

Warehouse Security Playbook for 2026

A Practical Guide for Logistics, Warehousing, and Production Facilities

Security in warehouses, logistics facilities, and manufacturing environments in 2026 is about more than recording video. These facilities need systems that reduce shrinkage, improve safety, verify incidents fast, control access cleanly, and help teams respond in real time. The strongest programs combine video, AI, access control, remote guarding, and centralized management into one practical strategy.

This guide is written for leaders responsible for security and operations across warehouse environments, including operations managers, security directors, facility managers, and multi-site decision makers.

What this playbook covers

While this playbook focuses heavily on warehouse and [logistics environments](#), the same principles apply to [manufacturing](#) and [food production facilities](#), where inventory control, safety monitoring, restricted-area access, and multi-site visibility are equally critical.

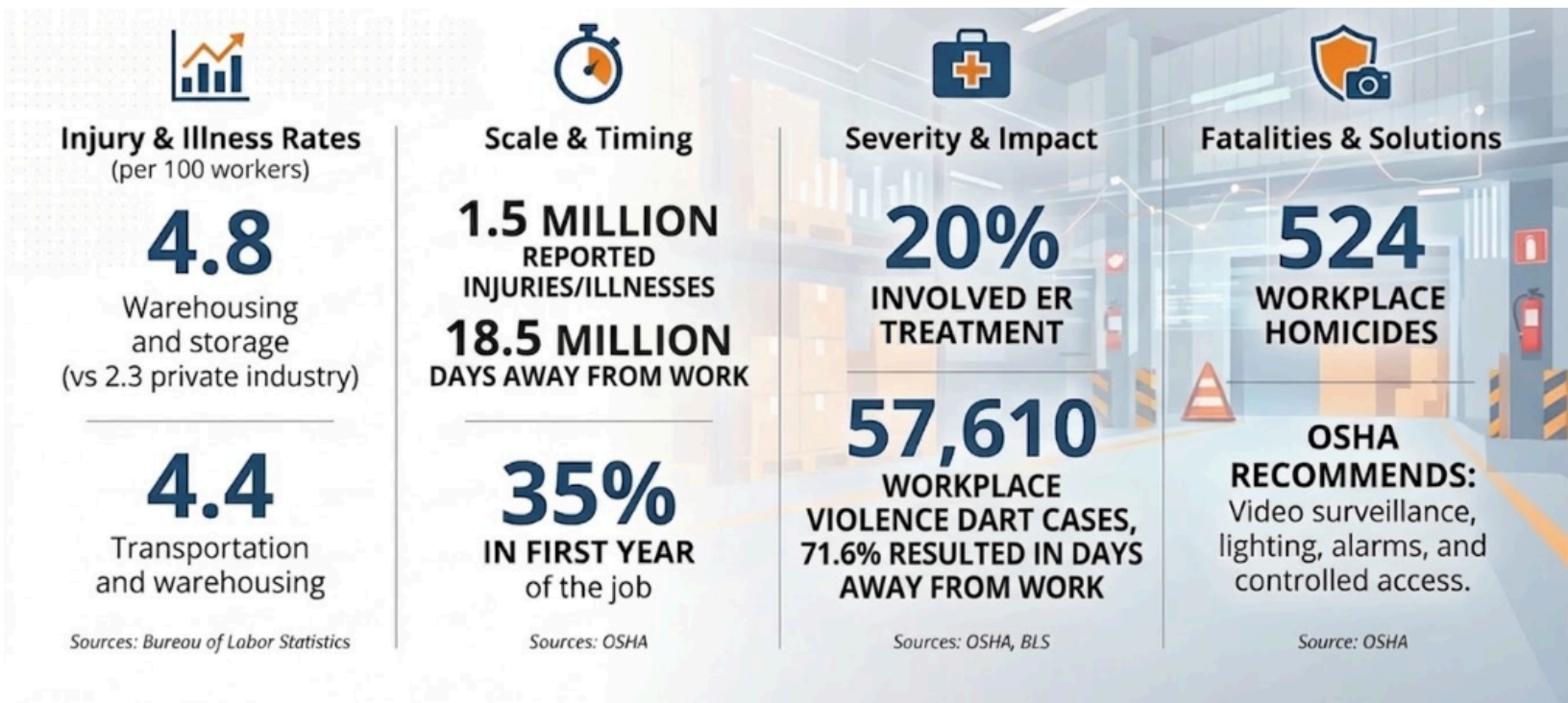
- Top warehouse security risks
- Coverage best practices
- AI and investigation tools
- Access control modernization
- Remote guarding
- Multi-site management

Use this playbook to spot weak points in your current setup and build a stronger security roadmap for 2026.

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Why this matters by the numbers



- Warehousing and storage recorded 4.8 injury/illness cases per 100 workers in 2024, versus 2.3 across private industry. [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#)
- Transportation and warehousing logged 4.4 cases per 100 workers in 2024, also well above the national private-industry average. [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#)
- OSHA's 2023 reporting captured more than **1.5 million injuries and illnesses, linked to 18.5 million lost-work days** and 22.4 million restricted-duty days. [OSHA Work-related injury & Illness Report](#)
- 35% of reported injuries happened in a worker's **first year on the job**. [OSHA Work-related injury & Illness Report](#)
- About **20% of OSHA cases involved ER treatment** [OSHA Work-related injury & Illness Report](#)
- BLS recorded 57,610 serious workplace violence cases in 2021–2022, and more than **7 in 10 led to lost work time**. [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#)
- There were 524 workplace homicides in 2022, and transportation/material-moving workers were among the occupational groups with the highest counts. [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#)
- **OSHA specifically recommends** video surveillance, lighting, alarms, and controlled access as workplace-violence safeguards. [OSHA Workplace Violence Fact Sheet](#)

Where Incidents Actually Happen: High-Risk Zones in Warehouse Operations

These zones often deserve extra planning attention:



Security planning should prioritize these areas before expanding coverage elsewhere.

