



*Photo by iStockphotos.com/cherrybeans*

# Should Communities Use Fake Cameras?

THE PROS AND CONS OF USING DUMMY SURVEILLANCE

BY BRIE  
PETERSON

**W**hen security is the topic of discussion for a community, dummy cameras are often proposed as a possible solution. Dummy, or fake, cameras are designed to look real in hopes that people will not know the difference. They are often seen as a budget-conscious deterrent that is

better than having nothing at all. While there is nothing wrong with that initial point of view, it is important to look further into the advantages and disadvantages of fake surveillance to determine if the cameras are truly beneficial.

The first question that communities typically ask about a possible security system is, "How much will this cost?" This is understandable, and the price of fake cameras is not hard to accept. They are relatively cheap, easy to find, and simple to set up. Plus, dummy cameras won't require much maintenance once installed. After they are in place, it is possible that the fake cameras will scare off amateur thieves. Although fake cameras are designed to look like real cameras, it is not hard for anyone to learn a few factors that distinguish the two. One common characteristic of phony cameras is a blinking, red light. Most legitimate surveillance cameras do not have one, and that is an easy sign to spot for criminals. Some fake cameras will even come with movement to tilt or pan around an area, but that is not likely to discourage most criminals and many will be aware of these features. Plus, experienced thieves may gain confidence upon realizing that actual surveillance is not installed.

Communities also have to remember that dummy cameras are only a deterrent—nothing more. If an incident happens at the



## BRIE PETERSON, BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CONSULTANT FOR ENVERA SYSTEMS

Brie Peterson is the Sr. Business Development Consultant for Envera Systems. She works closely with the sales and marketing departments to provide best-in-class service to the communities that Envera works with. Envera Systems is an all-inclusive security provider that focuses on the unique needs of communities through technology-based solutions. Using Virtual Guards located at Envera's Central Station, Envera is able to provide Next Generation protection by verifying visitors, monitoring video, managing community databases, and more. For more information, call (855) 380-1274 or visit [www.EnveraSystems.com](http://www.EnveraSystems.com).



Proud Winner of the  
2018 Florida Community Association  
Journal Readers' Choice Silver Award.



## Association Management Solutions

IBERIABANK provides condo and homeowners associations throughout Florida with a wide variety of services customized for this industry. How can we help your association?

### Borrowing Needs\*

- Roof Improvements
- Common Area Upgrades
- Clubhouse Renovations
- Business Visa Credit Cards

### Deposit Needs\*

- Florida-based Lockbox Services
- ACH Processing
- CDARs/ICS Accounts
- Remote Deposit Scanning

# IBERIABANK

Tampa Bay | Sarasota/Bradenton | Southwest Florida | Central Florida  
Jacksonville | Southeast Florida | Florida Keys

[www.iberiabank.com](http://www.iberiabank.com)

\*Subject to approval, including credit approval.

Member  
FDIC





entrance, amenity, or somewhere else in the neighborhood, there will not be footage or proof. This greatly decreases the chances that the community will be able to find the people responsible for damage. Preventing or deterring crime is always the first step in a successful security plan, but an efficient plan includes methods to provide evidence when needed.

Associations also need to consider the legal implications when using fake cameras at amenities or assets within the community. If a crime occurs in an area where fake cameras are located, the association risks having created a false sense of security for residents and visitors. Lawsuits have been filed

before against communities that implied security existed. To decrease this risk, a community could make residents aware that the cameras do not actually record any footage, but that information is likely to become known outside the neighborhood. Additionally, some security providers will not install fake cameras because of the liability.

Finally, security systems are frequently researched and installed for peace of mind.

However, installing fake surveillance is likely to have the opposite effect. Instead, communities will continuously question if the dummy cameras are deterring crime, and how the community will deal with an incident when it happens. Phony security systems do not provide comfort.

In the end, real video cameras and security methods are invaluable investments. The two types of video surveillance that are most effective in community associations are passive video surveillance and active video surveillance. The passive system is ideal at community entrances and can also be used at other assets. Active surveillance is a preventative system that can signal a guard when trespassers enter an amenity area after hours. This system works best with two-way audio so that the trespassers can be addressed immediately.



**TOWERS**  
Property Management

We specialize in Homeowners Associations, Condominiums, and Bookkeeping Services for the Self-Managed Community.

Associations are our only business so we can focus our entire efforts on your community.

**Towers Property Management is a family owned and managed business. We take pride in each community that we work with. Our clients are more than just a number to us.**

We proudly serve Orange, Seminole, and Osceola County.

References and free estimates are available by contacting us at:  
Office: 407-730-9872  
Fax: 407-730-9877  
www.towerspropertymgmt.com  
info@towerspropertymgmt.com




**TRIPP SCOTT**  
ATTORNEYS AT LAW

*"Experience You Can Trust, Service You Can Count On!"*

Matthew Zifrony • Lindsay Raphael  
954-525-7500  
110 SE 6th St, Ste 1500  
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301  
www.trippscott.com

- Annual meetings
- Assessment collections
- Compliance issues
- Foreclosures
- Dispute resolution
- Document drafts and amendments
- Rules and regulations enforcement
- Contract preparation/negotiation



**southern mosquito control services, inc.**

LET US TAKE THE BITE OUT OF MOSQUITOS!  
[WWW.MOSQUITOPRO.COM](http://WWW.MOSQUITOPRO.COM)

Specializing in Mosquitos and Midges – Quiet Electric Foggers  
Environmentally Responsible and Conscientious  
Trusted, Ethical and Dedicated Service Since 1996  
Long-Term Relationships with Clients – Let Us Earn Your Business

LICENSED & INSURED

Specializing in HOA Communities and Resorts  
Fogging • Waterway • Barrier Treatments  
(407) 475-1100 (888) 545-5736





# J.R. Frazer, Inc.

Reserve Studies, Property & Flood Insurance Cost Valuation Reports for Condo Associations and HOAs



Conducting quality business for over 25 years in reserve studies and property cost valuations for the Southeast and Central Florida area(s).

