Surveillance Impact Report

SkyWatch

San Diego Police Department

DESCRIPTION

The Logistics Unit is directed on a case-by-case basis by command staff to utilize SkyWatch during different types of operations. The SkyWatch is comprised of a trailer with a scissor lift sitting platform that is climate controlled, has an affixed PTZ Camera located on top for enhanced viewing capability, and one digital video recorder (DVR). This system is also equipped with red, white, and blue lights and a loudspeaker. This system takes a large footprint and is highly visible. This system is the size of a large vehicle.

It is authorized for the following types of circumstances:

1) To support first responders during critical incidents, disasters, and other all hazard emergencies by providing a raised viewing platform for personnel to view the event/incident. The SkyWatch has a live view PTZ camera for personnel in the platform to assist the user in the unit with an enhanced view. The personnel in the platform can relay what they see to personnel at a command post.

2) To provide enhanced security overwatch, anti-terrorist efforts, and situational awareness during special events and large gatherings by providing a raised platform for personnel to relay what is seen to the command post and recorded Digital Media Evidence (DME). This is done to identify pre-incident indicators and mitigate, as well as respond to and investigate terrorist, criminal acts, and other all hazard emergencies.

PURPOSE

SkyWatch supports first responders and command personnel during critical incidents, disasters, special events, large gatherings, and all hazard events by providing a raised platform for viewing by up to 2 personnel. This unit is equipped with one PTZ Camera. It has the ability to provide real-time video to the person occupying SkyWatch during an incident, as well as record video to retain potential evidence.

LOCATION

SkyWatch is stored at the Logistics Unit secure warehouse. It may be deployed to any area where an authorized need arises.

City of San Diego crime statistics can be viewed at Crime Statistics & Crime Mapping | Police | City of San Diego Official Website.

IMPACT

SDPD's SkyWatch Surveillance Use Policy safeguards civil liberties and civil rights by requiring a specified approval process and Department policies and procedures that govern the use of the system. Surveillance technology's uses and deployments are not based on discriminatory or viewpoint-based factors. The Department's use of surveillance technology is intended to support, benefit, and protect the communities of San Diego and the surrounding region while minimizing and mitigating potential impacts on community members' civil rights and civil liberties.

SkyWatch is only deployed to authorized incidents or events. Authorized events and incidents and the process for use authorization are determined based on the criteria set forth within the SkyWatch Surveillance Use Policy. Collection of any recorded data is also done based on the criteria set forth within the SkyWatch Surveillance Use Policy.

MITIGATIONS

The collection, use, retention, or dissemination of data shall not be used to violate the Constitutional rights of any person or be used in any manner that would discriminate against any person based upon their ethnicity, race, gender, natural origin, religion, sexual orientation or gender identity. The surveillance use policy for SkyWatch puts in place procedural measures specifying when the equipment may be used, safe storage requirements, and an approval process to ensure that policy is adhered to.

DATA TYPES AND SOURCES

SkyWatch can record video data from its permanently mounted PTZ video camera and local DVR.

DATA SECURITY

SkyWatch is stored in a secure facility and managed by the Logistics Unit. Data recorded on the DVR overwrite automatically once the DVR is full unless deemed as DME and collected. Recorded data collected as DME is governed by the surveillance use policy, as well as the following Department procedures:

- SDPD Procedure 3.02 – Impound, Release, and Disposal of Property, Evidence and Articles Missing Identification marks.
- SDPD Procedure 1.49 – AXON Body Worn Cameras.

Data can also be collected by an outside law enforcement agency, in which they abide by their department's evidence collection procedures.

FISCAL COST

The purchase of SkyWatch was made using funds from the UASI 2007 grant.

The approximate total cost of purchasing SkyWatch was $118,955.61.

SkyWatch does not have a regular ongoing operating cost. The cost to deploy and staff the vehicle annually varies based on many factors such as cost of fuel, number of deployments, length of deployments, and salary rate of the individual hired to staff it during an event. Additionally, as it is a trailer, annual maintenance costs vary greatly depending on what maintenance is due. If SkyWatch or its internal equipment fails and needs repair or replacement, the cost will be paid by Fleet if it is a direct part of the vehicle or by the Logistics Unit annual service agreement with the supporting vendors if it is an internal non-vehicle-related component. The annual service agreements support numerous responsibilities of-Logistics Unit and other areas of the department.

THIRD PARTY DEPENDENCE

SkyWatch's ability to record does not depend on any third-party vendor, as it records locally on its own internal DVR.

The Logistics Unit utilizes third-party vendors Agreegateway and Willy's Electronics to maintain or repair SkyWatch's internal systems.

ALTERNATIVES

There are numerous vendors that manufacture raised viewing platforms like SkyWatch. SDPD owns one additional raised viewing platform, Terrahawk, however, it is a platform only and does not have surveillance technology. No other type of system SDPD is aware of would provide the same kinds of operational benefits that SkyWatch can provide.

The San Diego Police Department also owns and operates Camera Trailer Camera Systems, which provide a similar operational capability but have different benefits and downsides. The Department purposely maintain both types of systems as the different benefits they offer may be more appropriate for different kinds of events or incidents. The benefit of a raised viewing platform is that you have an actual person able to directly view and report what is occurring. There is no risk of losing transmission. However, the negative is that they come at a significantly higher cost in the initial purchase and utilization. The higher initial cost is because the platform is mounted on either a large trailer or vehicle with large hydraulics able to support a cabin with a person. The higher utilization cost comes from having to pay a person to be in the cabin for the entire event; for each location, a viewing platform is deployed. The benefit of the Camera Trailer Camera Systems is that the equipment can be put out at multiple locations and monitored by one individual at a command post.

TRACK RECORD

The Police Department has used SkyWatch successfully for several years. Some examples of authorized, successful uses are as follows:

- December Nights
- Holiday Beach Operations
- Miramar Air Show
- Petco Park Events

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND COMMENTS

On April 4, 2024, at 1804 hours, there was a publicly held meeting in all nine council districts in the City of San Diego. The following surveillance technologies were presented by the San Diego Police Department:

1. Arteco
2. Airship Video Management System
3. Camera Trailer Camera System
4. Mesh Radio System
5. Skywatch

There was one attendee in District 1. There were no attendees in District 2. There was one attendee in District 3. There were no attendees in District 4. There were no attendees in District 5. There were no attendees in District 6. There was one attendee in District 7. There were no attendees in District 8. There were no attendees in District 9. There were no questions or comments from the three attendees. There was one online comment submitted for Camera Trailer Camera Systems expressing general support.

To maximize the reach of the materials presented at the community meetings, the Police Department created a link to the City of San Diego's technology website, which provides all materials for presented technologies as well as upcoming technologies and additional materials. The materials and questions/comments section can be accessed by visiting the web address below: www.sandiego.gov/police/technology. The web address was posted in conjunction with the QR code at the community meeting.

The Department also video-recorded a meeting so that it could be presented to a larger group. The benefit of the video was the capability of translating the presentation into over 100 languages, such as Spanish and other languages frequently used by the communities within San Diego, to maximize penetration of the materials to affected groups. The link to the video is at the San Diego Police Department's YouTube channel under Surveillance Technology Community Meeting 04/04/2024 (youtube.com).