- **Loading docks** - trailer swaps, inventory transfers, and disputes
- **Forklift routes** - vehicle-pedestrian conflict and safety incidents
- **Pick and pack stations** - inventory accuracy and shrinkage risk
- **Racking aisles** - product damage, falls, and investigation challenges
- **Restricted rooms and cages** - high-value inventory or controlled materials
- **Employee entrances** - credential misuse and tailgating
- **Gates and yard entries** - vehicle verification and after-hours access
- **Scale houses** - shipping verification and transaction disputes
- **Parking lots** - theft, vandalism, and worker safety

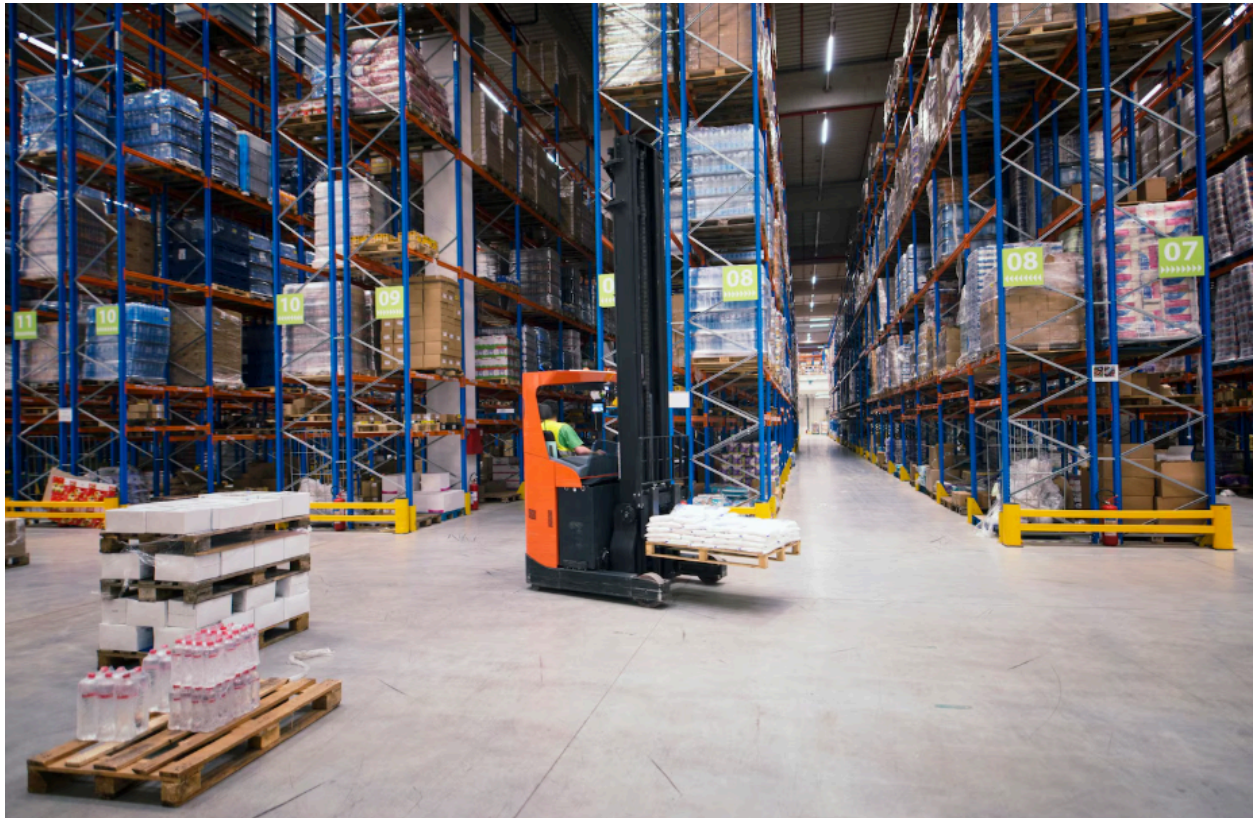
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- **Exterior storage areas** – low visibility and perimeter risk

Each zone carries a different mix of **shrinkage, safety, dispute, and access-control risks**, which is why coverage strategy should be tailored to how work actually flows through the facility.





Why Warehouse Security Needs a New Playbook in 2026

Most warehouses already have some security tools in place. Cameras, door controls, and basic monitoring systems are common. Yet many operations still struggle with the same issues: shrinkage, safety incidents, shipment disputes, perimeter risk, weak access control, and slow investigations.

The problem is rarely a complete lack of technology. More often, the system is incomplete, outdated, or difficult to use. Teams may have cameras but cannot locate footage quickly. They may have access control but poor credential management. They may cover the building interior while leaving docks, gates, yards, or parking areas exposed.

At the same time, warehouse environments have become more complex. Facilities now move more inventory, vehicles, and people than ever before, often across multiple sites and temporary workflows. Security no longer supports theft prevention alone. It now plays a role in safety monitoring, dispute resolution, compliance, operational continuity, and multi-site oversight.

Older security systems were designed primarily to **record events after the fact**. Modern warehouse operations require systems that help teams **detect, verify, and respond to incidents faster**.

The most effective programs use a layered approach that combines:

- Video coverage
- AI-assisted detection and search
- Access control
- Active response tools such as remote guarding
- Centralized management across locations

When these layers work together, security becomes more than surveillance. It becomes a system that improves protection, accountability, investigation speed, and operational efficiency.

This playbook explains how to build that kind of system for warehouse, logistics, and production environments in 2026.



The Top Security Concerns Facing Warehouses, Logistics, and Production Facilities

Most security projects in warehouses, logistics facilities, and manufacturing environments trace back to six recurring problems.

