

Best Practices to Prevent Film Theft

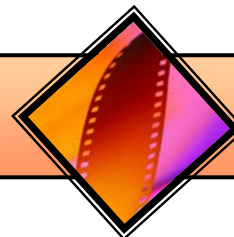


Table of Contents

The Problem.....	2
Preparation.....	3
Identifying Camcord Activity.....	4
Camcord Prevention Tips.....	5
Pre-Release Screening Security.....	6
Guidelines for Private Security.....	7
Print Security.....	8
Contacts.....	10
Appendix.....	11

The Problem

- ❖ Pirates use digital recording devices to steal movies directly from theatre screens. Copies are then distributed all over the world via the Internet or counterfeit optical discs.
- ❖ As anti-camcording laws are passed in the United States, procedures (like the ones recommended here) are established, and exhibitor awareness programs are introduced, copies of films sourced from theatres in the United States have been decreasing while copies of films sourced for theatres in Canada and other international markets are on the rise.
- ❖ Sophisticated pirates are now able to combine the stolen video sourced from one theatre with the stolen audio sourced from an entirely different theatre. This audio-only theft can prove more challenging to prevent.
- ❖ Copies of camcorderd movies are being acquired not just by so-called “release groups” for free distribution over the Internet but also by organized pirate networks who illegally produce counterfeit discs in replication plants and burner labs that are then sold throughout the world.
- ❖ Between June 2003 and January 2006, unique camcord copies were traced back to theatres in 19 countries worldwide.



Above: Examples of anti-camcording posters used around the world.

Preparation

The following is meant to be used as a guideline only. Different approaches may be more appropriate depending on local laws and theatrical practices.

- Prior to instituting any of the security measures recommended in this document, theatres should make themselves aware of what **local laws** apply to illegal camcording and communicate with local law enforcement agencies to determine whether and how they will respond to camcording complaints. . In addition, it should be determined whether theatre employees or any other competent authority is empowered with the right to confiscate recording devices, to interrupt or interfere with the camcording, and/or to ask the patron to leave the auditorium.
- **Signs, posters, and other documents** should be prominently displayed at the theatre box office and in the lobby advising patrons that “Camcorders, audio recorders or any recording devices are not permitted inside the theatre.” **Pre-screening slides** with the same information should also be considered. Where applicable, the notices can also warn patrons that there may be random bag and jacket checks for those items. (*See page 2 for poster examples*)
- Theatres should institute **training** on how to prevent camcord piracy for new employees as part of their existing orientation. On-going communication with all employees regarding camcording activity is always recommended.

Please visit **www.fightfilmtheft.org** for the latest in training material uniquely developed by the CMPDA and theatre owners like you.

- Where appropriate, theatre management should consider implementing an internal **reward program** as a further incentive for their employees to identify and stop patrons from illegally camcording a movie. (*see page 4 for information on the CMPDA & MPTAC reward program*)
- If possible, theatres should implement **an audience greeting program**, in which theatre staff asks the audience for their support to prevent film piracy.
- **Surveillance systems** can be installed that not only help combat piracy, but record other poor guest behavior.

Identifying Camcording Activity

NEVER PUT YOURSELF OR YOUR PATRONS AT RISK!

- Theatre employees should check auditoriums for recording/camcording activity as part of regular patrols.
- Does your theatre have a written anti-camcord policy? If not, consider the following steps:
 - i. Advise a theatre manager immediately.
 - ii. A manager should call the local police immediately.
 - iii. If a police officer has not arrived within 20 minutes of the end of the movie, theatre management and/or theatre security should stop or interfere with the camcording. [Note: *theatre employees should never put themselves or their patrons at risk.*]
 - iv. Theatre management or security should politely but firmly ask the suspect to accompany them to wait in the lobby.
 - v. Get the suspect's name and ask to see identification (copy it or write down full address and identification number). Write down a good physical description.
 - vi. If local laws permit, ask the suspect to hand over the device and the recording.

✓ The Canadian Motion Picture Distributors Association (CMPDA) and Motion Picture Theatres Association of Canada (MPTAC) have instituted a program to reward theatre employees who identify patrons illegally recording a movie. **Employees may be eligible for a “Take Action” reward of up to \$500.00*** for identifying a person operating a video camera or other recording device to copy a movie in a theatre, for immediately notifying the police, for stopping the camcording, and for filing a police report of the incident. (*A reward application is available at www.fightfilmtheft.org.*)

Once you have followed the steps above, call the 24-hour, 7 days a week hotline (800) 371-9884 to report the incident and be eligible for the \$500.

* The grant of any prize, award, reward, or other incentive issued by the CMPDA, MPTAC, and/or the joint Theatrical Camcorder Reward Program, including the amount or form of such prize, award, reward, or other incentive, is made at the sole discretion of the CMPDA and MPTAC

Camcord Prevention Tips

Be extra vigilant opening day, opening show. The earlier in the film release period, the more valuable a film is to movie thieves. Always be alert, but pay particular attention during new release periods.

Be extra vigilant first showing, last showing. Camcord thieves favor theatres with light crowds. The first and last shows are ideal times for them to attempt to illegally record a movie.

Monitor auditorium five minutes before screening. Camcord thieves set up during this time, so look for a lot of movement just prior to the screening. Camcord thieves sometimes use clamps on the seat ahead of them or beside them. Individuals who have their arm over the seat beside them with no one next to them should be scrutinized.

Look for glowing lights. Often camcorders can't fully conceal the small glowing light on the camera. If someone is seemingly "on their cell phone" through the whole first hour of the film or if employees notice a small green or red glow in the dark of the theatre, take a closer look.

