

## Video



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While still common today, surveillance cameras recording to a DVR in some back room is so 2003. Bring clients up to 2023 standards via remote video monitoring, in which virtual agents react and intervene to incidents in near real-time.

**By Nat Carmack**

**Y**ou've likely been bombarded with the commercials. TV lawyers shouting at you through the screen, "Have you or a loved one suffered injury in a workplace accident? You may be entitled to financial compensation!" With "No Win No Fee" incentives, law firms seeking injured clients and the justification that lawsuits are for social good, America has become a uniquely litigious society.

A 2022 report for the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Institute for Legal Reform, "Tort Costs in America: An Empirical Analysis of Costs and Compensation of the U.S. Tort System," reported that in 2020, tort costs amounted to \$443 billion, or 2.1% of U.S. gross domestic product (GDP). Tort, or a wrongful act that can cause loss or harm that leads to civil legal liability, consists of general and commercial liabilities — including workplace injuries — automobile accident claims and medical liability claims. U.S. tort system costs have continuously and steadily risen, impacting the national economy, but also businesses and individuals.

Workplace injury lawsuits are a burden for organizations under the U.S. tort system. Preventing workplace injuries and workplace injury fraud has become a priority for businesses to protect both their finances and their reputations.

So where does this fit into security integration services? Traditionally, surveillance cameras have been used to record footage of a location that is then stored for future reference if an incident occurs. Whether a business owner or manager is reviewing the footage to investigate an incident after it has already taken place or if they are pulling footage to turn over to law enforcement for their investigations, this approach is reactive and fails to prevent incidents from happening and to instantly intervene in an incident in progress.

Remote video monitoring (RVM) is an interactive and proactive approach to security. Rather than investigating or responding to an event after it has already happened, RVM allows virtual agents to react and intervene in an incident in near real-time from a remote command center.

If a client is spending money on security systems and their installation, it only makes total sense to

bring this infrastructure to life. These systems must be made interactive and used by agents in a command center setting to maximize their effectiveness, efficiency and to make them truly worthwhile. Everything needs to be live monitored by highly trained command center staff.

### More Than Just Security

The purpose of RVM is to proactively prevent or react to security events, now in real-time. Tools that make this possible include artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning (ML) and other advanced video analytics. Applied to surveillance cameras and other security infrastructure, like electromagnetic door locks, intrusion detection, perimeter detection, GPS devices and more, advanced video analytics can filter abnormal activity from normal activity.

RVM or proactive video monitoring (PVM) proves its value in more than securing and protecting physical property. Video monitoring can add value to security solutions by increasing the return on security investments, or ROSI. This might include the prevention of workplace injuries and the insurance that state, local and company mandated compliance policies and procedures are being followed in a workplace.

Compliance violations and workplace injury lawsuits can bring great monetary loss to organizations and negatively impact their reputation. In “How Video Analytics Add Value to Your Solutions” for SSI, Bruce Ericson states, “Compliance violations and lawsuits can cost companies billions, not to mention lost profits due to a damaged reputation. Video analytics help ensure compliance with federal, local and industry-specific mandates while also protecting organizations, and their CEOs, from damaging lawsuits.”

Video analytics and the monitoring and storage of video footage allows organizations to prevent workplace accidents, investigate accidents after they have occurred, and observe that all safety and compliance procedures are always adhered to. Through surveillance cameras and other security infrastructure, employers can monitor a site for safety hazards. This might include environmental factors like spills, wet floors, or storage and handling of hazardous materials. By proactively monitoring and removing hazards that could lead to an injury, employers can avoid workplace injuries and the financial and reputational strain that can often follow.

Additionally, PVM can monitor employee be-

haviors to ensure that Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and other safety and compliance regulations are being adhered to. This includes making sure employees are wearing proper personal protective equipment (PPE), which may consist of gloves, safety glasses and shoes, earplugs or muffs, hard hats, respirators, or coveralls, vests, and full body suits. For certain workplaces and industries, wearing proper-fitting clothing can also be important in preventing work-related injuries. PVM can observe these behaviors and report them to employers to address their employees to prevent injury that could occur from failure to comply.

