



● IP CAMERA

Axis 225FD

PRICE £699 exc VAT

WARRANTY 1yr RTB

SUPPLIER Axis Communications 0870 162 0047

INTERNET www.axis.com

VERDICT A tough customer that looks strong enough to handle the rigours of exterior network video surveillance, with top image quality plus a wide range of useful alerting and alarm functions.

Axis Communications has traditionally offered one of the most comprehensive ranges of network cameras on the market, but primarily aimed at indoor use. Some of its products can function outdoors but need an additional housing; the latest 225FD, however, is designed specifically for exterior operation. It's built to handle harsh environments. The weatherproof and vandal-resistant housing is an all-metal construction and the camera is protected inside a glass dome. Come rain or shine, summer or winter, it can handle inclement weather, as the housing has a built-in heater and fan, and all housing components are sealed with rubber gaskets.

Camera setup is more tricky, as you'll first need to unscrew the three tamper-resistant Torx screws and remove the dome section of the camera body. The 225FD does support pan, tilt and zoom functions, but bear in mind these are all manual adjustments that must made to the lens and carrier when the camera is in situ. A number of power scenarios are possible and will be determined by the camera's location. It's 802.3af PoE compliant and you get an external power supply, but neither method will power the internal heater. For year-round use, you'll need Axis' optional outdoor-rated supply for this component to function.

The camera can be mounted directly to a wall or ceiling using the supplied template and screws, and all cabling is fed through a hole in the back where it can't be tampered with. There's also an internal connector block, which supports two inputs and one output. This can be used for monitoring doorbells or doors being opened and for triggering an alarm. Network installation is swift: the bundled IP Installer utility searches the network for Axis devices and allows you to change the default IP address and directly access the browser interface.

As we've come to expect from Axis' cameras, their image quality is always a standard setter. The 225FD is no exception, with its live view sharp and clear with very good colour balance in daylight and normal lighting conditions. It works fairly well in low light levels, as it will drop to a mono image at levels below 1 lux. It had no problems with fluorescent lighting, such as that in an underground car park, although we found the image grainy under typical sodium streetlights.



The 225FD has a built-in heater to ensure it remains operational even at very low temperatures.

The camera supports 20 simultaneous users in Motion-JPEG mode and unlimited users with MPEG4, although note that the maximum frame for the latter is only available at resolutions of 480 x 360 or lower. Bandwidth consumption can be reduced by increasing the image compression, reducing resolutions and limiting the frame rate available to multiple clients. For motion detection, you can specify ten areas in the image where it's to be enabled or disabled. Motion triggers can be used to download images to an FTP or HTTP server and then email them to multiple recipients. A trigger event can also be used to warn if the temperature drops outside its operating limits.

With its solid exterior, the 225FD is a top candidate for outdoor video surveillance in inclement conditions. Picture quality is very good over a wide range of lighting scenarios and it complements this with plenty of useful features.

DAVE MITCHELL

PC PRO RATINGS

PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
FEATURES & DESIGN	★★★★★
VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★★★
OVERALL	★★★★★

SPECIFICATIONS 1/4in Sony Wfine progressive scan RGB CCD; max resolution 640 x 480 pixels; max 30fps; 10/100BaseTX Ethernet; 32MB RAM; 8MB flash; Motion-JPEG and MPEG4 compression; supports 802.3af PoE, TCP/IP, HTTP, HTTPS, SMTP, FTP; external power supply (doesn't power heater); Axis IP Installer software bundled; one MPEG4 decoder/encoder licence included.