Most warehouse security projects trace back to six recurring problems.

1. Internal shrinkage

Loss from theft, mishandling, undocumented movement, or weak accountability.



2. Safety incidents and liability

Forklift traffic, loading docks, and racking zones create constant risk and liability.



3. Shipment and delivery disputes

Hard to verify what was loaded, when damage appeared, or who was present.



4. Break-ins, vandalism, and perimeter threats

Exterior threats like gates, yards, and parking lots remain serious, especially after hours.



5. Access control gaps and tailgating

Shared badges, weak visitor processes, and tailgating create real security gaps.



6. Multi-site visibility and management issues

A patchwork of local systems makes oversight harder and slows incident review.



1. Internal shrinkage

Loss is not always obvious. It may involve theft, mishandling, undocumented movement, or weak accountability at transfer points. Good coverage helps teams track what moved, who handled it, and where the process broke down.



2. Safety incidents and liability

Warehouses carry constant safety exposure. Forklift traffic, loading docks, pedestrian paths, and racking zones all create risk. Teams need clear footage to document what happened and how quickly they responded.

3. Shipment and delivery disputes

Many disputes come down to proof. Without clear dock footage, it is harder to verify what was loaded, when damage appeared, or who was present during handoff.

4. Break-ins, vandalism, and perimeter threats

Exterior threats remain serious, especially after hours. Gates, yards, parking lots, trailer areas, and outdoor storage all need attention.

5. Access control gaps and tailgating

Shared badges, stale credentials, weak visitor processes, and tailgating create real gaps. These problems often build slowly until the site no longer trusts its own access system.

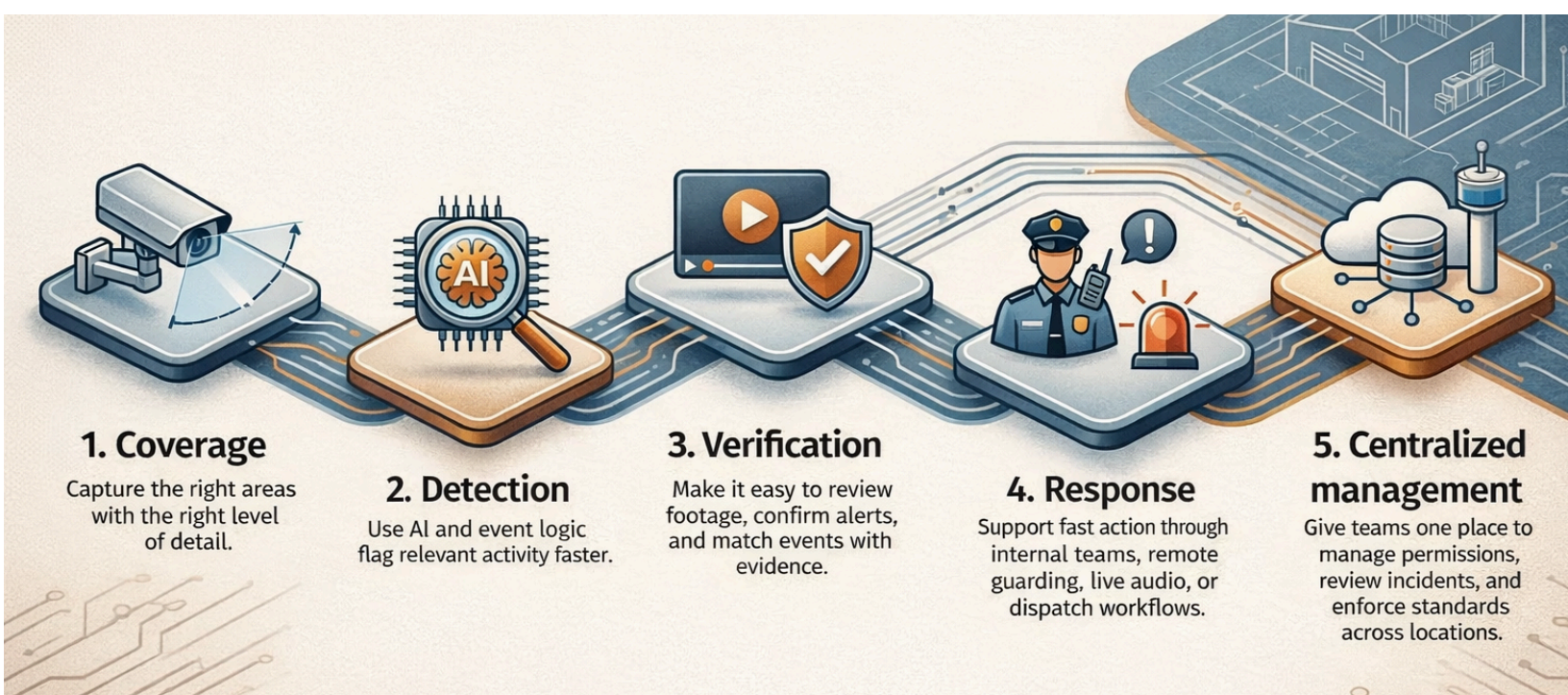
6. Multi-site visibility and management issues

Multi-site operators need consistent visibility and control. A patchwork of local systems makes oversight harder and slows incident review.

These risks call for more than isolated tools. They require a layered strategy.

The Layered Security Framework for Modern Warehouse Environments

A strong security program in warehouses, logistics facilities, and manufacturing environments is built in layers. Each layer solves a different operational problem. When combined, they create a system that helps teams detect issues earlier, verify events faster, and respond with confidence.



1. Coverage

Capture the right areas with the right level of visibility.

Coverage is the foundation of every warehouse security system. If the system does not capture the right locations clearly and consistently, every other security tool becomes less effective.