Our reports are very easy to understand and help communities meet their reserve requirements by staying in a positive cash flow. We now provide color photographs of reserve assets.

We offer a discounted rate when ordering both a reserve study and property cost valuation report.

*"We want to thank our customers for their business and continued support."*

**FREE PHONE CONSULTATION!**

561-488-3012

JRFrazerENT@aol.com

www.JRfrazer.com



# Cover Your Assets

A Roof Management Program Protects Now and in the Future



Protect your owners from costly "surprise" assessments by staying on top of the roofs under your supervision.  
Annual Inspections • Replacement or Repair Recommendations • Complete Project Management  
Design Services • QA Inspections • Existing dispute? We provide expert witness testimony.

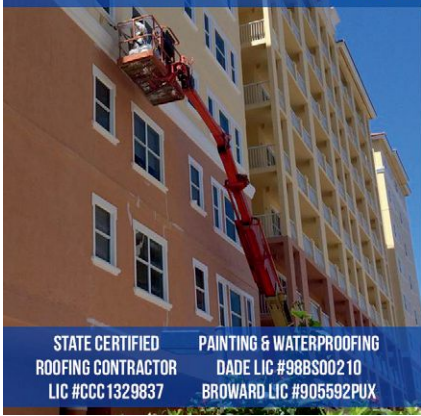
**Ed Williams Registered Roof Consultant, LLC**

2762 SW Matheson Ave. A2 Palm City, FL 34990 • EwilliamsRRC@msn.com

EdWilliamsRegisteredRoofConsultant.com • 772.335.5832



HI-RISE - COMMERCIAL & RESIDENTIAL | HALF THE COST OF A NEW ROOF | 10, 15, 20 YEAR WARRANTIES



Absolute Waterproofing, Inc. offers over 35 years experience in South Florida. We specialize in building restoration, painting, waterproofing, and silicone roofing systems.



DADE: 305-949-0281 | BROWARD: 954-581-2401 | 954-391-9668

STATE CERTIFIED ROOFING CONTRACTOR LIC #CCC 1329837  
PAINTING & WATERPROOFING DADE LIC #98BS00210 BROWARD LIC #905592PUX

# SWAYSLAND PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERING CONSULTANTS, INC.

Specializing in:

- Structural Engineering
- Concrete Restoration
- Waterproofing and Roofing
- Forensic Engineering



MEMBER  
INTERNATIONAL  
CONCRETE REPAIR  
INSTITUTE

2890 MARINA MILE BLVD., SUITE 114, FORT LAUDERDALE, FL 33312  
(954) 473-0043 (888) 264-7732

## A.C. DUCT RESTORATION—CLEANING AND LEAK REPAIR

Bothered by Musty Odors, Excess Dust, Allergies or High Electric Bills?



We clean & repair the duct leaks in your A.C. systems.  
Duct Leaks can cause mold and waste energy.



- NADCA Certified Duct Cleaners
- Duct Leak Diagnostics & Repair
- Dryer Exhaust
- Licensed Mold Assessments



Reg. \$395 **FREE** Code: A200  
A.C. Duct Inspection  
RESTRICTIONS APPLY



1-888-707-7763

www.ADAflorida.com

## Save Up to 40% on Utilities with Submetering!

The Submetering  
Experts



Established  
in 1957

Over 200,000  
Meters Installed  
Nationally

- Accurately bill for individual utility usage
- Residents only pay for what they use
- Reveals leaks minimizing damage
- Promotes conservation
- Reduces property consumption saving thousands per year!

Call 888-My-Meter (888-696-3837)  
For a FREE Site Evaluation and Quote  
www.midwayservicesinc.com

While real video surveillance systems do require maintenance, there are security providers who will help support the system. This can include camera checks to make sure they are working properly and that the picture is clear. Some companies will also inform communities when an incident occurred and retrieve the watermarked video so that the community has valuable evidence.

In addition, landscaping and lighting around a neighborhood should be regularly checked. Well-lit areas and manicured landscapes are less likely to create hiding spaces for potential thieves or trespassers and increase the chances that they will be seen. Burglar alarms for homes, access control, and gate security systems with guards or virtual guards are also beneficial for overall security.

Cutting costs will not solve a community's concerns, especially when it comes to video surveillance. For communities that do choose to install fake cameras, it is important to understand the possible ramifications. Ultimately, most do not want to pay the price later. Plus, there are many options for systems and providers available so that communities can find the best fit for their needs and budget.

If you have security questions or concerns, please email [ask@envera.com](mailto:ask@envera.com) systems.com. ■