

TECHNOLOGY · 14 PAGES

QR Entry vs Video Intercom — Which One Does Your Building Need?

A practical decision framework for property managers choosing between QR-first, video-first, or hybrid entry. Includes a property-type matrix and an entry volume calculator.

14 pages · Includes fillable calculator · PDF

Why This Decision Matters More Than It Looks

Most property managers approach access control as a single decision: pick QR, or pick video intercom, and deploy it everywhere. That instinct is understandable — it's simpler to buy, simpler to explain to a board, and simpler to install. It's also usually the wrong call.

QR entry and video intercom are not competing products solving the same problem. They're two different tools built for two different jobs: QR entry optimizes for speed and cost at high-frequency, lower-verification points; video intercom optimizes for verification and control at the points where seeing who's asking to enter genuinely matters. Most properties have both types of entry points, which means most properties get the best outcome from a deliberate mix, not a single blanket choice.

WHAT THIS FRAMEWORK GIVES YOU

A structured way to decide, point by point, which approach fits — based on traffic volume, verification requirements, property type, and budget. By the end, you'll have a specific recommendation for every entrance on your property, not just a general preference.

This guide works alongside our broader Property Manager's Guide to Modern Access Control and our RFP Template — use this one specifically when you're deciding what to actually specify at each entry point before you talk to vendors.

The Three Approaches

1

QR-First

Every entry point uses a printed QR plaque and a time-limited code sent to visitors by text or email. No panel or wiring required at most points. Optimized for speed, low cost, and minimal hardware footprint. Best where verification-by-sight isn't a priority.

2

Video-First

Every entry point uses a video intercom panel, requiring a resident or guard to see and speak with a visitor before granting access. Optimized for verification and control. Higher hardware and installation cost, and slower per-entry, but the right choice where every entry needs a face check.

3

Hybrid

Video intercom at the primary entrance or lobby, QR entry at every secondary gate, visitor lane, and low-traffic pedestrian point. This is the approach most multi-gate properties land on, because it applies each technology where its strengths actually matter.

The rest of this guide walks through how to decide which approach — or combination — fits your specific property, point by point.

Factor 1: Traffic Volume · Factor 2: Verification Requirements

Factor 1 — Entry Traffic Volume

The more visitors and deliveries pass through a given point each day, the more a slow, high-friction verification process costs you in complaints, guard time, and bottlenecks. High-traffic points favor QR entry for speed; low-traffic points can absorb the extra step of a video call without creating a backlog.

Factor 2 — Verification Requirements

Ask a direct question for each entry point: if someone we didn't expect showed up here, how much would we want to see their face and confirm who they are before letting them in? A primary lobby or a gate with a history of solicitation or unauthorized entry attempts scores high here. A side gate used mostly by residents on foot, or a delivery lane, usually scores low.

HOW THESE TWO FACTORS INTERACT

High traffic and high verification need at the same point is the hardest combination — it's also the exact profile of a primary lobby or main vehicle gate, which is why video intercom is worth its cost specifically there, even though it's slower per entry.

Factor 3: Property Type · Factor 4: Budget & Infrastructure

Factor 3 — Property Type and Layout

A single-entrance mid-rise has an entirely different profile than a gated community with five vehicle gates and a dozen pedestrian paths. The more entry points a property has, the more a QR-first or hybrid approach starts winning on cost — video intercom hardware and wiring at every point on a five-gate property adds up fast.

Factor 4 — Budget and Existing Infrastructure

If your property has existing wiring in good condition at a primary entrance, keeping or upgrading video intercom there is usually cost-effective. If secondary points have no existing wiring, QR entry avoids a costly new-installation project entirely. Budget doesn't just mean "how much can we spend" — it also means "what do we already have that we shouldn't throw away."

A QUICK GUT CHECK

If you're already leaning toward "QR everywhere" or "video everywhere" before reading the property-type matrix on the next page, pause. Almost no property is actually best served by a single answer applied uniformly to every entry point.

Recommended Approach by Property Type

Property Type	Recommended Approach
Gated community, multiple vehicle gates	Hybrid — video at main gate, QR at secondary gates
Single-entrance mid-rise apartment	Video-first — one point, verification matters most
High-rise multifamily with lobby + garage	Hybrid — video at lobby, QR at garage / secondary doors
Garden-style / townhome community	QR-first — many low-traffic pedestrian points
Commercial or mixed-use building	Hybrid — video at tenant/public entrance, QR at loading and service points
Student housing	Hybrid — video at building entrance, QR for high-frequency guest traffic
Age-restricted / active adult community	Video-first — higher verification comfort priority for residents
Single-entrance boutique building	Video-first, or QR if budget-constrained and traffic is low

Use this table as a starting point, then confirm each point against the traffic and verification factors on the previous pages — property type sets the default, but your specific entry points can override it.

Methodology — How the Calculator Works

For any entry point where the right approach isn't obvious from the matrix alone, this calculator gives you a volume-based recommendation. Run it once per entry point.

Step 1 — Estimate Daily Traffic

Count average visitors (guests, contractors, service providers) and deliveries passing through this specific point per day. If you don't have exact data, a guard log, package room count, or even a one-week manual tally will get you close enough.

