

2020 Surveillance Impact Report Executive Overview

Situational Awareness Cameras Without Recording

Seattle Police Department

April 13th, 2021

Version 1

Overview

The Operational Policy statements in this document represent the only allowable uses of the equipment and data collected by this technology.

This Executive Overview documents information about the collection, use, sharing, security and access controls for data that is gathered through Seattle Police Department's use of Situational Awareness Cameras Without Recording. All information provided here is contained in the body of the full Surveillance Impact Review (SIR) document but is provided in a condensed format for easier access and consideration.

1.0 Technology Description

The Seattle Police Department utilizes four types of situational awareness cameras to monitor an identified subject or watch an area of concern while positioned from a safe distance away. SPD operates these cameras in a variety of different ways to serve specific purposes depending on the situational need. The cameras fall broadly into four categories:

- mounted on remote controlled robots,
- mounted to poles or extenders,
- strategically placed, and
- cameras that are thrown.

There are four types of situational awareness cameras used by SPD's SWAT Unit:

Robot Mounted Cameras – The Avatar Robot by RoboteX incorporates a 360-degree optical camera and is remote controlled by officers from a safe position on scene. The remote range of the Avatar Robot is approximately 200 meters.

Pole Cameras – Pole camera models are made by Tactical Electronics and Smith and Wesson. These are small, portable cameras that can be extended in height (to approximately 20'). They are typically handheld during their use and send secure images to the user's handheld remote monitor.

Placeable Cameras – Camera models are made by Remington and Tactical Electronics. They are small portable cameras designed to be placed in specific strategic locations and situations. These models also send secure images to the user's handheld remote monitor.

Throwable Cameras – Camera models are made by Remington and Tactical Electronics. These small, rugged cameras are designed to be thrown into situations where access by SPD personnel is not possible. Like the pole and placeable cameras, the secure images are transmitted to the user's handheld remote monitor.

The images transmitted from these cameras are secured and viewed on proprietary monitors. SPD does not record, store, or retain any of the images captured by these camera technologies.

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2.0 Purpose

Operational Policy: Describe limits to the function of the technology according to the stated purpose.

SPD's tactical units use situational awareness cameras to assess potentially dangerous situations from a safe location. The use of these cameras allows SPD to view surroundings and gain additional information prior to entering a location, which provides additional safety and security to SPD personnel, the subjects of the observation, and other members of the community.

3.0 Data Collection and Use

Operational Policy: No images or data are collected, stored, or retained by any situational awareness camera used by SPD.

No images or data are collected, stored, or retained by any situational awareness camera used by SPD. This equipment is securely stored and accessible only to the SWAT Unit for use in their operations.

4.0 Data Minimization & Retention

Operational Policy: No images or data are collected, stored, or retained by any situational awareness camera used by SPD.

This question is not applicable to these technologies, as no images or data are collected, stored, or retained by any situational awareness camera used by SPD.

5.0 Access & Security

Operational Policy: All members of SWAT are given training in the use and appropriate application of these cameras. Any SWAT personnel may elect to use one of the cameras if the situation calls for its use.

This equipment is securely stored and accessible only to the SWAT Unit for use in their operations. No images or data are collected, stored, or retained by any situational awareness camera used by SPD.

When situational awareness camera equipment will be utilized in protected areas, such as inside a home, the SWAT Unit obtains a signed warrant.

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Access

No images or data are collected, stored, or retained by any situational awareness camera used by SPD. When situational awareness camera equipment will be utilized in protected areas, such as inside a home, the SWAT Unit obtains a signed warrant.

Security

Only members of SWAT are authorized to use this equipment and are specifically trained in their use. The SWAT commanders are responsible to ensure usage of the technology falls within appropriate usage.

6.0 Data Sharing and Accuracy

Operational Policy: No data is collected, stored, or retained by any situational awareness camera and cannot be shared.

This question on data sharing is not applicable to these technologies, as no images or data are collected, stored, or retained by any situational awareness camera used by SPD.

7.0 Equity Concerns

Operational Policy: Where the cameras are utilized in non-public areas a signed warrant is obtained prior to their use.

SPD Policy 5.140 forbids bias-based policing and outlines processes for reporting and documenting any suspected bias-based behavior, as well as accountability measures. The use of this technology does not enhance the risks of racial or ethnicity-based bias.

The potential that innocent members of the community would fall under surveillance by covert use of situational awareness cameras by the SPD SWAT Unit is mitigated in two ways. First, the usage of this equipment is situational, and the cameras are used during events in which the SWAT Unit responds to calls for police service. Where the cameras are utilized in non-public areas a signed warrant is obtained prior to their use. Second, no images, data, or audio is recorded by the situational awareness cameras.

The mission of the Seattle Police Department is to prevent crime, enforce the law, and support quality public safety by delivering respectful, professional and dependable police services. [SPD Policy 5.140](#) forbids bias-based policing and outlines processes for reporting and documenting any suspected bias-based behavior, as well as accountability measures. The use of this technology does not enhance the risks of racial or ethnicity-based bias.

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