



CITIZENS ASSOCIATION
of GEORGETOWN

Citizens Association of Georgetown Public Safety Program

You Asked For It: **Information on Security Cameras**

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CAG Public Security Cameras

The Citizens Association has found surveillance cameras to be a useful part of our Public Safety Program. These cameras not only provide deterrence to criminals on the blocks where they are located but since word is out that CAG has installed cameras in Georgetown at undisclosed locations, we believe they provide deterrence Georgetown-wide.

As CAG continues to add cameras, the goal is to provide further coverage of important entries and exits to Georgetown, such as Q Street and Reservoir Road. (The Georgetown Business Improvement District has installed cameras on Wisconsin Avenue and M Street.) Besides acting as a deterrent to crime, the CAG cameras have been useful to the police in identifying descriptions of suspects, their cars, and license plate numbers.

Thanks to a generous contribution from the M.C. Dean Foundation and other donations to the Public Safety Program, CAG will have as many as eight cameras installed and maintained throughout the neighborhood. As a reference point, installation and maintenance add several thousand dollars to the approximate \$2,500 cost of each two-lens camera.



Home Security Cameras

Recognizing that there are financial and location limits on CAG's camera program, many residents have asked about installing their own cameras in the front of, back of, or alleys adjacent to their houses to provide more security and deterrence.

The cost of exterior cameras rises with the desired resolution, night vision capability, location, and method of installation. Most high-end high definition exterior cameras with low light optics and/or infrared lighting built-in must be hard wired to electricity and a central digital recording device (DVR) which can be accessed from the internet through a building's Wi-Fi system. CAG's cameras fall into this category, but are not appropriate for most residential uses because of their specialized nature and cost.

In addition, a system that might work well in one house may not be a good choice for a different house configuration. For example a camera that does a good job covering a well-lighted doorway may not do a good job of covering an unlighted rear yard. While lights in the rear on photocells or motion detectors can help deal with that problem, a specialized night vision camera may be the better choice in that location. Accordingly, if you want a good high definition external camera system, your best option is to contact an independent camera installer and get a bid on a system that would be best for your situation and needs. Listed below are two firms that have been recommended by CAG members. CAG itself does not endorse either of them.

For some applications, a wireless solution may be the only practical choice even though resolution may not be as high as a wired camera. Exterior Wi-Fi cameras with on-board recording ability that can be monitored using a house Wi-Fi system have been recently introduced. Range extenders are available to extend the house Wi-Fi signal to cameras out of range of the existing Wi-Fi signal, but most cameras need to be wired for

power (some use rechargeable batteries but only record when motion across the camera triggers recording of the event).

For inside the house there are several choices available, including whole house systems that permit operation of cameras and several other devices such as lights and HVAC systems. These systems are relatively inexpensive and capable of being installed by a homeowner, so they provide a low-cost alternative for camera surveillance. See below for an interior system recommended by employees of M.C. Dean.

Lastly, several security vendors that specialize in monitored alarm systems (which should be considered a high priority for all homeowners in Georgetown) can provide interior and exterior camera systems to their packages. Some CAG members have reported that ADT's camera system provides good results. If you use ADT or another monitored alarm system, ask that company about adding cameras to your existing security package.

EXTERIOR CAMERAS

There are many wired and wireless exterior cameras on the market but the choice of which cameras to use and how to connect them to your house (via Wi-Fi or hard-wired) is a job best left to professionals. One resident has expressed satisfaction with a camera package by Wirepath Surveillance, which was installed professionally. Visit wirepath.com.

INDEPENDENT RESIDENTIAL CAMERA INSTALLERS

Strategic Home Media. Contact Steve Adams, owner. 410-643-3335, strategichomemedia.com, steve@strategichomemedia.com

Jonathan Tapper, Maryland Security Professionals. 410-224-3128. marylandsecurity.net, jontapper@marylandsecurity.net

DO-IT-YOURSELF INTERIOR WIRELESS CAMERAS

Suggested by M.C. Dean representative:

Piper: The Piper has a night vision system called Piper NV. The other camera which works best with lights on is the Piper Classic. The NV is ~\$269 versus the ~\$199 for the Classic. The NV with night vision also has a 3.4 Megapixel camera versus the 2 Megapixel that the classic has. You can have up to five Piper units in your home on the network. Each Piper comes with a camera, siren, microphone, motion detector, z-wave hub (for expansion to sensors), and built-in temperature sensor. Visit getpiper.com

Other interior camera systems are sold online direct or through Amazon, and at stores such as Best Buy, Costco, and Home Depot.

MONITORED ALARM COMPANIES

Frontpoint Security (Self-installed but monitored by Frontpoint. Has camera options). Visit frontpointsecurity.com

Simplisafe (Self-installed but monitored by Simplisafe. Does not have camera options). Visit simplisafe.com

ADT. Visit adt.com/home-security

AT&T. Visit att.com/shop/digital-life.html

Vector. Visit vectorsecurity.com

This information is also available on our website, www.cagtown.org