Pay attention to seating arrangements. Camcord pirates often try to place themselves in the absolute center of the theatre or try to shield themselves by having accomplices sit on either side of them.

Monitor the use of Assisted Listening Devices (ALD). The "professional" camcord thief will often have or borrow an ALD which he will hard wire to the camcorder along with a remote ocular device to ensure that the full screen is in the frame. Theatre operators may want to create a log that notes the name and address (from an appropriate ID) of those who borrow an ALD.

Look for coats in summer. If someone is wearing a long or unseasonably heavy coat in warm weather, take a closer look. Look for odd shapes outlined in pockets. Ask to look into shopping bags.

Be aware of "Friends" of Staff. Does one member of your staff frequently have "friends" joining them at the theatre at odd times? Look for non-employees coming or going out of the projectionist's booth or those arriving at odd hours claiming to be friends of an employee or manager.

Pay attention to theatre rentals. Has an unlikely person approached you about renting the theatre for the private showing of a new release? Theatre personnel may wish to keep a log of those who seek to rent out the theatre for their exclusive use.

Pre-Release Screening Security

The following is a list of practices that more specifically address advance screenings (such as premieres, events, film festivals, etc.) where extra security is required.

The distributor and exhibitor should always communicate prior to any advance screening to ensure the needs of both parties are being met.

1. Establish contact with the local police department prior to the screening to advise them of potential security concerns.
2. Post signs outside and inside the theatre advising, “Camcording is prohibited and will not be permitted inside the theatre,” and, where appropriate, “violators will be prosecuted.”
3. Place a statement on the screener ticket plainly stating that, “Camcording during the screening will not be permitted.” Distribute handouts to patrons advising the same.
4. Post signs outside theatre stating, “All bags will be searched prior to admission.” Then, with the assistance of appropriate personnel, search all patrons’ bags upon entry.
5. Ensure that all security personnel are alert to the presence of potential camcorders and monitor the projection booth for suspicious activity.
6. Employ the use of an infrared night vision scope to detect illegal camcording during the screening.
7. Take appropriate action as described on page 4 of this document if camcording is detected.

Guidelines for Private Security

At times, such as the opening weekend of a blockbuster, theatres should consider hiring private security to assist with these security measures. The following are suggested guidelines for the use of private security:

- Private security should first establish contact with the theatre manager.
- Private security is there to assist the management, not to take charge of security. Management must always decide what action should be taken if a camcord suspect is apprehended.
- Five minutes before start of show time, security should discreetly walk through the theatre and look at areas in the center of the hall.
- They should then walk through again at the beginning of the feature film.
- For further instruction, see page 4 of this document.

Print Security

Receipt of Print Materials:

- The theatre should transfer all print materials to a secure area in the projection booth as soon as possible after receipt. The projection booth door should be kept locked at all times and/or be restricted to code-entry or card-entry access.
- Projection booth employees should ensure that the seals on the outer print container are unbroken. If the seals are broken, the projection booth employees should immediately notify the theatre manager, who should in turn immediately notify the distributor's booking department.
- Projection booth employees should keep a print movement log, recording the exact location of each print material item during the period it is in the theatre's possession. Any changes in location should be recorded by the theatre employee responsible for print material security. The print movement log should include:
 - The film title (or code name)
 - The number of the print copy and the quantity of reels
 - The date and time of delivery
 - The scheduled screen number for the next play week
 - The location the print has been moved from and by whom
- If any print materials do not arrive within 24 hours of the agreed play date, the theatre employee responsible should inform the theatre manager, and the theatre manager should notify the distributor's booking department.

Securing and Protecting Print Materials:

- Projection booth doors should remain locked at all times, subject to fire regulations. Sets of keys should be kept to a minimum and held by authorized technical and management staff only.
- The booth doorway(s) should be protected by an intruder alarm system and/or closed circuit television (CCTV) cameras.
- Any CCTV cameras installed in the projection booth itself should not have a record facility and should not have a view of the theatre screen.
- Wherever possible, alarm systems should be able to identify electrical equipment in use, such as video cameras and video mobile phones.
- Only authorized employees should be permitted to physically relocate a print from one screen to another. The print movement log should be completed and signed when any print is moved.

- Wherever possible, print locking mechanisms should be available and used. Keys should be secured in the theatre manager's office at the end of each day.
- Each picture should be protected with a loose dust cover.
- Where prints are delivered on separate reels, they should be stored in locked cupboards with the first reel in a separate, locked cupboard in a different location (wherever possible, the theatre manager's office).
- Under no circumstances should print materials or any part of it be permitted to leave the theatre during the period of the booking.

Breaking Down and Returning Print Materials:

- All print materials should be returned and accounted for as soon as possible after the booking has ended.
- All publicity materials such as trailers, posters and standees for the films, should be returned or destroyed on site, depending on distributors' instructions, not copied, given away, sold or auctioned.
- Each print should be plated off and broken down into its individual reels. The leader and tail should be re-attached and the reels placed back in their individual cans and transit case. The outer case should be sealed, with tape overlapping the lid, and clearly labeled for transportation.
- Prints should be broken down within 24 hours of the last contracted performance. The print movement log should be updated and signed.
- Boxed up, sealed, and labeled prints should be transferred to the designated secure area to wait for collection.
- Under no circumstances should prints be handed over to persons without identification or the appropriate documentation.
- If any prints remain uncollected, projection booth employees should advise the theatre's bookers, who will notify distributor's booking department.
- After print materials have been collected, the theatre's print movement log should be completed, signed, and filed.

Contacts

Should you need further information or have any questions, please feel free to contact us.

Canadian Motion Picture Distributors
Association
7900 Taschereau Blvd
Suite C-210
Brossard Qc J4X 1C2
1-800-363-9166
www.cmpda.ca

