

Preventing Revenue Loss and Boosting Gym Profits with Tailgating Detection

Summary: Unauthorized entries (“tailgating”) can quietly drain a gym’s revenue and pose security risks. By using a camera-based tailgating detection tool, **24-hour gyms and other facilities can save hundreds to thousands of dollars each month**. Savings come from **recovering lost membership fees, avoiding fines/penalties, and reducing staffing costs**, all while improving member safety. Below we present both **conservative and optimistic estimates** of potential savings, backed by data from Ontario and across North America.

Why Tailgating is Costly for Gyms

Tailgating is when an unauthorized person slips into a facility by following a paying member without proper check-in[1][2]. In a gym setting, this often means a non-member is using the gym **without paying**, essentially *stealing services*. This leads to:

- **Lost Revenue:** Every tailgating incident represents a membership or guest fee that the gym didn’t collect[3]. For 24-hour gyms (especially during unstaffed hours), these incidents can add up to a significant income loss[4].
- **Overcrowding & Wear:** Extra people increase facility usage without corresponding revenue. This can create overcrowding (frustrating paying members)[5] and additional wear on equipment.
- **Safety and Liability Risks:** If an unauthorized person causes trouble or gets injured, the gym may face **liability issues** (since they haven’t signed waivers or followed safety orientations)[6]. It’s harder to identify perpetrators of theft or vandalism if someone is in the gym off-record[6]. In one case, a gym owner noted they could even get sued by an unauthorized visitor if something goes wrong[7].
- **Reputation Damage:** Members expect a secure environment. Visible instances of people sneaking in can signal that the gym isn’t properly enforcing access, undermining member trust[8].

Bottom line: Tailgating directly hits a gym’s bottom line and can create secondary costs. A tailgating detection system aims to **stop these revenue leaks and risks at the door**.

Savings from Preventing Unauthorized Entries

Stopping tailgaters has a **clear financial benefit**: it converts those free, unauthorized workouts into paid visits or new memberships. Gyms using AI camera systems report recovering **substantial revenue** that used to be lost: - **Average Recovery:** An AI-based detector can **boost revenue by ~\$1,600 per month** on average by catching and charging for unauthorized entries[9]. This assumes an average of ~18 tailgating incidents per gym per week[10]. Each incident might be a \$20 guest fee or membership day-pass charge

recovered. - **Conservative Scenario:** In a smaller gym or one with moderate supervision, tailgating might be less frequent. Even preventing, say, *5 unauthorized entries per week* (≈ 20 per month) at \$15 each would save about **\$300/month** ($\approx \$3,600/\text{year}$) that used to walk out the door unpaid. This is a **low-end** estimate for a gym with relatively good existing enforcement. - **Optimistic Scenario:** A busy 24/7 gym might see *15–20 tailgaters per week* (some industry data suggests $\sim 18/\text{week}$ on average[10]). At a typical \$20 fee each, that's **\$1,200–\$1,600 per month** recouped. Over a year that is **\$14–\$19K in recovered revenue**. In one case study, a fitness center found tailgaters were **15% of total entries** before detection; after installing a camera system, unauthorized entries dropped to under 5%[11] – a 70% reduction, translating to thousands in saved revenue.

Figure: Unauthorized gym entries dropped from $\sim 15\%$ to $\sim 4\%$ of total visits after implementing a tailgating detection system[11]. By greatly reducing unpaid entries, gyms can recover most of the revenue that was leaking away.

Avoided Overcapacity Fines: Stopping tailgaters also helps gyms stay within capacity limits. For example, if fire code or local rules limit occupancy, unauthorized entrants could push you over the limit unknowingly. Fines for exceeding posted occupancy or violating safety codes **can range from a few hundred dollars for first offenses to thousands for repeat violations**[12]. (During COVID-19 in Ontario, some gyms that ignored capacity limits were fined in the **\$2,000+ range** for violations[13].) By ensuring **every person is accounted for**, a gym can avoid these penalties. This is more of an *insurance policy* benefit – you may not quantify it until an avoided fine or lawsuit, but it's an important protective factor.

