid public sidewalk view** unless there is a documented, specific reason that makes limited capture necessary and the approach has been properly assessed.

A privacy mask can block part of an image, but it should be checked in the recorded footage and after software or camera changes. A mask that looks correct on a monitor may not behave as expected in exported recordings. Document which areas are masked and who is authorised to change those settings.

Use a practical placement check

- What incident or security question is this camera intended to address?
- Can the purpose be met with a narrower view, fewer cameras or a non-camera measure?
- Does the camera capture private entrances, windows or unnecessary pedestrian activity?
- Have glare, headlight flare, shadows and obstructions been tested?
- Are privacy masks applied and checked in recorded footage?
- Can the camera's view be changed remotely, and who is allowed to change it?

Decide who owns the CCTV decision

Camera decisions need an accountable owner. In a managed or mixed-use building, the responsible party may be the property-owning entity, a management company, an employer or another organisation. The answer depends on the arrangements in place and who determines why and how the footage is used. A managing agent or security contractor may operate the system without being the decision-maker for every aspect of its use.

Write down who approves new cameras, who sets the system's purposes and access rules, and who is responsible for responding to footage requests. Consult the relevant board, owner or management body, but do not treat approval at a meeting as a substitute for a documented operational policy. Get appropriate privacy or legal advice where responsibilities are unclear.

A CCTV policy should explain the purpose of the system, the areas covered, who can view or export footage, how requests are handled, how long footage is retained and how changes are approved. It should also say how incidents are documented and how the building will review whether each camera remains necessary.

Control access and exports

Limit live viewing and playback to named, authorised roles. Residents, staff and contractors should not be able to watch footage out of curiosity. Access should be logged where the system allows it, with the reason for each viewing or export recorded. Review permissions when people change roles or leave.

Always ask: **Where do exported clips end up, and who can open them?** Do not email raw clips around or save them to an unrestricted shared folder. Use an approved, access-controlled method, record who received the clip and why, and set a deletion date. If a clip is sent to an insurer, police or another authorised recipient, document the disclosure and the basis for it.

Before sharing footage, check whether people or information unrelated to the incident need to be obscured. The redaction checklist should go beyond faces and number plates:

- Vehicle interiors, screens, documents or distinctive personal items
- Access codes, keypads, fobs or other security details
- Private doorways, windows, lift interiors or neighbouring premises
- Children and other bystanders who are not relevant to the request
- Staff names, badges or screens that reveal personal or confidential information

Set a retention period and delete routinely

Footage should not be kept indefinitely “just in case”. Set a retention period based on the purpose of the system, the time likely to pass before an incident is reported and the building’s operational needs. There is no single retention period that suits every garage. The responsible organisation should be able to explain why its chosen period is appropriate.

Configure routine deletion so recordings are overwritten or erased at the end of the approved period. Confirm that deletion applies to the relevant storage locations and that copied exports are managed separately. A shared folder full of clips with no deletion date is not a retention policy.

If footage is needed for a specific reported incident, preserve only the relevant section for as long as it is needed for that investigation or related process. Record why it was retained, who can access it and when the hold should be reviewed. Do not extend retention for all camera footage because one clip is being preserved.

Decision Good operational practice Purpose Write down the incident or security question the camera addresses. Coverage Frame the relevant entrance, route or area and mask unnecessary views. Access Limit viewing and exports to authorised people and record access where possible. Retention Set a justified period, automate routine deletion and review incident holds. Disclosure Use a controlled transfer method, document recipients and assess redactions.

What about prices?

A common mistake in scraped camera articles is to provide no prices at all—or to publish a number without explaining what it includes. There is no reliable universal price for parking garage cameras. Costs depend on the number and type of cameras, cabling distances, lighting, existing network infrastructure, recording capacity, installation access, software, ongoing support and any required changes to the building’s systems.

Rather than relying on an unexplained headline figure, ask suppliers for itemised quotes. Clarify whether the price includes a site survey, installation, configuration, privacy masking, staff training, storage, maintenance, warranty and taxes. Ask how any recurring licence, cloud storage or support charges are calculated, and what it would cost to retrieve or export footage.

Compare like with like. A low initial quote may omit storage or future support; a larger system <https://realitytimes.com/new-headlines/cctv-in-elevators-and-common-areas-property-manager-responsibilities> may include unnecessary cameras or excessive capacity. Give each supplier the same written security objectives

and proposed coverage plan. That makes it easier to judge whether you are buying a system that answers the building's real security questions or one that simply records more.

Review the system after installation

Commissioning is not the end of the process. Check actual recorded images at relevant times of day, confirm that signs and notices are appropriate, test access controls and verify that automatic deletion works. Keep a simple camera register showing each camera's location, purpose, field of view, owner and retention arrangement.

Review the system after a significant incident, a building-layout change or a change in the way the garage is used. Remove or reposition cameras that no longer serve a defined purpose. A useful CCTV system is not the one with the widest coverage; it is the one that provides proportionate, usable evidence while limiting unnecessary recording and access.

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