Coverage planning should focus on operational reality, not generic camera placement. That means ensuring visibility across:

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- the warehouse floor
 - loading docks
 - forklift routes
 - inventory transfer points
 - gates and yard areas
 - employee entrances
 - parking lots and exterior storage

Warehouse floors typically require **complete visibility**, while docks and transfer points often require **higher detail footage** to resolve shipment disputes, safety incidents, or inventory movement questions.

When coverage is designed well, investigations rarely hit dead ends.

2. Detection

Identify important events faster using AI and intelligent alerts.

Detection tools help teams identify relevant activity without manually reviewing hours of video.

Modern systems use AI to detect common security events such as:

- people entering restricted zones
- vehicles moving through specific areas
- after-hours activity
- loitering or unusual motion patterns

Detection can also support operational safety monitoring, such as identifying slips, falls, or PPE compliance issues in defined zones.

The goal is not to replace human judgment. The goal is to **surface important events quickly so teams can respond faster**.

3. Verification

Confirm what actually happened without wasting time.



Once an alert occurs or an incident is reported, teams need to confirm the situation quickly. Verification tools allow security teams, operations managers, or supervisors to locate and review relevant footage without manually searching through hours of recordings.

Strong verification capabilities include:

- fast video search tools
- event-based filtering
- linking access events to video footage
- exporting clips for internal review or external reporting

This layer is especially important for warehouses where disputes, accidents, or inventory questions require **clear evidence and fast answers**.

The easier it is to verify events, the faster teams can resolve incidents and move forward.

4. Response

Take action quickly when security events occur.

Detection and verification help teams understand what is happening. The response layer determines **how quickly action can be taken**.

Response options may include:

- internal team notifications
- remote guarding intervention
- live audio warnings
- dispatching on-site security
- contacting local authorities

For many warehouses, remote guarding adds a valuable layer of proactive response. When suspicious activity is detected after hours, a live operator can review the situation and intervene immediately.

Fast response can stop theft, deter trespassing, and prevent small incidents from becoming larger problems.



5. Centralized management

Maintain visibility and control across one site or many.

As organizations grow, security systems must scale with them. Centralized management allows teams to manage security across [multiple locations from a single platform](#).

This enables teams to:

- manage user permissions
- review incidents from any site
- standardize security policies
- share footage with leadership or investigators
- revoke access quickly when roles change

For companies operating multiple warehouses, distribution centers, or production facilities, centralized oversight is critical for maintaining consistent security standards.

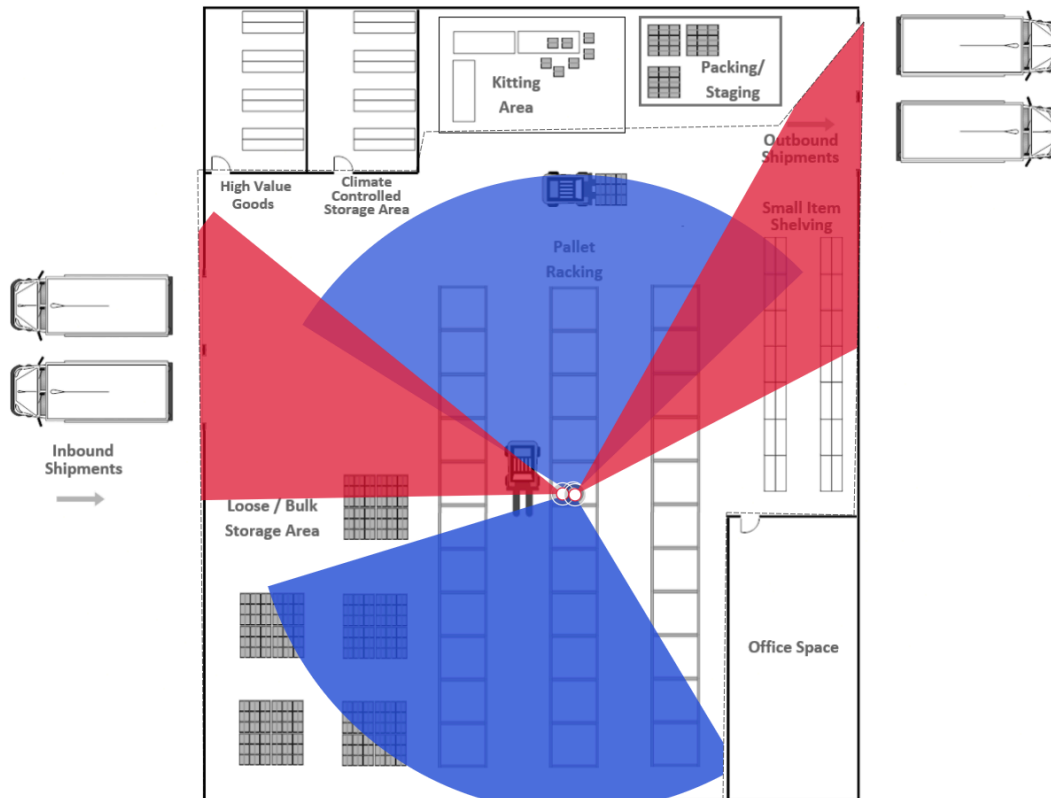
Together, these layers create a complete security strategy.

- Video provides visibility.
- AI improves detection and usability.
- Access control strengthens accountability.
- Remote guarding adds active response.
- Centralized management allows the system to scale across sites.

When designed together, these layers transform warehouse security from passive recording into an operational tool that supports safety, accountability, and faster decision-making.

Video Coverage Best Practices for Warehouses

Coverage quality matters more than camera count. The goal is to capture the right scenes in a way that supports proof, safety, and investigation.



