ECAM



The Shopping Center **Security Blueprint**

90% of Shopping Centers Were Hit by Organized Crime Last Year. Here's How to Protect Yours.



Retail real estate is important to the U.S. economy for many reasons. The International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC) states the industry is responsible for more than 34 million jobs, the equivalent of one out of every six U.S. jobs. The type of jobs has grown to include fitness, health care, education, and other service industries.

The industry also makes up a whopping 20 percent of the U.S. GDP, which equals $3.9 trillion. Additionally, it provides a large source of revenue for communities at the local and state level. Moreover, retail real estate consists of big and small businesses. More than 20 percent of ICSC members are from Fortune 100 companies while 70 percent of retail real estate establishments contain fewer than 10 employees.

Despite its massive contribution to the U.S. economy, retail centers feel some pressure because of the growth of online sales.

The Cushman and Wakefield Q report states:

"Clicks-to-bricks expansion trends will continue as physical store locations remain vital to retailer survival, even as eCommerce growth continues to outpace overall retail sales growth."

The key to retail success is to have a seamless omnichannel strategy and ensure the bricks-and-mortar stores have amenities to attract shoppers and minimize vandalism, loitering, dumpster diving, and other factors that can decrease visitors.

Shoppers want to feel secure knowing retail centers have a comprehensive security program in place. They want to know they're safe when carrying packages as they walk to their vehicles at any time of the day. Retailers and property managers want to minimize loss from theft and damage. Unfortunately, there's a lot of room for improvement in retail real estate security.

How One Shopping Center Added $1.2M in Added Property Value

80%
decrease in property damage

$1.2M
added property value

$120K
increase in NOI

ECAM has worked with retail centers of various sizes. In one case, a Dallas shopping center client was dealing with more than $300 per month in damage from glass breakage, vandalism, illegal dumping and loitering. Moreover, thieves stole $35,000 worth of copper from five of the HVAC units.

Retail center management attempted to combat the problem by implementing traditional security measures. However, many of these solutions were not going to work within their budget. Management decided it needed to look for another solution.

The client contacted ECAM for a customized solution. In addition to a $2,000 monthly monitoring fee, we installed $30,000 to 40,000 worth of equipment.

ECAM's solution with the setup and monthly monitoring fee costs less than the traditional security measures they had been using.

The shopping center gained additional savings as the live remote monitoring service lowered overall expenses. Reduced expenses made it possible to add more amenities.

The sight of security cameras provided shoppers and retailers with peace of mind. Shoppers keep returning, which increases occupancy and rental rates.

This security solution with video monitoring resulted in an 80 percent decrease in property damage and helped reduce major risks like copper theft. The shopping center saw an increase in its net operating income (NOI) of $120,000, which added over $1.2 million to the property's value.



The Biggest Problems Affecting the Shopping Center Industry

According to a National Retail Federation's Organized Retail Crime (ORC) study, ORC has reached an all-time high. ORC includes professional shoplifting, cargo theft, retail crime rings, and other organized crime in retail environments.



ORGANIZED RETAIL CRIME

More than 90 percent of the companies surveyed report being a victim of ORC in the past year. More than 70 percent believe that ORC is climbing.

SHRINK OR LOSS OF INVENTORY

What's more is that shrink, or loss of inventory, costs retailers $112.1 billion. The following are the top causes for shrink:

- Shoplifting and organized crime: 36 percent
- Employee theft: 33 percent
- Administrative errors: 19 percent
- Vendor fraud or error: 6 percent

The Hidden Threats Draining Your Shopping Center's Value

Retail centers not only deal with organized crime and shrink but also:

- Damage to property
- Vandalism
- Trespassing
- Loitering
- Parking lot and garage problems
- Dumpster diving
- Rooftop issues

Even death. In 2023, there were more than 300 retail violent deaths and 390 criminal acts. The Bureau of Labor Statistics report found the leading cause of workplace fatalities was violent acts.

> Organized Retail Crime cost retailers $777,877 per $1 billion of sales, beating the previous year's record by 7 percent. — National Retail Federation

Shopping center managers and owners have an obligation to provide a safe environment for their retailers and shoppers. What's more, is that an effective security program can help decrease the following pain points in managing their properties:

- Higher security costs
- Poor shopping experience
- Complaints from unhappy shoppers
- Liability losses
- Negative impact on net operating income
- Property damage expenses

COSTLY CRIMES

Crimes that occur in and around your shopping center can be costly and endanger the safety of your retailers and shoppers. When criminal activity persists at a retail center property, it can increase maintenance and repair costs, lower property values, and decrease retailer rental demand, all of which can impact your ROI.

Fortunately, with some proactive security measures, even the most troubled properties can turn around. While no two retail centers are alike, this guide will cover what you can do to protect your property, your staff, and your shoppers.

4 THINGS TO DO NOW

The right security solution depends on the shopping center size, location, surroundings, socioeconomic population, and other unique requirements.

