

## Take action to prevent or curtail photography only if you believe that an individual or group's behaviour is suspicious.

Safer City Partnership

**PHOTOGRAPHY ISSUES** The issue of what can and cannot be photographed within the City of London, and whether the police, business owners or security personnel can take action against individuals taking photographs, has been a source of controversy during the last few years. How can we as businesses help to keep the City secure while enabling the ordinary visitor to record its attractions without hassle or objection?

It is certainly unfortunate that, in these days of heightened security, even innocent tourists can raise suspicion as they photograph City landmarks. However, experience tells us that those wishing to disrupt business, cause criminal damage or mount terrorist attacks often embark on reconnaissance missions involving photography. Therefore, the police and security officers will legitimately question people who are taking photographs and would ask that the public understand the need for this.

Arising out of the Home Secretary's review of counter terrorism and security powers in 2010, the British Security Industry Association (BSIA) has developed some straightforward guidance on this matter which can be summarised as follows:

- Security personnel do not have the right to prevent individuals in a public place from photographing or filming a private building.
- If an individual is on private property, he or she may not take photographs if it is expressly prohibited or requires a permit, and a security guard may inform them of this and use reasonable force if the individual refuses to stop.
- If a security person believes that an individual is behaving in a suspicious manner, he or she should report the matter to the police.

- Security personnel do not have the right to delete pictures or confiscate cameras, nor can they obstruct individuals from taking photographs.
- Members of the public and media representatives do not need a permit to film or take photographs in a public place.
- On private land, the public may take photographs unless it is expressly prohibited by the landlord or a permit is required and has not been given.
- Security personnel should refrain from acting in an intimidating manner in any contact they have with the public.

The City of London Police does have powers relevant to the use of photography for terrorist purposes, but these same powers cannot be used to stop people who are taking photographs for legitimate purposes or to destroy any pictures they have taken. Anyone taking a

photograph of a public building, including a photo-journalist, is not committing an offence and does not require a permit.

In a nutshell, your security personnel should only take action to prevent or curtail photography if they genuinely believe that an individual or group's behaviour is suspicious - and even then they should inform the police and leave the officers concerned to deal with the matter.

For further advice regarding photography issues, visit the British Security Industry Association (BSIA) web site at [www.bsia.co.uk](http://www.bsia.co.uk)