1. Why 100% warehouse floor coverage matters

Warehouse floors should have no meaningful blind spots. Teams need to follow activity across the operational space without losing the story halfway through.

No gaps means fewer investigation dead ends.



2. Why loading docks need higher-detail coverage

Docks need more than general overview footage. They often need higher-detail views to verify loading activity, confirm handoffs, review damage claims, and document safety incidents.

At loading docks, detail matters as much as coverage.



3. How to approach perimeter and yard surveillance

Focus on the areas where intrusion, theft, or damage are most likely:

- Gates
- Dock exteriors
- Scale houses
- Trailer areas
- Truck routes
- Parking lots
- Exterior storage

4. How to identify your facility's high-risk zones

Start with workflow and risk, not templates. Ask:

- Where do incidents happen most often?
- Where does inventory change hands?
- Where are disputes most likely?
- Which areas create the highest safety exposure?
- Where would unauthorized access cause the most damage?

Map those answers before placing cameras.

How to Expand Coverage Without Inflating Cost

Better coverage does not always mean a much larger project. In many warehouses, smarter device selection improves visibility without unnecessary infrastructure cost.

1. Multi-sensor cameras

[Multi-sensor cameras](#) can cover multiple directions from one device. That can reduce separate mounts, cable runs, switch ports, and IP assignments while still improving visibility.



2. Fisheye and wide-coverage options

Wide-coverage devices can help fill blind spots in open areas, intersections, entrances, and shared work zones.



3. Retrofit opportunities for existing facilities

Existing sites can often improve coverage by replacing older cameras with broader-coverage options rather than redesigning the whole system.

Coverage efficiency without sacrificing accountability

The goal is smarter deployment, not cutting corners.

Safety, PPE, and Incident Documentation

Security systems in warehouses, logistics facilities, and manufacturing environments should support safety as well as loss prevention.



1. Why safety belongs in the security conversation

The same system that helps investigate theft can also document accidents, support faster response, and improve training.

2. Common warehouse incident types

The most common incident categories include:

- Forklift collisions or near misses
- Slips, trips, and falls
- Struck-by-object incidents
- Loading dock accidents

- Pedestrian and equipment conflicts

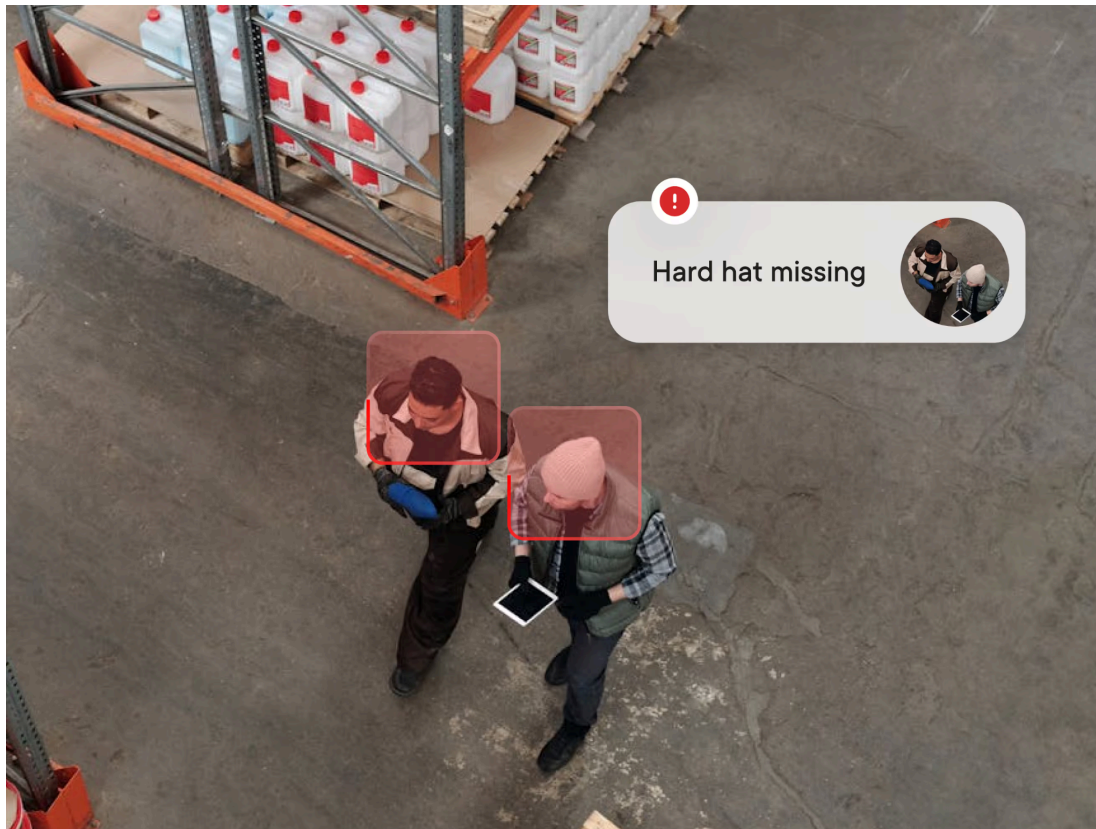
3. Why faster response matters

Teams need to verify incidents quickly so they can protect the injured person, secure the area, and build an accurate record.

Security footage can help answer three questions after an incident: what happened, when it happened, and how quickly teams responded.

4. PPE compliance monitoring

AI-assisted tools may help identify PPE noncompliance or defined safety events. Used well, they support coaching, documentation, and awareness.



This should feel like a safety support tool, not a punishment tool.

AI-Powered Video for Faster Detection and Investigation

AI adds value when it helps teams find footage faster and respond sooner.

