



Supreme Court
Rhode Island Judiciary
Policy Regarding Requests for Recorded Security System
Footage
Revised March 13, 2026

I. Authority

Pursuant to G.L. 1956 § 8-15-4, the State Court Administrator, under the direction of the Chief Justice, is tasked with the duty “to control and supervise the maintenance and repair of all buildings housing the supreme and several inferior courts of justice throughout the state of Rhode Island,” “to perform all necessary functions relating to the administration of the courts,” and “to act upon all administrative matters affecting the operation of the Judiciary.” The responsibility for carrying out the terms of this Policy, under the supervision of the State Court Administrator, is vested in the Facilities, Operations, and Security Office and the Office of General Counsel.

II. Purpose

The Rhode Island Judiciary (Judiciary) owns, operates, and maintains a comprehensive security system at all courthouse locations for the purpose of protecting public property and maintaining a safe, secure, and peaceful environment for judicial personnel and staff and all court users and visitors. The security system includes video surveillance cameras augmented by facial recognition technology (FRT) which may be used to identify or verify the identity of an individual present within a courthouse location from a digital, photographic, or video image. This Policy establishes a uniform, Judiciary-wide process for handling and responding to requests for access to or disclosure of surveillance footage recorded by the Judiciary’s security system. Access to or disclosure of any recorded footage shall only be permitted in accordance with this Policy.

III. Retention

The Judiciary’s security system shall retain recorded footage for a period not to exceed fourteen (14) calendar days. Images used by the FRT software are confidential and may be retained in accordance with security needs as determined by the Judiciary’s Director of Security.

IV. Access and Disclosure

- A. Procedure. All requests for access to or disclosure of recorded footage shall be made in writing and directed to the Judiciary’s Director of Security. When a verbal request for recorded footage is received, the requestor shall be instructed to reduce the verbal request to writing and forward the written request to the Judiciary’s Director of Security. The

Director of Security shall promptly forward all such written requests to the Office of General Counsel for review.

All written requests shall describe, at a minimum, the recorded footage sought with a reasonable degree of specificity including, but not limited to, the date of the recording, the approximate time period or duration of the footage sought, the location of the event depicted in the footage, the nature of the footage, and the reason for which the footage is sought. Written requests not meeting these standards may not be entitled to review.

- B. Review of Request. Once a written request for recorded footage is received, the Judiciary's Director of Security shall ensure that the requested footage, if in existence, is preserved while the Office of General Counsel determines whether the footage may be released pursuant to applicable law. Requestors seeking footage which does not exist shall be promptly notified of this fact.

In general, recorded footage and any information or data concerning or relating to the nature and format of the Judiciary's security system including, but not limited to, the type of equipment and software specifications utilized, specific system operating procedures, and the particular locations under surveillance should not be released to the public as these details constitute sensitive security information. If information regarding the configuration and design of the Judiciary's security system were to be revealed through direct disclosure, or indirect access through the release or viewing of recorded footage, the release of this information could jeopardize the safety of the Judiciary's courthouse locations as well as judicial personnel and staff and court users and visitors. Access to or release of this information could also significantly increase the Judiciary's risk of being the target of criminal activity and would publicly expose the Judiciary's internal and external security measures including, but not limited to, system capabilities, floor plans of public and nonpublic areas of the Judiciary's courthouse locations, the operating procedures and patrol patterns of the Judiciary's security personnel as well as the Capitol Police and the Division of Sheriffs, and the existence of any areas beyond the range or scope of surveillance.

FRT software results, images, and related data and information are for internal use only. The Judiciary shall not allow access to, sell, copy, modify, display, publish, transfer, transmit, distribute, disclose, release, share, or otherwise disseminate any FRT software results, images, related data and information, or any part thereof, in any form or format, to any third party whatsoever at any time. An individual's inclusion in the FRT software system is neither confirmation nor suggestion of criminal conduct or wrongdoing. Publicly releasing FRT software results and/or images, or other personal identifying information such as, but not limited to, the names of Monitored Attendees, could violate the individuals' privacy, harm their reputational interests, result in other forms of social and economic stigma, and/or lead to other unfair outcomes.

