



SITUATIONAL AWARENESS CAMERAS: IMPACT AND USE POLICY

UPDATED: FEBRUARY 4, 2026

SUMMARY OF CHANGES BETWEEN DRAFT & FINAL POLICY

Update	Description of Update
Removed statement that situational awareness cameras do not use artificial intelligence and machine learning.	Public comment highlighted a lack of industry-standard definitions for artificial intelligence and machine learning.
Expanded upon situational awareness cameras rules of use.	Added additional language clarifying situational awareness cameras rules of use. Added language to clarify situational awareness cameras rules of use-authorization.
Expanded upon safeguards and security measures.	Added language regarding information security. Added language to reflect the removal of access to situational awareness cameras when job duties no longer require access.
Minor grammar changes.	Minor syntax edits were made.

SITUATIONAL AWARENESS CAMERAS ADDENDUM

Date of Addendum	Description of Addendum
April 11, 2023	NYPD is utilizing an autonomous security robot during a seven-month pilot program.
December 07, 2023	Clarified information related to the autonomous security robot sensor capabilities. Updated policy regarding deployment authorizations.

SITUATIONAL AWARENESS CAMERAS REVISION

Date of Revision	Description of Revision
February 4, 2026	This impact and use policy was revised to comply with the recently passed amendment to the POST Act, Local Law 56 of 2025.

ABSTRACT

The New York City Police Department (NYPD) utilizes a variety of situational awareness cameras to allow NYPD personnel to assess potentially dangerous situations from a safe location. The NYPD does not record, store, or retain any of the data transmitted through situational awareness cameras.

The NYPD produced this impact and use policy because situational awareness cameras are capable of processing both acoustic data and video images, and sharing it with NYPD personnel conducting observation on remote monitors.

CAPABILITIES OF THE TECHNOLOGY

Situational awareness cameras are portable cameras that enable NYPD personnel to observe inside barricaded, hazardous, or otherwise compromised locations from a safe location. NYPD uses situational awareness cameras manufactured by Tactical Electronics, Zistos, and Milwaukee. The use of situational awareness cameras allows NYPD personnel to gather critical information about a queried location before entry, providing additional safety and security to NYPD personnel, the subjects of the observation, and other members of the community in potentially dangerous situations.

The NYPD uses 2 types of situational awareness cameras: cameras attached to poles or other extenders, and handheld scope cameras.

Most NYPD situational awareness cameras only process video images. Some situational awareness cameras can simultaneously process video images and acoustic data (i.e., sound). Situational awareness cameras send video and, if capable, acoustic data to NYPD personnel reviewing the transmission on a remote monitor through either an encrypted signal, secure data transmission to or from a cloud, or through a direct wired connection between the situational awareness camera and the monitor. The NYPD does not record, store, or retain any of the video or acoustic data processed by situational awareness cameras. Depending on the type of device being used, the situational awareness camera may be lowered into position, attached to a hand-held pole and extended around a corner, or maneuvered by a remote control.

NYPD situational awareness cameras do not utilize video analytics, facial recognition, or any other biometric measuring technologies.

RULES, PROCESSES & GUIDELINES RELATING TO USE OF THE TECHNOLOGY

NYPD situational awareness camera must be used in a manner consistent with the requirements and protection of the Constitution of the United States, the New York State Constitution, and applicable statutory authorities.

Request for Use: NYPD situational awareness cameras may only be used by NYPD personnel for legitimate law enforcement purposes. Only members of NYPD Emergency Services Unit (ESU) or Technical Assistance Response Unit (TARU) are authorized to use situational cameras and personnel must be trained in their use and appropriate application. If necessary, NYPD personnel will request assistance from Emergency Services Unit (ESU) or Technical Assistance Response Unit (TARU). An ESU or TARU supervisor will determine if the use of situational awareness cameras is appropriate.

NYPD situational awareness cameras cannot be used for routine foot patrol by officers, traffic enforcement, or immobilizing a vehicle or suspect.

Court Authorization: The NYPD does not seek court authorization before using situational awareness cameras. NYPD situational awareness cameras are only used during exigent circumstances or in emergency environments.

As with all NYPD operations, no person will be the subject of police action because of actual or perceived race, color, religion or creed, age, national origin, alienage, citizenship status, gender (including gender identity), sexual orientation, disability, marital status, partnership status, military status, or political affiliation or beliefs.

The misuse of situational awareness cameras will subject employees to administrative and potentially criminal penalties.

Addendum Obligation: In accordance with the Public Oversight of Surveillance Technology Act, an addendum to this impact and use policy will be prepared as necessary to describe any additional uses of situational awareness cameras.

SAFEGUARDS & SECURITY MEASURES AGAINST UNAUTHORIZED ACCESS

Physical Safeguards & Security Measures: Situational awareness cameras are securely stored within NYPD facilities when not in use, in a location inaccessible to the public. Additionally, a supervisor must periodically inspect and account for the devices. Access to situational awareness cameras is limited to NYPD personnel with an articulable need to use the technology in furtherance of a lawful duty. Access to NYPD situational awareness cameras is determined by an officer's assignment and is rescinded when that officer's assignment no longer requires its use.

Data Safeguards & Security Measures: NYPD situational awareness cameras transmit video images, and acoustic data if capable, to NYPD personnel reviewing the transmission on a remote monitor through either an encrypted signal on a secured stand-alone network, or through a direct-wired connection between the situational awareness camera and the monitor.