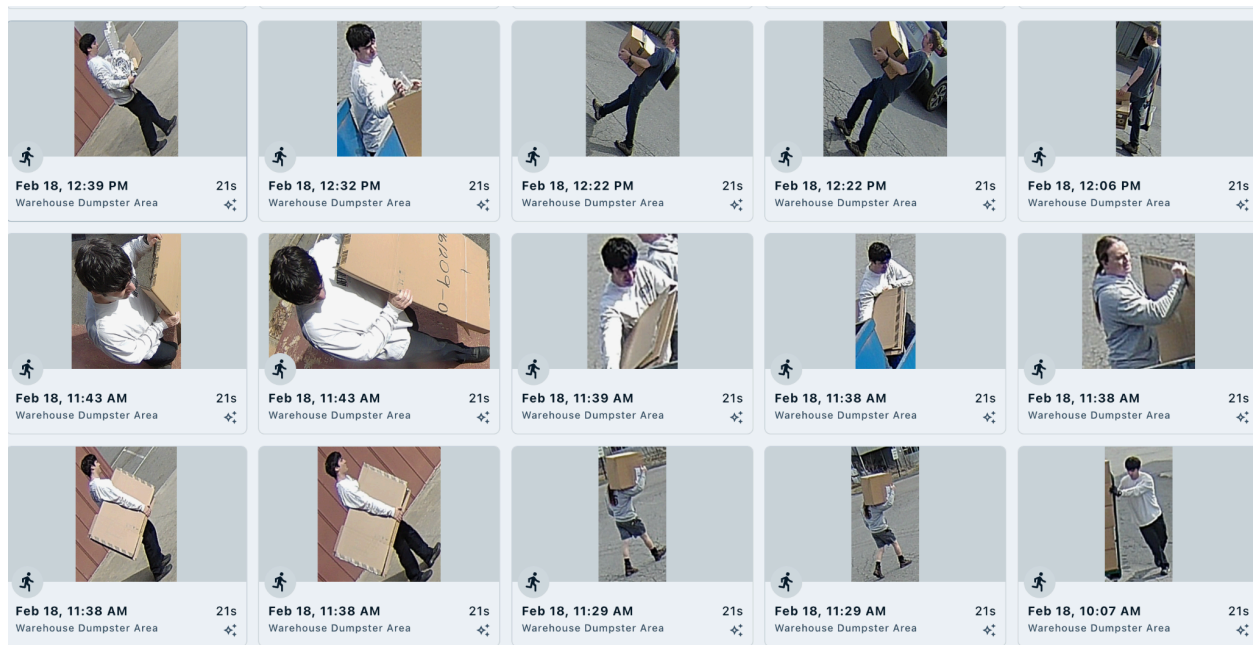
1. Baseline AI: people and vehicle detection

Baseline [AI improves searchability](#) by helping teams filter footage based on relevant activity.

2. Advanced search and incident retrieval

Natural language or attribute-based search can cut investigation time. Instead of reviewing hours of clips, teams can search for defined activity such as a person holding a box or a vehicle entering a zone.

Finding footage should not feel like finding a needle in a haystack.

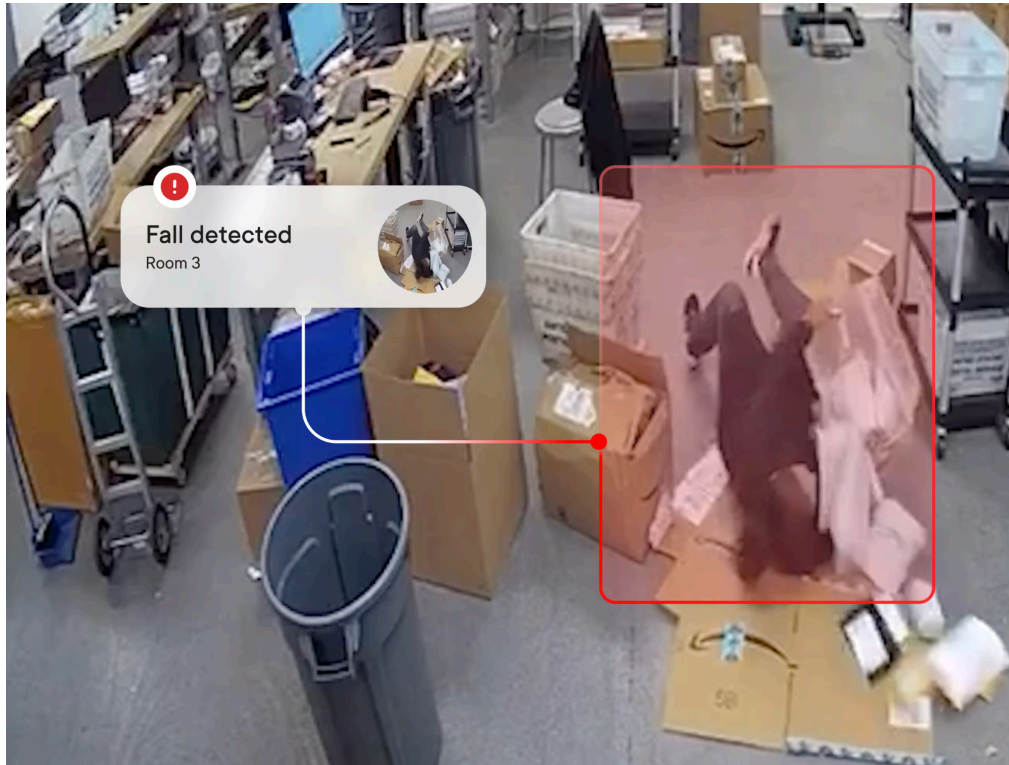


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3. Safety alerts and event detection

More advanced AI may support alerts tied to slips and falls, PPE noncompliance, loitering, or perimeter activity.



4. Emergency threat detection

Some platforms also support custom workflows for high-risk threats. These should be deployed based on actual site needs, response planning, and cost.

