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LotGuard

Frequently Asked Questions About Vacant Property Security

Frequently Asked Questions About Vacant Property

Vacant properties are **3 to 5 times** more likely to be targeted by intruders than occupied buildings. Without regular foot traffic or oversight, they become easy targets for theft, vandalism, squatting, and other property crimes.

Property managers and owners understand the risks of empty buildings but may underestimate how quickly they escalate. A property between tenants or sitting idle can attract criminal activity within days. Without proper security, minor issues can quickly turn into costly damage and liability concerns.



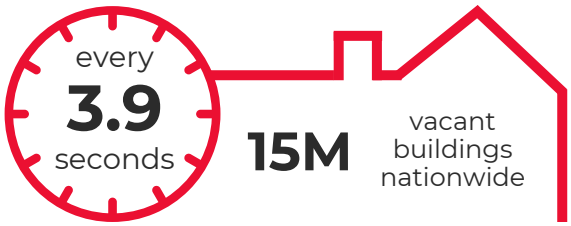
This article answers 10 frequently asked questions about vacant property security, covering monitoring options, insurance considerations, and best practices for protecting exterior areas like parking lots and loading zones. It also explores how modern surveillance solutions help maintain visibility across unoccupied sites.



Why is Surveillance Important for Vacant Properties in the US?

Vacant properties face a higher risk of crime, arson, and damage than occupied sites. Without regular on-site presence, there's little natural surveillance, making it easier for criminals to spot and exploit vulnerabilities.

In the U.S., a property crime occurs **every 3.9 seconds**, and with **over 15 million** vacant buildings nationwide, the level of exposure is significant.



Once targeted, vacant properties are more likely to be hit again, creating a costly cycle of damage, rising insurance claims, and longer vacancy periods.

Proactive surveillance helps break this cycle by **increasing visibility and deterrence**. Visible cameras and active monitoring signal that a property is protected, discouraging criminal activity before it starts.



What Are the Common Threats During Vacancy?

Vacant buildings are prime targets for both opportunistic and organized crime. Without consistent oversight, these empty sites have a distinct risk profile that differs from an inhabited property, giving criminals easy access without the risk of being caught.

The longer a property sits empty, the more vulnerable it is, signaling to offenders that the site is unmonitored.

Some of the most common threats include:













What Makes Vacant Properties More Vulnerable to Crime?

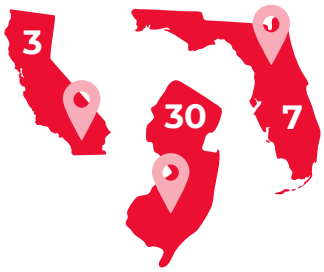
These factors drive higher crime rates at vacant properties in the US:

	Main Risk Factor	Examples
	**Visible signs of neglect**	Graffiti, boarded windows, uncollected mail, trash, overgrown lawns, and damage all signal a property isn't monitored.
	**Predictable vacancy periods**	If a site is regularly empty on weekends, after hours, or holidays, the risk of crime increases.
	**Limited natural surveillance**	Unlike occupied buildings, vacant sites lack deterrents and surveillance, making them easy targets with little risk of being caught.
	**Easy entry points**	Unsecured doors or windows, inviting squatters, thieves, and loiterers.

How Do I Legally Remove Squatters From a Vacant House in the US?

Squatters' rights (also known as adverse possession) exist in all 50 states of the US. These laws allow someone to claim ownership of a property they occupy without permission, but only if they meet certain requirements (e.g., pay property taxes) over a set number of years.

For instance, squatters can claim legal ownership of vacant property in as little as **3 years in California**, **7 years in Florida**, and **up to 30 years in states like Louisiana and New Jersey**. In most cases, however, property owners can't remove them by force and must follow the correct legal process to avoid liability.



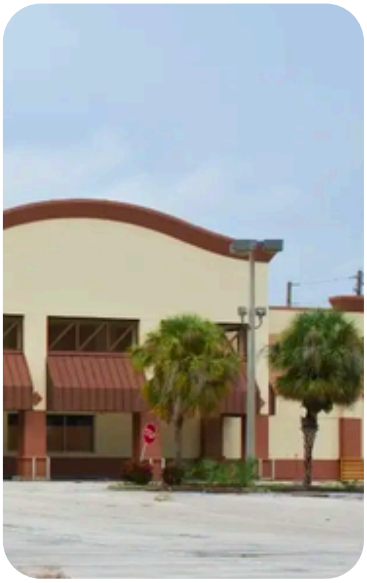
While the eviction process differs across the United States, it typically involves **serving a formal eviction notice through the courts.** In states like California, Florida, and Texas, owners may file a complaint and have sheriffs remove squatters within weeks.