Ericson also argues, “Slip and fall and other workplace injury lawsuits leveled against organizations are unfortunately not uncommon. While video evidence can help refute company liability in such an event, it is often not enough. Video analytics can prevent incidents before they get to the point of litigation, before they occur, by proactively identifying an employee engaging in prohibited behavior (i.e., not wearing the proper protective gear or entering restricted areas).”



The priority in workplace injuries should be prevention. With PVM, employers can prevent or reduce workplace accidents, reducing costs of worker's compensation and giving employees confidence in their safety. However, if an accident or injury does occur, PVM can be used in investigations. Recorded video footage can be used to determine the cause of an injury or accident. It can also be used to determine if the injury claim is fraudulent or honest. Worker's compensation fraud occurs when an employee falsely claims a work-related injury or occupational disease, or when an employee exaggerates an existing injury or occupational disease.

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**Video****Remote Monitoring Advantages**

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Lastly, proactive video monitoring can also be used to improve the customer experience. Notification with lines at the checkout areas getting too long can allow managers to adjust their staff positioning on site to allow for shorter wait times. Analytics can be used to detect “out of stock” situations of products, thus reducing missed sales opportunities. PVM can be used in many ways to improve the customer experience.

Layering advanced video analytics over surveillance cameras allows organizations or third-party companies to conduct video audits of an organization’s operations and employee compliance. Customizable to specific concerns, video audits can monitor for adherence to safety policies, OSHA requirements, environmental hazards and more.

**Stop Threats in Tracks**

PVM traditionally has been used to secure property and promote safety. Found to be effective and efficient in ensuring workplace safety compliance and preventing accidents and injuries, PVM also captures and responds to arising or in-progress security incidents.

When an alarm is triggered and received by the command center, a live virtual guard reviews the event in near real-time. Virtual guards will then verify the event to determine whether the threat is real or simply a false alarm. Using a scripting database, virtual guards will then actively intervene in an incident to prevent or stop it in its tracks.

When video verification occurs in near re-

al-time, a virtual guard can respond before an event occurs or while it is still in progress. Depending on the severity of an event there are a variety of ways a virtual agent can intervene. The agent’s intervention is always going to follow predetermined site- and incident-specific “protocols.” This ensures consistency and high levels of quality by the virtual command center agent staff.

For example, if there is an AI analytic alarm triggered by an individual or someone entering a property after hours, a virtual guard can engage with them through audio speakers. Through speakers installed throughout a property, virtual guards can initiate a recorded or live voice announcement to engage with customers, staff or trespassers in real-time. A virtual guard may say to someone entering a business’s property after hours: “This is a message from [Business Name’s] live video monitoring center. You are being monitored and recorded. The hours of operation are Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. Please return during our regular operating hours. Thank you.”

If the unwanted behavior persists, a guard can issue another, more firm voice command. “This is a message from [Business Name’s] live monitoring center. Your activity is being monitored and recorded. We ask that you vacate the property and return during our normal operating hours. If you do not comply, police will be dispatched to remove you from the property.” Live or recorded voice announcements are one method that can be used by RVM to prevent or diffuse an incident.

If a business or site is staffed with physical security guards, PVM monitors the property from a greater perspective and alerts guards to areas of concern or incidents to respond more safely and effectively. A physical security guard can only see what is in front of them. RVM bypasses blind spots by granting virtual agents a more expansive view of a property to efficiently guide onsite security.

Through the installed security systems infrastructure, in combination with the interactive virtual guard monitoring, businesses can augment and support onsite physical security guards. PVM can empower and support onsite guards by preparing and directing them to the right place at the right time. This will allow the onsite staff to respond to any situation or an incident in progress, making their response faster, safer, more efficient, and more effective. If a site is not staffed with physical guards or an incident requires a more specialized response, virtual agents can take appropriate actions, including dispatching local law enforcement if needed.

### Closing the Deal

Through the ongoing real-time use of the existing equipment and technology, PVM increases the value of this infrastructure. The client has most likely spent many thousands of dollars on these systems and security equipment, so why not maximize their effectiveness?

Surveillance equipment alone only allows for a reactionary approach to security. Through video analytics and live video monitoring, virtual agents can intervene in real-time. Whether this consists of dispatching onsite security of concerns, calling local police, or investigating compliance or workplace injuries, or improving customer experiences, PVM creates a positive ROSI for end users and an increased value of products for integrators. **SSI**

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