5. Understanding AI and cost

Not all AI is included by default. Some features require added software layers or recurring fees. Evaluate AI based on where your team loses time today: search, review, verification, or response.

The right AI reduces review time and increases accountability.

Retention, Redundancy, and Retrieval

Recording footage is not enough. The system must keep it long enough, protect it from failure, and make it easy to retrieve.

Many warehouses do not know their true retention window. They may discover an incident too late and find that the footage is already gone.



Redundancy matters for the same reason. A storage failure can erase critical evidence.

Retrieval matters too. A site may technically have the footage and still lose time because it is hard to search, export, or share.

Usable footage depends on three things: coverage, retention, and the ability to find it quickly.

Remote Guarding as an Active Deterrence Layer

FASTER, INFORMED, REAL-TIME RESPONSE



DETECT

AI enhanced cameras detect people and vehicles in the area.



ANALYZE

Professional, US based remote guards monitor activity and determine if it's a security threat.



RESPOND

Remote guards respond in a way that fits your unique security challenges.

- Dispatching Police - Live talk down warnings via loud speaker.
- Dispatching on premise guards - all of the above and more.



Remote guarding turns camera detection into live response.

1. What remote guarding is

[Remote guarding](#) uses video feeds and defined alert logic to send suspicious activity to trained operators for review.



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2. How the detect-analyze-respond process works

The model is simple: detect, analyze, respond. A system flags activity. A live operator reviews it. If needed, the operator issues a live audio warning, dispatches local guards, or contacts police.



3. Best-fit warehouse use cases

Remote guarding is often a strong fit for:

- Perimeter breaches
- Yard trespassing
- After-hours activity
- Exterior asset protection
- Trailer areas
- Parking lots



4. Why proactive response matters

The advantage is deterrence. A fast live response can stop unauthorized behavior before it becomes a loss.

For many organizations, the decision between remote guarding and traditional on-site guards also comes down to cost and coverage hours. Remote guarding often allows facilities to monitor large exterior areas overnight or after hours without the expense of full-time guard staffing.

To estimate how the two approaches compare, SCW provides a simple tool that helps facilities evaluate the potential cost difference between remote guarding and on-site guards. You can explore the comparison here:

<https://www.getscw.com/remote-guarding-vs-on-site-guard-cost-calculator>

Running the numbers often helps security leaders determine where remote guarding can extend protection while keeping budgets under control.

5. Customizing the service

Different sites have different schedules, risk windows, and escalation needs. Remote guarding should be tailored to the facility.

Remote guarding helps convert passive video into active intervention.

Access Control for Warehouse Operations



[Access control](#) should improve order and accountability. In many warehouses, it becomes messy over time.

1. Signs your access control system is falling behind

Common warning signs include:

- Stale credentials
- Shared badges
- Weak visibility into events
- Poor admin usability
- Slow verification after incidents

2. Common warehouse access risks

Recurring risks include tailgating, borrowed badges, weak contractor processes, and poor control over restricted areas.

3. When modernization makes sense

Modernization makes sense when the system no longer supports clean administration, reliable verification, or policy control.

4. Reusing existing hardware where possible

Many access upgrades do not require a total rip-and-replace. Existing locks and door hardware can often stay while the backend and credential model improve.

The goal is better control with less friction.

Encrypted Credentials and the New Access Security Reality



Credential security deserves more attention than many warehouses give it.

Some access systems still rely on older credential formats that are easier to copy or misuse. As cloning tools have become more visible, this risk has become harder to ignore.



Encrypted credentials are becoming standard for serious facilities. That applies whether the credential is a card, fob, or smartphone-based identity.

A modern access control system is only as strong as the credentials it relies on.

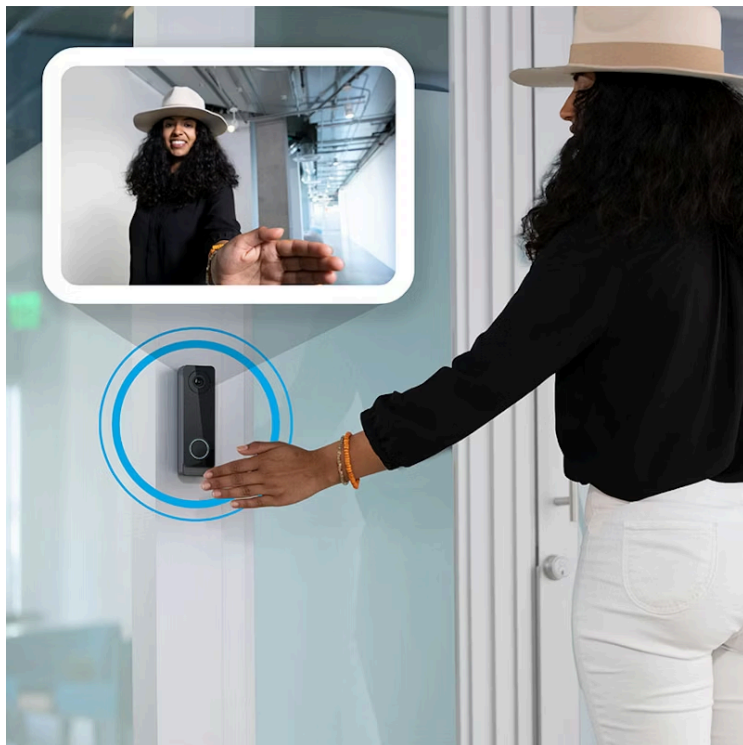
When evaluating an upgrade, review three pieces together:

- Credential format
- [Reader technology](#)
- Backend platform

Ask:

- Are our credentials encrypted?
- Can they be copied with common tools?
- Are our readers aligned with a more secure path forward?
- Is credential management auditable and easy to control?