Liability Savings: Similarly, the system can prevent scenarios that lead to costly liability. An unauthorized person who sneaks in and gets injured could sue or cause the gym's insurance premiums to rise. While hard to put a dollar figure on it, preventing one serious incident could **save tens of thousands** in legal costs. Gym owners have cited liability from unauthorized visitors as a major concern[7] – a risk that robust access control mitigates.

Staffing Optimizations and 24/7 Access Benefits

For gyms that implement 24/7 access, a tailgating detection tool is part of a broader cost-saving strategy: running **unmanned or low-staff shifts**. By automating entry control, gyms can **extend hours or go fully 24/7 without adding staff** at night. This yields tangible savings: - **Lower Labor Costs:** A typical front-desk staff or receptionist costs money every hour the gym is open. For example, one European gym solutions firm notes a *front desk can cost about €1,500 per month* in wages[14] (approximately **\$2,000+ CAD**). If your gym can eliminate a late-night shift or reduce staffing to only peak times, that money is saved. Even on a smaller scale, cutting 40 hours of staffing a week (one full-time equivalent or several part-timers for off-peak times) could easily save **\$2,000–\$3,500 per month** in Ontario when considering wages and benefits. - **Conservative Estimate:** Suppose a gym owner previously staffed 4 extra hours each evening for check-ins. Switching to automated camera entry might cut those 4 hours (with no issues at the door) – saving, say, *4 hours* ×

30 days = 120 hours of labor a month. At \$15/hour, that's **\$1,800/month** saved. This doesn't even count additional savings like reduced scheduling hassles. - **Optimistic Estimate:** A gym going fully **unmanned overnight** (e.g. no staff from 10pm to 6am) saves an 8-hour shift nightly. That's 56 hours/week or ~240 hours/month. At \$15–20/hour, it equals **\$3,600–\$4,800 per month** in labor cost reduction. In other words, over **\$40–60K a year** saved by not having to employ overnight front-desk staff. (Many 24/7 gyms do exactly this – staffed in daytime, key-fob entry at night.)

Importantly, offering 24/7 access can **attract new members and increase revenue**. Busy professionals, shift workers, or night owls may choose your facility specifically because they can work out anytime. This translates to membership growth: - Gyms that switched to 24/7 often tout it as a **competitive advantage** that brings in more sign-ups[15][16]. Even retaining a few extra members (who would have canceled due to limited hours) can add a few hundred dollars of monthly revenue per member. - Members also report higher satisfaction and loyalty when 24/7 access is available[16], improving long-term retention. Higher retention means reduced revenue loss from churn.

So, beyond cutting costs, a tool enabling around-the-clock secure access can indirectly **boost income**. For instance, one gym owner in Massachusetts felt safer operating 24/7 with a tailgating detector and noted he could open another location sooner because he didn't need overnight staff[17]. The extended hours **“worked tremendously”** to grow the business while controlling labor costs[18].

Ontario and North America Statistics

To put things in context, here are some relevant stats for Ontario and North America: - **Number of Gyms:** Ontario has **over 1,700 fitness facilities** (the most of any province in Canada)[19]. North America overall has a huge fitness industry – the U.S. alone hosts about **41,370 gyms**[20], and Canada has roughly 8,500–9,500 gyms[21]. That's ~50,000 facilities across North America. Many are increasingly adopting 24-hour access or key-fob entry systems to meet member demand. - **Growth of 24/7 Model:** In the early 2000s, virtually no gyms were open 24/7. Today, **24-hour gyms are common** – major franchises like Anytime Fitness (with 80+ locations in Ontario and ~5,000 worldwide) operate on a round-the-clock model. This trend shows that **unmanned access is a proven approach** in the industry. It also means the *tailgating issue is widespread*: whenever front desks are unstaffed, the temptation for members to sneak in friends exists. - **Revenue Impact:** The average gym membership in Canada costs around \$40–\$60 per month. If even a fraction of people are using the gym without paying, the cumulative losses are large. *Example:* If 5% of visitors are unpaid tailgaters (a fairly conservative figure), a gym with 1,000 visits a week charging \$10/visit effectively loses \$100/week, or **\$5,200/year**. Scale that to Ontario's ~1,700 gyms – that's potentially on the order of **\$8.8 million annually in lost revenue in one province** (in a conservative scenario). North America-wide, the lost revenue could be **tens of millions per year** if not addressed. These are rough estimates, but they illustrate the magnitude of the issue.