Step 2 — Apply the Volume Thresholds

Daily Traffic at This Point	Volume-Based Recommendation
Under 15 entries/day	QR entry is sufficient
15–40 entries/day	QR entry, with video intercom as an optional backup
40+ entries/day	Video intercom recommended to manage verification bandwidth

Step 3 — Apply the Security Override

If this point scored high on Factor 2 (verification requirements) on page 4, use video intercom regardless of volume. Security requirements override traffic volume — a low-traffic primary entrance with high verification needs still calls for video intercom.

Fillable Worksheet — Run This for Each Entry Point

Entry point name / location: _____

Average visitors per day: _____

Average deliveries per day: _____

Total Daily Traffic = visitors + deliveries = _____

Does this point require face verification before entry (Factor 2)? YES / NO

If YES → recommendation is **Video Intercom**, regardless of traffic volume.

If NO → apply the volume thresholds from page 7 to your Total Daily Traffic figure above.

Entry Point	Daily Traffic	Verification Required?	Recommended Approach

Repeat this table for every gate, door, or entry point on your property before requesting vendor quotes — this becomes your scope of work reference for Section 3 of the RFP Template.

The Hybrid Blueprint

Once your worksheet from page 8 is complete, most multi-gate properties end up with a mix — video intercom at one or two points, QR at the rest. Here's how to deploy that combination cleanly.

- ✓ **Put video intercom where verification matters most.** Typically the primary vehicle gate or lobby — the point every resident and most visitors pass through, and where a guard or resident genuinely benefits from seeing who's asking to enter.
- ✓ **Deploy QR everywhere else.** Secondary gates, pedestrian side doors, and delivery lanes get a printed plaque and a time-limited code — no panel, no wiring, minimal hardware cost.
- ✓ **Manage both from one dashboard.** Confirm with any vendor that QR and video intercom credentials are managed from the same cloud platform — a resident's access should work the same way whether they're approaching the main gate or a side door.
- ✓ **Keep credential issuance consistent.** Whether a resident invites a guest through the video-covered main gate or a QR-covered side gate, the process for generating that guest's access should feel identical to them.
- ✓ **Revisit annually.** Traffic patterns shift — a side gate that gets a new sublease's worth of daily visitors may cross the threshold that justifies adding video intercom later.

Cost Comparison by Approach

Cost Factor	QR-First	Video-First	Hybrid
Hardware per secondary point	Printed plaque only	Full intercom panel	Plaque at secondary points
Wiring requirement	None, in most cases	Required at every point	Only at the video point(s)
Installation speed	Fast, minimal disruption	Slower, more disruptive	Fast overall, one focused install
Per-entry visitor speed	Fastest	Slowest	Fast at most points, deliberate at main entrance
Verification quality	Lower	Highest	Highest where it matters most
Best fit for multi-gate properties	Good, if verification needs are low everywhere	Expensive at scale	Typically the most cost-efficient overall

For an itemized quote against your specific mix, use the pricing table in Section 7 of our RFP Template — ask vendors to break out hardware and installation cost by entry point, not as a single blended number.

Common Mistakes to Avoid

- ✓ **Letting the vendor's specialty decide the approach.** A vendor that only sells video intercom will recommend video intercom everywhere; a QR-only vendor will do the opposite. Neither is evaluating your property's actual mix of traffic and verification needs.
- ✓ **Applying one answer to every entry point.** As covered throughout this guide, almost no property is genuinely best served by a single uniform approach.
- ✓ **Ignoring existing infrastructure.** Ripping out functional wiring at a primary entrance to switch to QR-only, or running new wiring to secondary points that don't need it, both waste budget that could go toward the point that actually needs the investment.
- ✓ **Underestimating resident comfort expectations.** Some resident populations — particularly in age-restricted or higher-security-conscious communities — place a premium on face verification even at secondary points. Factor 2 exists specifically to catch this.
- ✓ **Skipping the volume calculation.** "It feels like a lot of traffic" is not the same as counting it. The calculator on page 8 takes ten minutes per point and prevents both over- and under-specifying.

From Decision to Deployment

1. **Walk every entry point on your property** and complete the worksheet on page 8 for each one.
2. **Cross-reference against the property-type matrix** on page 6 as a sanity check on your point-by-point results.
3. **Document your recommended approach per entry point** — this becomes your scope of work for Section 3 of the RFP Template.
4. **Check existing infrastructure at each point** — see our Retrofit vs. New Installation guide to determine whether each point is a retrofit or new-build candidate.
5. **Request itemized vendor quotes** broken out by entry point, using the RFP Template's pricing table.
6. **Confirm single-dashboard management** before signing — QR and video credentials should be administered from one platform, not two disconnected systems.

CONCLUSION

Key Takeaways

- ✓ QR entry and video intercom solve different problems — speed and cost versus verification and control.
- ✓ Decide point by point, using traffic volume and verification requirements, not a single property-wide preference.
- ✓ Most multi-gate properties get the best outcome from a hybrid deployment: video at the primary entrance, QR everywhere else.
- ✓ Run the entry volume calculator for every access point before requesting vendor quotes.
- ✓ Confirm any vendor can manage both credential types from a single dashboard.
- ✓ Use your completed worksheet directly as the scope of work section in your RFP.

Once you've mapped every entry point to a recommended approach, you're ready to move from this framework into a formal vendor process — our RFP Template picks up exactly where this guide leaves off.

VIVO CONTROL

One Platform for Both QR and Video Intercom

Vivo Control manages QR entry and video intercom from a single cloud dashboard — deploy video at your main entrance and QR everywhere else, with no new wiring required at secondary points and one unified access log.

Book a Free Demo →

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