

## Sheriff Partners with Businesses and Residents to Create **OPERATION WATCHDOG**

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The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines a watchdog as: 1. a dog kept to guard property and 2. one that guards against loss, waste, theft or undesirable practices. Monmouth County Sheriff Shaun Golden is applying the later definition by partnering with business and residents to help solve crimes through the Monmouth County Sheriff's Office new Operation Watchdog initiative. The program invites and encourages business owners and residents to register their video surveillance systems with the sheriff's office in an effort to assist in, and expedite, criminal investigations.

Monmouth County is the first county in New Jersey to offer Operation Watchdog. The Monmouth County Sheriff's Office credits the Toms River Police Department (formerly Dover Township Police Department) for initiating the program on the local level. Sheriff Golden served with the Toms River Police Department prior to joining the Monmouth County Sheriff's Office.

Operation Watchdog is a strictly voluntary program and provides law enforcement with information on the locations of video surveillance cameras that are registered with Operation Watchdog. The information is safe, secure and will not be made public. Police will not ask for direct or live access to a surveillance or security camera. Instead, they will reach out to the registered businesses or homeowners in the vicinity in which a crime occurred. Such video surveillance may have captured evidence which may be helpful in an investigation and in solving the crime and bringing the perpetrators to justice.

"This is an extremely beneficial partnership from all ends, since it increases safety and helps solve and reduce crimes more efficiently and effectively," said Sheriff Shaun Golden. "Surveillance cameras are crime-fighting tools, and registering them through Operation Watchdog saves members of law enforcement time when it comes to determining the location of video

cameras which may contain valuable footage of criminal activity.

"Operation Watchdog makes sense for everyone because it assists law enforcement in the development of evidence for criminal investigations. The program also helps local businesses and citizens protect themselves – a natural interest for our residents who want to help ensure the safety of their neighborhoods," said Prosecutor Christopher J. Gramiccioni. "It's like an electronic Neighborhood Watch program and requires no funding for implementation."



Registration is free, easy and takes a few minutes to complete. A registrant's contact information is provided along with the location of the cameras. Upon completion of the application, a member of law enforcement will follow up to confirm the information. Information that may not appear to mean much now could be very useful should a crime occur. To view the Monmouth County Sheriff's Office Operation Watchdog registration site, please visit [www.mcsonj.org/operation-watchdog/](http://www.mcsonj.org/operation-watchdog/).

**How Does Operation Watchdog Work?**  
**A simple, uncomplicated three-step process:**



- **Step 1: REGISTRATION** - You provide contact information and tell us where your security cameras are located. There is no cost for registration.
- **Step 2: CONFIRMATION** - Once the application is completed, a member of your local law enforcement agency will follow up with you to confirm your information.
- **Step 3: CALL FOR ASSISTANCE** - Law enforcement agencies in Monmouth County will contact you if there is a criminal incident in the area of your security cameras. Police personnel may request a copy of any video captured by your security cameras which may be pertinent to the investigation

There are five terms and conditions that registrants must follow:

1. Any video collected by a law enforcement agency relating to criminal activity may be used in the investigation and as possible evidence.
2. Video footage provided to a law enforcement agency is reserved for official use only.
3. Under no circumstances shall registrants construe that they are acting as an agent/employee of a law enforcement agency through the Operation Watchdog program.
4. When necessary, a law enforcement agency will contact you directly using the information provided to obtain security camera footage.
5. You agree not to release any video footage or still images to the media without consulting your local law enforcement agency.

The very first Monmouth County businesses to sign up for the program were iPlay America and Rook Coffee. "iPlay America is proud to be a part of Operation Watchdog," said Bob McDaid, owner and founder, iPlay America. "One of our core values as an organization is safety – not just within our facility, but within our community as well. This program allows us to further enhance our community involvement."

Through participation in Operation Watchdog, businesses and residents with a video security system can help local law enforcement take a Bite Out of Crime. 🐾