The best practice is that retail center management takes responsibility for securing common areas including hallways and restrooms, the perimeter of the property, parking lot and garage, and everything up to the retailer's lease-line. Retailers take responsibility for security and safety within their walls.

Here are some things that can strengthen your shopping center security program.

SECURE THE PERIMETER

The shopping experience is more than stores carrying an inventory of what shoppers need. Customers want multi-sensory experiences that e-commerce can't provide. A retail center can stand out with landscaping that evokes emotional connections.

It's possible for a landscape design to create a warm and inviting setting. It can help the retail center stand out. Smart landscape design comes with the bonus of helping to prevent crime. Poor landscaping planning can facilitate crime by providing suspects with a place to hide. So, ensure your environmental design looks attractive without giving would-be criminals a helping hand.

Regularly trim bushes, trees, and shrubs to avoid creating hiding spots. Sidewalks need to remain free and clear of shrubs so shoppers feel safe and no one can surprise them. Check the trees to verify they don't provide access to buildings, interfere with lighting, or block views.

Lighting is the cheapest and one of the most valuable security measures. The garage, parking lots, sidewalks, and common areas need to be well-lit. Conduct recurring inspections of the entire property to identify areas for lighting improvements and ensure the lights work properly.

REVIEW PARKING LOT AND GARAGES

For retail real estate managers and owners, parking is one of the greatest areas of liability. According to the Bureau of Justice, more than 10 percent of property crimes took place in parking lots or garages over a four-year period.

Lighting, again, is critical for parking lots and garages. Do an inspection to see if there are any blind spots or hiding spaces that could put a shopper in danger. One of the most effective ways to protect these areas is to use security cameras. More on that in a moment.

Check with the police about crime statistics within one and two blocks of the retail center. This informs you of the risks your shoppers and employees could encounter when parking.

91.6 PERCENT
Companies that are ORC victims

$112.1 BILLION
Cost of shrink in 2025

TRAIN RETAILERS, THEIR EMPLOYEES, AND PROPERTY MANAGEMENT STAFF

Property managers can take steps to improve security and decrease the likelihood of crime occurring by training employees. Train them on what to look for and know what actions to take if they spot something. Employees provide an extra pair of eyes all around the property.

To enhance security, property managers can create guidelines for retailers. Some things to consider including in these guidelines:

- Conduct thorough screenings of new hires.
- Employees wear a name tag with the store's name.
- Procedures for opening and closing the store.
- Encourage pairing up when walking to vehicles in the darkness.

They'll also need training on procedures your property has in place.



IMPLEMENT SECURITY TECHNOLOGY

Management can implement security technologies to cost-effectively increase the security of their retail center property and its surroundings. Surveillance cameras can see more, especially on the roof, a common problem spot. The cameras' visible presence — especially in the parking lot and garage — help deter crime.

Video surveillance installation requires design, wiring expertise, professional installation standards, network configuration, port forwarding, knowledge of the local city code, and much more. Besides a few random elevators or special applications, all new cameras should be IP (internet protocol) high quality megapixel cameras.

The system should save the footage to a recorder for later reviewing as needed and retains it for a set amount of time. How much footage the system stores and how long the company retains it varies. Be sure to ask your vendor about these.

The higher the definition the video, the easier it will be to identify faces, license plates, and other information that could lead to an arrest. License plate cameras are becoming more popular but there are design/ cost/ installation challenges especially when there are multiple points of egress. The monitoring team cooperates with the client and law enforcement providing footage, information, and any other relevant details to help find the responsible party.

Meanwhile, off-site personnel watch the property on their monitors. When they spot a problem, they can call the local authorities to relay relevant information. Some vendors offer speakers that allow them to talk to the suspect or activate a pre-recorded warning message. The advantage of this approach is that you have someone talking to the criminal without putting anyone in harm's way.

The appearance of surveillance cameras will help deter a small percentage of criminals. It certainly won't help catch masked suspects or vehicles that have been stolen. For those that don't notice the cameras or feel invincible, the team monitoring the cameras can take action to minimize damage and apprehend the suspect.

360° Shopping Center Security

When you secure the perimeter and parking areas, train employees, and implement remote video surveillance, you drastically minimize security risk. Still, success depends on many factors.

The first three things — securing the property and parking as well as training employees — require education, consistency, and people not making any mistakes. If something should happen, none of these methods have a way of tracking down the individuals involved. Without security technology like live video monitoring, you won't have eyes across the property.

In rare cases, shopping center management does the monitoring. They have access to the cameras on their mobile devices and computer screens. However, their attention is split with their everyday duties and they don't always catch something suspicious as soon as it happens. Property Management certainly doesn't stay up all night and watch the cameras. This is where third-party trained operators have an advantage. They've been trained to identify potential problems before they happen.