Unauthorized access of any system will subject employees to administrative and potentially criminal penalties.

POLICIES & PROCEDURES RELATING TO RETENTION, ACCESS & USE OF THE DATA

The NYPD does not record, store, or retain any of the video or acoustic data processed by situational awareness cameras.

The NYPD retains and disposes of records pursuant to New York City Charter § 1133(f), (g) and (h). Pursuant to these provisions, the NYPD developed a retention schedule that was approved by the New York City Law Department and Department of Records and Information Services. This retention schedule governs the retention and disposition of NYPD records, and the NYPD retains

and disposes of records pursuant to this schedule. The retention period of a “case investigation record” depends on its classification and is based on the final disposition of the case, i.e., what the arrestee is convicted of or pleads to. Further, case investigations are not considered closed unless they result in: prosecution and appeals are exhausted, a settlement, no arrest, or when restitution is no longer sought.

The misuse of any data will subject employees to administrative and potentially criminal penalties.

POLICIES & PROCEDURES RELATING TO PUBLIC ACCESS OR USE OF THE DATA

Members of the public may request information or data related to the NYPD’s use of situational awareness cameras pursuant to the New York State Freedom of Information Law. However, the NYPD does not record, store, or retain video or acoustic data processed by situational awareness cameras and would be unable to provide same.

EXTERNAL ENTITIES

Entities outside of the NYPD do not have direct access to the video or acoustic data collected by NYPD’s situational awareness cameras.

Vendors & Contractors: The NYPD purchases situational awareness cameras and associated equipment or software from approved vendors. The NYPD emphasizes the importance of and engages with vendors and contractors to maintain the confidentiality, availability, and integrity of NYPD technology systems.

Vendors and contractors may have access to associated software in the performance of contractual duties to the NYPD. Such duties are typically technical or proprietary in nature (e.g., maintenance or failure mitigation). In providing vendors and contractors access to equipment and computer systems, the NYPD follows the principle of least privilege. Vendors and contractors are only allowed access on a “need to know basis” to fulfill contractual obligations and/or agreements.

Vendors and contractors providing equipment and services to the NYPD undergo vendor responsibility determination and integrity reviews. Vendors and contractors providing sensitive equipment and services to the NYPD also undergo background checks.

Vendors and contractors are legally obligated by contracts and/or agreements to maintain the confidentiality of NYPD data and information. Vendors and contractors are subject to criminal and civil penalties for unauthorized use or disclosure of NYPD data or information.

TRAINING

Only trained NYPD personnel can operate situational awareness cameras. NYPD personnel receive command-level training on the proper operation of situational awareness cameras and the associated equipment. NYPD personnel must operate situational awareness cameras in compliance with NYPD policies and training.

INTERNAL AUDIT & OVERSIGHT MECHANISMS

Only members of the NYPD ESU or TARU are authorized to use situational awareness cameras. ESU and TARU personnel are specifically trained in their use and in appropriate application of the cameras. Use of situational awareness cameras is a strategic decision made by ESU or TARU personnel during law-enforcement encounters where ESU or TARU responds to requests for assistance.

Supervisors of personnel utilizing situational awareness cameras are responsible for security and proper utilization of the technology and associated equipment.

The misuse of any NYPD equipment will subject employees to administrative and potentially criminal penalties.

HEALTH & SAFETY REPORTING

There are no known tests or reports regarding the health and safety effects of situational awareness cameras. Additionally, after a search for relevant information, no physical safety hazards identifiable by manufacturer warnings or published academic research regarding physical safety hazards have been identified pertaining to the use of situational awareness cameras or associated equipment.

DISPARATE IMPACTS OF THE TECHNOLOGY & IMPACT & USE POLICY

The NYPD has implemented significant safeguards to ensure that situational awareness cameras are used effectively and responsibly. The NYPD does not believe that this technology is being used in a manner that disparately impacts any protected groups as defined in the New York City Human Rights Law.

The safeguards and audit protocols built into this impact and use policy for situational awareness cameras help to mitigate the risk of partial and biased law enforcement. Situational awareness cameras are used as a reactive tool to support de-escalation efforts without endangering officers, subjects of observation, or the general public. Use of situational awareness cameras is a strategic decision made by ESU or TARU during law enforcement encounters in which they respond to requests for assistance. The NYPD does not record, store, or retain any of the video or acoustic data processed by situational awareness cameras. NYPD situational awareness cameras do not utilize video analytics, facial recognition, or any other biometric measuring technologies. Based on these safeguards, any theoretical risks of NYPD's situational awareness cameras are effectively mitigated and do not result in disparate impacts.

The NYPD is committed to the impartial enforcement of the law and to the protection of constitutional rights. The NYPD prohibits the use of racial and bias-based profiling in law enforcement actions, which must be based on standards required by the Fourth and Fourteenth Amendments of the U.S. Constitution, Sections 11 and 12 of Article I of the New York State Constitution, Section 14-151 of the New York City Administrative Code, and other applicable laws.

Race, color, ethnicity, or national origin may not be used as a motivating factor for initiating police enforcement action. Should an officer initiate enforcement action against a person, motivated even

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in part by a person's actual or perceived race, color, ethnicity, or national origin, that enforcement action violates NYPD policy unless the officer's decision is based on a specific and reliable suspect description that includes not only race, age, and gender, but other identifying characteristics or information.