Bringing Video and Access Control Together



Separate systems slow investigations.

When access control and video live in different platforms, teams have to check a badge event in one place and search for the matching footage in another. That wastes time.

Integrated workflows speed up verification. When a door event links directly to video, the team can confirm what happened faster.

When access events and video live together, verification becomes faster and more reliable.

The benefits are direct:

- Faster incident review
- Less time switching systems
- Better evidence gathering
- Cleaner accountability for doors and credentials

A simple test: how long does it take your team to verify a badge event today?

Truck, Gate, and Driver Access Control



Warehouse access control should start at the gate, not just the building.

1. Access control beyond the building

Truck entry, contractor arrival, and yard access affect both security and throughput.

2. Driver and contractor workflows

Drivers, visitors, and contractors often need temporary or time-based access. Good systems support these workflows without manual workarounds.



3. Gate automation and license plate recognition

Gate automation and license plate recognition can help higher-volume sites reduce backups while keeping entry auditable.

4. Reducing backups without losing control

The goal is to keep legitimate traffic moving while preserving visibility into who entered, when, and under what authorization.

Ask:

- Where do trucks back up today?
- Which steps are still manual?
- How are temporary drivers handled?
- Would automation improve both speed and control?



Centralized Management for Multi-Site Operations

Multi-site security becomes difficult when warehouses, logistics facilities, and manufacturing sites follow different technology paths.

Centralized management gives operators one way to manage permissions, review incidents, share evidence, and enforce standards across sites.

Multi-site security is only manageable when visibility and permissions are centralized.

The benefits include:

- More consistent standards
- Lower admin burden
- Faster off-site incident review
- Better permission control
- Stronger regional oversight

For multi-location organizations, centralized management is not optional. It is how security scales.

Security Program Self-Assessment: Questions Before You Upgrade

Before investing in new cameras, AI tools, or access systems, security and operations leaders should step back and evaluate how their current environment performs.

These questions often reveal the biggest operational gaps.

Incident impact

- What incidents cost us the most time or money?
- Which events disrupt operations the most?

Investigation efficiency

- Which areas are hardest to investigate?

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- 
- How easy is it to locate footage today?
 - How long do we actually retain video?

Access and perimeter control

- Which entrances or gates create the most uncertainty?
- Are our credentials encrypted and centrally managed?

Operational coverage

- Where would remote guarding reduce risk the most?
- Do our current systems work across multiple facilities?

Strategic planning

- What should we fix first?
- Are we designing security around real workflows or legacy limitations?

How to Build the Right Warehouse Security Program

The best warehouse security programs start with priorities, not products.

1. Start with the biggest risks

Identify the issues that create the most loss, delay, liability, or uncertainty.

2. Prioritize the most important zones

Map the areas that matter most: warehouse floor, docks, gates, restricted rooms, parking lots, and trailer areas.

3. Decide what needs to be phased

Not every site should do everything at once. A phased roadmap still works if it addresses the biggest blind spots first.



4. Balance outcomes, infrastructure, and budget

Good planning improves security without forcing unnecessary replacement.

5. Work with a partner who can tailor the solution

No two warehouses have the same workflow, risk profile, or building history. The right plan should reflect that.

Warehouse Security Planning Checklist

Coverage and visibility

- ☐ Full warehouse floor visibility
- ☐ Dock overview and detail coverage
- ☐ Yard, gate, parking, and trailer coverage
- ☐ High-risk zone mapping

Retention and resilience

- ☐ Verified retention window
- ☐ Storage sized for real conditions
- ☐ Redundancy where needed
- ☐ Fast export and sharing workflow

Access control

- ☐ Old credentials removed promptly
- ☐ Encrypted credentials in use
- ☐ Clean visitor and contractor process
- ☐ Clear restricted-area rules

Response and monitoring

- ☐ Meaningful after-hours monitoring

- 
- 
- ☐ Remote guarding fit assessment
 - ☐ Fast alert verification
 - ☐ Clear escalation paths

Multi-site oversight

- ☐ Centralized permissions
- ☐ Cross-site incident review
- ☐ Consistent security standards

SCW's Approach to Warehouse Security

SCW approaches warehouse security as a complete system, not a collection of disconnected products.

SCW supports end-to-end planning across video surveillance, access control, remote guarding, and system design. That includes consultation, floor plan mapping, coverage strategy, and recommendations aligned with the facility's workflows, risks, and budget.

Organizations can work with SCW through either turnkey installation or self-install models, supported by NDAA-compliant commercial-grade systems and U.S.-based expert support.



Why SCW Works Well for Warehouse and Industrial Environments

Warehouse, logistics, and production facilities require security systems that support more than basic monitoring. They must enable faster investigations, safety documentation, controlled access, and consistent visibility across multiple sites.

SCW has extensive experience supporting corporate and industrial environments where security systems must operate reliably in demanding conditions.

More than 33% of Fortune 100 companies use SCW products, reflecting our ability to support organizations that need dependable systems, responsive support, and scalable security infrastructure.



Boise Cascade



woodgrain



FLEX
LOGISTICS



Tyson



PEPSICO



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SCW helps facilities navigate the full process:

- identifying operational risks
- mapping camera coverage
- modernizing access control
- improving visibility across facilities
- building and installing a system that supports future growth

From planning and design to deployment and ongoing support, SCW helps warehouses implement security systems that work in real operational environments.

Warehouse security in 2026 requires more than isolated tools. Facilities need integrated systems that improve visibility, speed investigations, strengthen accountability, and support safer operations across one site or many.

The next step is to evaluate your current environment, identify the highest-risk zones, and build a security roadmap that fits your facility.

Ready to evaluate your warehouse security strategy for 2026?

Connect with SCW for a tailored review of your facility, workflows, and risk priorities.

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