ECAM offers a proactive approach with live monitoring and surveillance. We watch when there is activity, not just motion. Our systems use a combination of video analytics and human intelligence to provide a cost-effective, proven solution.

Because we have cameras strategically placed around your property, we can cover more ground by monitoring multiple areas at the same time.

Our trained operators are identifying suspicious activity in real-time. They can activate speakers to deter potential criminals and unwanted trespassers. They can call the police with live reports on criminals often before damage occurs.



Customized Shopping Center Solutions

We've built a customized comprehensive camera design to watch highly affected areas. We've also incorporated audio speakers. This solution has deterred potential crimes and increased peace of mind for property management and owners, retail store staff, and shoppers.

The following ECAM services are available for shopping center sites:

- Live video monitoring: We proactively watch cameras, reducing risk and expenses.
- Mobile Surveillance Units (MSUs): Rapidly deployable, self-contained security camera trailers equipped with advanced cameras, powerful deterrence features, and remote monitoring capabilities. Ideal for enhancing coverage in high-traffic areas like parking lots without the need for permanent infrastructure.
- Camera monitoring: Keep your existing cameras and join our proactive platform.
- System health check: This service process helps your surveillance system run properly with as little onsite maintenance as possible. When technical issues and service problems pop up, they get prioritized and fixed.
- Long-range surveillance: Certain trained operators can zoom in and capture information, some license plates, and select faces at a distance.
- Thermal imaging: These cameras can see what the human eye and standard cameras cannot. They can provide clear images during daylight, darkness, shadows, and inclement weather.
- Video review and analysis: A trained team searches through hours of video footage to investigate issues. You'll save time and money in that you won't have to delve through hours and hours looking for the videos to find a specific incident.

ECAM remote video surveillance offers many advantages over other companies' services. Among them are proactive monitoring not event-based alarm monitoring, experienced site designers, strong police relationships improving response times, 24/7 services, and perhaps most importantly, increased time and resources for property owners/managers to focus on their operating income, not their security headaches.

We can tailor, implement, and manage a complete security solution or we can do a part of it. Whatever your objectives and budget dictate, we'll work to meet those requirements. That's why we're the leaders in the industry.

To learn more about remote video monitoring and how this proactive solution can save you money, deter crime, and decrease your liability and risk, contact ECAM today.

Please call 855-220-ECAM or visit our website: ecam.com.



ECAM BY THE NUMBERS

140,000+
Of Cameras Monitored

6
State-of-the-Art
Live Video Monitoring Centers

2000+
Employees Worldwide

50,000+
Crimes Deterred Annually

30,000+
Police Dispatches Annually

1000+
Arrests Annually

UP TO 60%
More Cost Effective
Than Traditional Security Measures

24/7/365
Secure Any Site at Any Time

70,000+
Video Reviews

Working with ECAM can help your business experience a faster response from law enforcement. Considering our information helps them make more than 1000 arrests every year, they know they can trust our information.

We have 40 regional offices and operational capabilities across North America. This gives us specialized knowledge about each area where we operate. Every region has its unique challenges and ECAM experts know what they are.

Technology is ever evolving. You need a partner that's going to keep up. That's why we have a dedicated R&D team to stay current on technology and implement the ones that benefit you.

Companies like yours could gain the following when they work with ECAM:

- Cost-effective and maximized security.
- Enhanced employee productivity.
- Mitigated property damage and liability.
- Reduced break-ins and thefts.
- Deterred would-be criminals.

Your ECAM security specialists can tailor, implement, and manage a complete video security solution. If you only need a partial one, ECAM can work with that. Whatever your objectives and budget dictate, we work to meet those requirements.

SUMMARY

The unfortunate fact is Organized Retail Crime has reached an all-time high as more than 90 percent of the surveyed companies report being a victim of ORC. Shrink from shoplifting, employee theft, and vendor fraud is also responsible for the bulk of the $46.8 billion loss. These numbers don't include the costs of property damage, vandalism, and rooftop problems.

The Bureau of Justice reports that over a four-year period, more than 10 percent of crimes occurred in parking lots and garages. For a 9-month period in 2018, more than 4,000 robberies took place in retail.

Retailers select shopping centers that provide security to ensure their customers and employees remain safe. A comprehensive security solution not only helps everyone feel safer but also it increases the value of your property as shoppers return and retail occupancy increases.

The most effective security program includes a perimeter review, parking lot and garage protection, training for retailers and employees, and security technology. The latter is the most critical because it ensures the greatest amount of property has eyes on it. If something should happen, high-definition cameras can provide identifying information to track the involved parties.

Security technology with proactive remote video surveillance uses a combination of video analytics and human intelligence for the most advanced level of security. Trained operators watch for activity in real-time, prepared to act using speakers and contacting the local authorities often before damage occurs.

With ECAM, you get a customized solution to provide your property with the security it needs while ensuring a return on investment.





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