Squatters can cause costly damage and serious risks, prevention is key. Regular inspections and visible surveillance deter occupancy and are far cheaper than legal action later.

How Often Should I Inspect Vacant Properties?

Vacant properties should be inspected **weekly**, as insurers often require documented checks and surveillance. Without them, issues like water damage, break-ins, and fire can go unnoticed, increasing repair costs.



Inspection frequency should match your site's risk profile. A vacant commercial property in a high-crime area warrants more checks than a rural site. To prove due diligence (should disputes arise), keep a paper trail of every inspection with date, condition, issues found, and actions taken.

For empty sites where routine inspections aren't practical, remote monitoring fills that gap. **Real-time alerts** and **24/7 recorded footage** give property owners visibility between visits and documentation of site conditions at all times.



Inspect weekly

Match frequency to risk profile

Keep record of every inspection

Stay covered with remote monitoring

Can I Claim for Property Damage on an Empty Building?

The short answer: **it depends on your policy and how long the property has been vacant.** Most standard commercial and homeowners insurance policies include a vacancy clause that limits or removes coverage once a property has been unoccupied for **over 30-60 consecutive days**. After that threshold, coverage for theft, fire, vandalism, and water damage is typically excluded or restricted.



20% **50%**

Vacant home insurance policies do exist, but they generally cost a lot more than standard coverage and have stricter rules. Should you file a claim, premiums may increase by **20-50%,** and some insurers may refuse coverage altogether, particularly after repeated incidents.



To reduce insurance complications and verify that reasonable precautions were taken to protect vacant property, **proactive security** (with live video monitoring) can strengthen your position with insurers.

How can Property Managers Improve Security at Vacant Sites?

Securing vacant property requires a layered approach, combining physical security and remote monitoring for stronger protection.



Regular inspections: Weekly visits help catch issues early, with routine upkeep like lawn cutting and hedge trimming recommended.



Physical barriers & access control: Fencing, reinforced doors/windows, and secured entry points deter unauthorized access.



Security guards: A physical presence deters crime, but limited coverage can leave blind spots.



Signage: “No Trespassing” or “Private Property” signs reinforce ownership and discourage entry.



Intrusion detection: Sensors, lighting, and alarms detect activity early and trigger alerts, helping prevent incidents.



Lighting: Well-lit, motion-activated areas reduce the risk of exterior and perimeter crime.



Smart surveillance: Solar-powered cameras with night vision enable continuous monitoring, while remote services verify threats and respond in real time.

Which Surveillance Systems Work Best for Vacant Properties?

The “right” surveillance system depends on your property’s size and layout. For most commercial sites, **mobile surveillance solutions** outperform fixed systems with fast deployment, flexibility, and no reliance on mains power.



LotGuard PRO

The **LotGuard PRO** is a 20ft tall solar-powered surveillance trailer with near-360° visibility and remote monitoring, ideal for wide-area coverage.



LotGuard MINI

The **LotGuard MINI** is a compact 4-camera unit designed for targeted monitoring of entry points and perimeters.



LPR Cameras

Add-on **License Plate Recognition (LPR) cameras** track vehicle activity, flag repeat visits, and provide timestamped records for law enforcement and insurance.

Cloud Platform

Our cloud platform connects all of the LotGuard systems, centralising footage, LPR data, and alerts for real-time remote visibility.

Does Mobile Surveillance Help Reduce Vacant Property Crime?

Mobile surveillance does help reduce crime at vacant properties. Visible security reduces opportunistic crime by changing the psychology of perceived risk for potential offenders. When a site has surveillance cameras and active monitoring, the risk of detection goes up, and most criminals move on elsewhere.

In fact, mobile surveillance units from LotGuard have shown crime reduction rates **of up to 87%**.



Always Awake. Always on Guard.



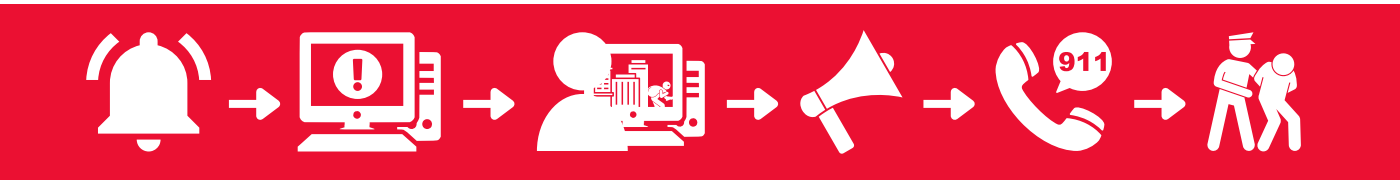


How can LotGuard's Mobile Surveillance Support Vacant Building Security?

