Site survey preparation checklist

What to have ready before we walk your building. Nothing here is mandatory and a survey still happens without any of it, but every item you can answer is a question we do not have to come back for.

Why this exists

A survey produces a design. The design is only as good as what is established on the day, and the things that most often send us back for a second visit are not technical: they are who owns the car park, who can authorise a penetration through a wall, and whether anyone has the password to the recorder that is already there. This list is those things.

We do not quote a camera system off a count over the phone, and we do not price from a floor plan. What a building needs is decided standing in it. This document helps that visit produce a design rather than a list of open questions.

1. Who decides, and who can authorise work

- ☐ **Are you the tenant, the owner, or the managing agent?**
  This changes the entire brief. A tenant designs for their own demise and needs landlord consent for anything outside it. An owner or agent is designing the shell, the lobby, the loading area and the car park, and is answering footage requests from tenants.

- ☐ **Who signs off a penetration through a wall, a ceiling or a roof?**
  Cabling routes are the expensive part of any camera system. Knowing in advance who has to approve a route saves the design being drawn twice.

- ☐ **Is there a lease clause on alterations or make-good at lease end?**
  If the system has to come out and the building be made good at the end of a term, that shapes containment and fixing choices from the start rather than at the end.

- ☐ **Who will hold the administrator credentials afterwards?**
  The answer should be you. We hand over administrator credentials and the configuration as built on every job. A customer who cannot get into their own system does not own it.

2. What is already installed

- ☐ **Is there an existing camera system, and who installed it?**
  Most of the work we do is on systems somebody else put in. Even a company name and a rough year helps.

- ☐ **Where is the recorder, and can somebody log into it?**
  If nobody has the password, say so. It is extremely common and it is better established before the visit than during it.

- ☐ **How far back does the recording actually go?**
  Open the playback and go back as far as it will go. The oldest material still on the system is the real retention window, whatever the handover paperwork said.

- [ ] **Where is the comms room, and what is in it?**
  The switch decides whether an addition is four cameras or four cameras plus infrastructure. Photographs of the rack are useful.

- [ ] **Is there an existing alarm or access control system?**
  Cameras that have to line up with door events are a different design from cameras that do not.

- [ ] **Is there existing cabling of unknown provenance?**
  Cable left by a previous tenant is common and is neither automatically usable nor automatically waste. We test rather than assume.

3. The building and its hours

- [ ] **What hours is the premises occupied, and when is it empty?**
  The hours nobody is in the building are usually where the exposure is, and they decide whether live coverage is worth more than another recorder.

- [ ] **Which doors do staff, visitors, contractors and deliveries use?**
  These are usually four different answers and they are frequently four different doors.

- [ ] **Is there a yard, a loading area, a car park or a gate?**
  Exterior positions have different power, lighting and containment requirements from interior ones.

- [ ] **Where does the light come from, and what changes after dark?**
  A position lit from behind produces a silhouette at any resolution. Camera position and lighting are specified together or not at all.

- [ ] **Is any part of the layout expected to change?**
  Racking that moves, partitions that come out, a suite that may be taken next door. A plan drawn on today's layout covers today.

- [ ] **Are there areas cameras must not cover?**
  Restrooms, changing areas and fitting-room interiors are never covered, and we will decline the request if it is made. Beyond those, tell us your own boundaries.

4. What the system has to achieve

- [ ] **What has gone wrong, or what are you trying to prevent?**
  A specific incident is far more useful than a general concern. It tells us which positions have to prove something.

- [ ] **For each concern: do you need to know THAT it happened, WHAT happened, or WHO did it?**
  These are three different requirements and the third is much harder than the first two. A camera specified for one will not do another.

- [ ] **Does any regulation, insurer or parent company fix a retention period?**
  If a period is specified for you, that figure is a design input and we build to it. If nothing specifies one, it is your policy to set.

- [ ] **Who will use the system, and how often?**
  A system used weekly by one person and one used daily by a shift have different requirements.

- [ ] **Does anything need to be integrated with another system?**
  We do not promise an integration before seeing what you run, and we do not name a product as supported on the strength of a datasheet.

5. On the day

- [ ] **Access to every area, including plant, roof and locked rooms**
  The positions that matter are frequently in the areas that need a key.

- [ ] **Somebody who knows the building, for about an hour**
  Not necessarily the decision maker. Whoever actually knows where things run.

- [ ] **Any drawings you have, even old or inaccurate ones**
  An out-of-date floor plan is still faster than measuring from nothing, and we will mark it up rather than trust it.

- [ ] **Ladder or lift access if positions are high**
  If we can reach it on the day, we can be certain about it. If not, we will tell you what remains unconfirmed.

What you get afterwards

A drawing with every proposed position marked, what each position is for, and the findings in writing. That includes the positions we do not think are worth a camera, and anything we could not establish on the day. The survey is free, and it is useful to you whether or not you go on to contract with us.

Scope and boundaries

Commercial only. We work on commercial premises only and not on private residences.

Fire alarm is out of scope. We do not hold a C-10 or C-16, so we do not work on fire alarm systems; that is coordinated with your own licensed fire alarm contractor.

Gate operators. Our gate scope is the access control only. The gate operator itself is supplied and installed by your gate contractor, and we coordinate with them.

What our licences cover. CSLB #976737 — C-7 Low Voltage Systems authorises camera install and repair, structured cabling, intercom and low-voltage work. BSIS ACO #7501 covers monitored CCTV, intrusion alarm and access control. Both are verifiable with the issuing agency, and we would rather you checked than took our word for it.

We are not a regulator or an approved vendor. No body certifies an integrator as compliant with any of the rules summarised in this document. The obligations sit with you.

This checklist contains no pricing and no timescales, because we do not publish either without seeing a building. It states no statistic and no product capability. If you have a version of this document that does, it did not come from us.