- **Case Study – NRG Lab:** A real-world example comes from NRG Lab Fitness Center, which implemented a tailgating camera solution. Before, about **14.95%** of entries were unauthorized guests; afterwards, only **4.44%** were (a 70% drop)[11]. They charged \$20 per unauthorized guest and achieved an **11× ROI** on the system investment within months (essentially turning former freeloaders into ~\$1,600/month of revenue)[9][22]. This demonstrates both the **conservative** case (even a few incidents caught pays off the system) and the **optimistic** case (significant revenue boost if a gym had a big tailgating problem).

ROI and Pricing Model Considerations

Investing in a tailgating detection tool **quickly pays for itself**. The service can be priced flexibly, but let's consider a common model: - Many providers charge a **monthly subscription per entry door**, often around \$100–\$150 per month[23]. For example, Camio's system starts at ~\$125/door/month and **“pays for itself in the first 6 tailgating incidents each month.”**[23] In other words, catching just a half-dozen unauthorized entries (which would have been free use) already covers the cost of the service. - **First Month Free Trial:** It's wise to offer the first month free (as proposed) so gym owners can **see the results in action**. During that trial, the system can log how many tailgaters it caught on camera and how much \$\$ in fees that equates to. This data often impresses owners. (For instance, if the free month logs 20 incidents, that's potentially \$400 in saved revenue – immediately proving the tool's value.) - **Flexible Pricing Options:** Depending on the data, you might choose a flat monthly fee or a performance-based model. A flat fee (per door or per facility) is simple and predictable for owners. Alternatively, a revenue-sharing or tiered model (e.g. low base fee + small amount per tailgate caught) could align with the gym's success. Ultimately, the goal is to price it such that the **gym saves much more than it spends**. In our scenarios above, even a \$150/month fee is dwarfed by the conservative savings (~\$300–\$400/mo) and is a steal compared to optimistic savings (~\$1,500+/mo).

Overall ROI: Whether conservative or optimistic, the returns are strong. A cautious gym owner might see a return of **2-3× their investment** (e.g. spend \$100, get \$300 back). An enthusiastic scenario can yield **10× or higher ROI** (spend \$125, get \$1,250+ back)[9]. And that's purely on recovered fees – not counting labor savings or avoided liabilities. **Graphs 1 and 2 below illustrate potential monthly savings.**

Figure: Estimated Monthly Savings per Gym (Conservative vs. Optimistic). Even in a conservative case, a 24/7 gym might save around \$1.4K/month by preventing tailgaters and reducing staff hours. Optimistically, savings could reach \$4K–\$5K/month in a high-traffic facility. These figures combine recovered fees from unauthorized entries and labor cost reductions, showing the tool's significant impact on the bottom line. [9][14]

Conclusion

For a busy gym owner, the takeaway is simple: **a tailgating detection system stops revenue loss that you might not even realize is happening.** It turns “sneak-ins” into paying customers, helps avoid fines and liability, and enables you to operate with lower overhead (potentially 24/7) confidently. In Ontario alone, where 1,700+ gyms compete, adopting such technology can be a differentiator – protecting your profits and your members. North American fitness clubs collectively could **save millions per year** if they all clamped down on unauthorized entries.

Investing in this tool is not an added expense so much as it is **preventing hidden losses.** With conservative expectations, it will cover its costs and then some; with optimistic results, it can substantially **boost your annual profits.** The first month is free to let you see the difference firsthand – a risk-free way to discover how much revenue you’ve been missing. In the end, ensuring every person in your gym is a paying, authorized member **keeps things fair, safe, and profitable for your business**[2][8].

Sources: Recent industry case studies, security solution providers, and fitness industry statistics for Canada and the U.S. were used to compile these figures[9][19][20]. All data is cited from reputable sources to ensure accuracy and verifiability. By leveraging these insights, gym owners can make informed decisions on strengthening access control and maximizing their revenue.

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