

## Guidelines for Selecting an Interview Recording System.

Interview Recording Systems are a unique application from traditional video surveillance systems in Law Enforcement. An interview recording is crucial evidence requiring high quality video and audio, reliable secure operation, auditability and authentication. The following guidelines provide a framework for specifying and selecting an interview recording system for your Law Enforcement Agency.

### Start with the End in Mind

Recording a custodial interrogation serves many purposes – some proscribed by law or regulation. A audio/video record of a custodial interrogation provides important documentation that a confession was not coerced and that all civil rights and departmental procedures were followed and finally provides crucial evidence in the prosecution of the crime to a Judge or Jury during judicial proceedings. Playing bad video (fuzzy, out of focus, shot from above) and muffled audio in the courtroom won't help make your case. Therefore, make sure the system is capable of and is installed with a clear camera shot of the suspect or witness face on as well as an overview shot to document everything going on in the interview room. Make sure the audio is high fidelity – clear and the appropriate volume. Ask to see sample audio/video from earlier systems or visit a site with the system installed.

Recent guidelines for interview recording by the AOC in North Carolina suggest two cameras per room to insure both an overview shot and a detailed face shot are recorded simultaneously.

*Guideline – High Definition (HD) or Full HD Video with High Fidelity Audio. Two Cameras per Room. Request samples of recorded video or visit a prior installation.*

### Know Who Can See Your Video

Whether your agency is small or large you will be required to know and demonstrate who has had access to an interview recording. In some agencies, the investigative division may have a more open policy for certain types of criminal investigations in others there may be special teams of detectives assigned to homicides. In most all agencies though, departmental and legal guidelines require isolated handling of sex crimes, crimes involving minors and professional conduct interviews. You must be able to control the access to the ongoing live interview and to the recorded interview files. Later, as you deliver case files to the prosecutor you will want to deliver the chain of custody and audit/access logs for electronics files.

*Guideline – Access Control for Live Streams and Recorded Files of Interviews with Audit Logs.*

### Beware of Dead Ends

Everyone has purchased some product or technology that didn't quite meet the job or didn't last as long as expected requiring limited budget funds to be replaced after a year or two. Planning for both your current and future requirements will help you insure the system you select can grow with you. For example, the interview recording system you are considering should offer unlimited client access and not require incremental costs to add detectives or other users. Secondly, how much storage capacity is included in the initial system and how can you grow the capacity either locally or in the cloud as your

archive gets larger and larger every year. If you need two rooms now, can the system grow to include additional rooms both locally or remotely such as at a substation in the future?

*Guideline – Ask for recorded hours (at full resolution with audio), not just terabytes. Plan for growth. Ask for a details on how you can grow your system in the future.*

### Pick a Reliable Partner

No technology or system deployment will go perfectly. The vendor you select will determine how things go when the project hits a snag – do they hang in there to make sure you are 100% satisfied at the end of the day. That in fact is the difference between a vendor and a partner – vendors sell commodities and see your relationship as a transaction. A partner, on the other hand, is seeking a long term beneficial relationship with your agency and will be there to solve in inevitable issues.

*Guideline – Request and check references for the products and partner you are considering.*

These are only a few of the key guidelines to consider when selecting a new interview recording system. We plan to write additional emails and provide follow-up information in the future. You can request additional information or discuss your specific needs at any time by contacting us at [info@carolinavideosecurity.com](mailto:info@carolinavideosecurity.com).