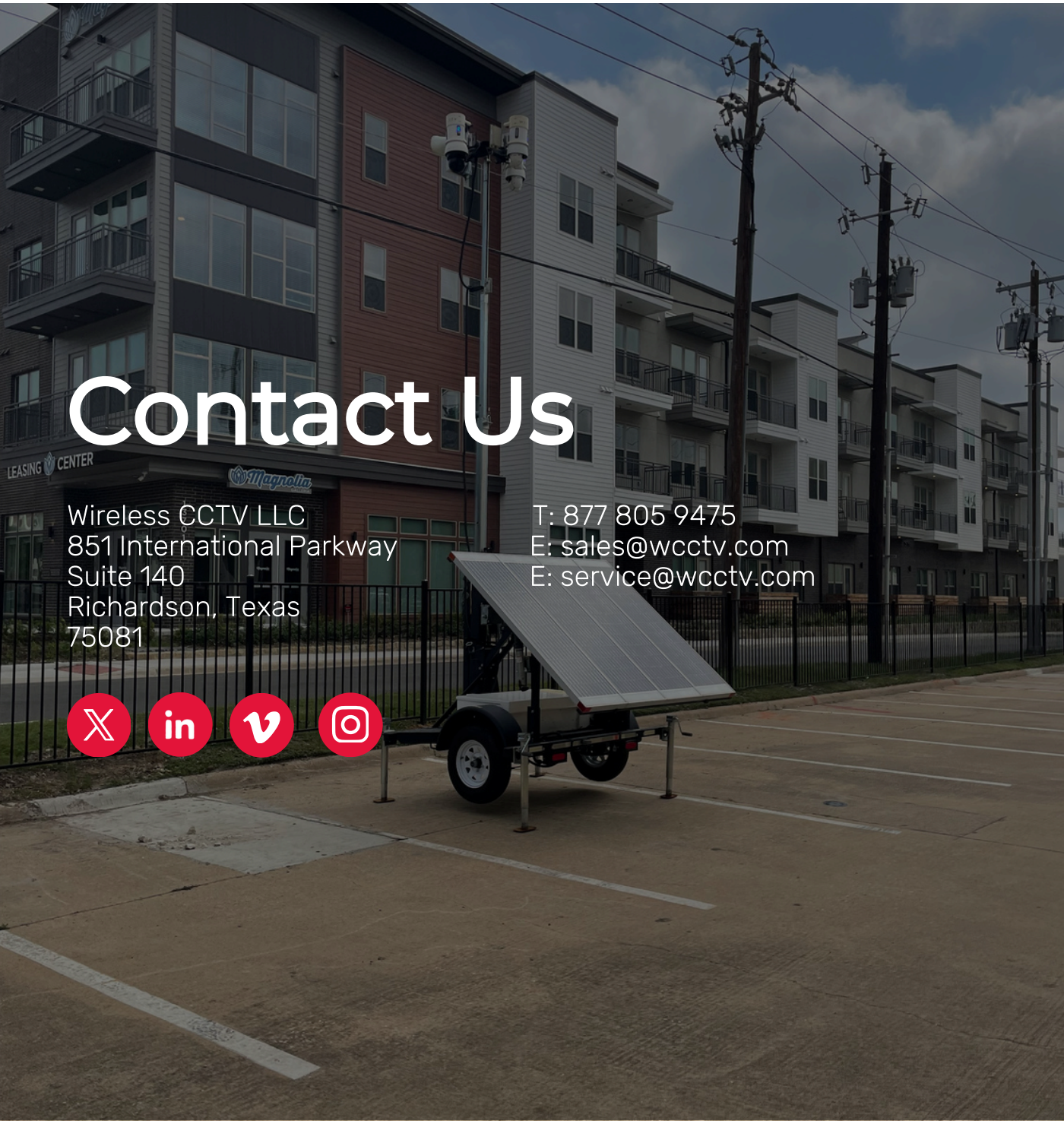
LotGuard's parking lot surveillance solutions are **specifically designed to address the security challenges of exterior spaces:** high-risk, often remote, with no fixed infrastructure.

LotGuard PRO is solar-powered with secure 4G/5G connectivity, no power or internet setup required. Deploy in minutes, even in remote locations. At up to 20 feet tall, PTZ cameras provide near-360° visibility with AI-driven detection of unauthorized activity.

When an alarm is triggered, alerts are sent directly to LotGuard's Interactive Surveillance Operations Centers (ISOCs), where trained operators verify incidents in real time and respond immediately activating lights, sirens, or contacting emergency services if needed.



LotGuard MINI extends coverage to tight spaces like alleyways and stairwells with 23X optical zoom and infrared night vision. Integrated LPR captures vehicle details, creating a reliable audit trail. With our cloud platform, manage all properties from one platform, access live feeds, review incidents, and generate reports instantly, without being onsite.



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