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China: New Regulations on Public Security Cameras Tackle Privacy and Personal Information Rights

On April 1, 2025, new regulations on the use of public security video systems that aim to “safeguard public security and protect rights to privacy and personal information” took effect in China. ([Regulations on the Management of the Public Security Video Imaging Information System](#), art. 1 ([English translation](#) by China Law Translate).)

Provisions

The regulations, which were promulgated by the State Council on January 13, 2025, govern “public security video image information systems.” These are systems that use image acquisition equipment to collect, transfer, display, and store video image information from public areas for public security purposes. (Art. 2.) Public places include crowded venues such as commercial centers, tourist attractions, schools, hospitals, transportation hubs, major public transit vehicles, and highway service areas. (Art. 7.)

The regulations specifically stipulate areas and locations where the installation of image acquisition equipment and related facilities are prohibited. These include:

- Inside guest rooms or private rooms in places such as hotels, inns, guesthouses, hostels, and homestays.
- Inside dormitory rooms for students or rooms provided by employers for staff accommodation and rest.
- Inside public bathrooms, toilets, changing rooms, nursing rooms, and fitting rooms.
- Other areas and locations where installing such equipment could infringe upon privacy through photography, surveillance, or eavesdropping. (Art. 8.)

Entities managing a newly built public security video system must file a record with the local public security authority within 30 days of the system’s activation. They must provide details such as the unit’s basic information, system location, number and types of cameras, and video storage duration. Entities managing existing systems in use before implementation of the regulations must register them within 90 days of the effective date of the regulations. (Art. 14.)

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The regulations require video image information collected by public security video systems to be kept for no less than 30 days. After 30 days, information that has served its purpose should be deleted, unless otherwise provided by laws and administrative regulations. (Art. 17.)

The regulations do not prohibit the installation of security cameras, such as residential video doorbells, in nonpublic areas. However, they stipulate that such installations must not endanger public security or infringe upon the legitimate rights and interests of other individuals. The regulations also prohibit the unlawful sharing or public dissemination of collected information involving public security, privacy, or personal information. (Art. 33.)

Penalties

Under the regulations, legal consequences for violations are progressive. The maximum fine is 20,000 yuan (about US\$2,760), with concurrent penalties for directly responsible supervisors and personnel. (E.g., arts. 26–30.)

Additionally, violations regarding cybersecurity, data security, and personal information protection obligations, or the illegal provision or public dissemination of video image information, may be punished in accordance with the Cybersecurity Law, the Data Security Law, and the Personal Information Protection Law. In serious cases, public security administrative penalties or criminal penalties may be imposed. (Art. 31.)

When image acquisition equipment is installed in areas and locations specifically prohibited by article 8 of the regulations, the public security organs will confiscate the related equipment and delete the video image information that was collected. An individual violator faces a fine of 5,000–10,000 yuan (about US\$690–1,380). An entity that violates the regulations is subject to a fine of 10,000–20,000 yuan, and its directly responsible persons will concurrently be fined between 5,000 and 10,000 yuan. Additionally, “[t]hose found guilty of peeping, secretly photographing, or eavesdropping on others’ privacy shall be subjected to public security administrative penalties. If the act constitutes a crime, criminal responsibility shall be pursued according to the law.” (Art. 27.)

Laney Zhang, Law Library of Congress
May 19, 2025

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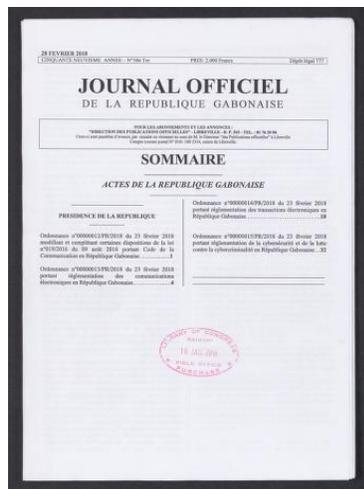
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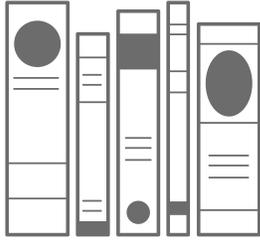
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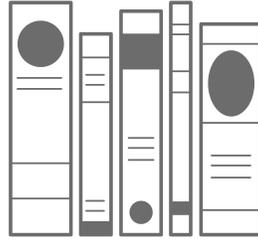


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