

Frigate NVR

The goal with a Network Video Recorder (NVR) is to free yourself from cloud subscriptions for security cameras. You can (and probably should) run a standalone NVR, but in this guide we'll setup Frigate NVR as a Home Assistant Add-On.

Equipment

To run an NVR alongside Home Assistant you will likely need more CPU power than a Raspberry Pi provides, but most mini PCs should have enough. You can always try it out and find out.

If you plan to use any detection features at all (object tracking, notifications for specific objects) then you will need some sort of hardware acceleration. The [Google Coral USB Accelerator](#) device is recommended and is what we'll cover in this guide.

The [Frigate recommended hardware guide](#) has more details on both hardware acceleration and CPU recommendations.

Cameras

See list of cameras I've tested at the bottom

You will need cameras that support RTSP and optionally ONVIF. ONVIF is needed for PTC cameras if you want Frigate to be able to control their movement. You also ideally want cameras that can output 2 streams, 1 high and 1 low resolution. High resolution will be used for viewing and the lower resolution for detection tasks.

In this guide I will be using a [Tapo C210](#) camera which can sometimes be found on sale under \$20 and supports Pan & Tilt as well as 2K resolution. Tapo cameras support RTSP and ONVIF as well as 2 different quality streams. Unfortunately they also require the Tapo app to perform the initial setup. I will be searching for other cameras that can be used entirely offline in the future and update this guide.

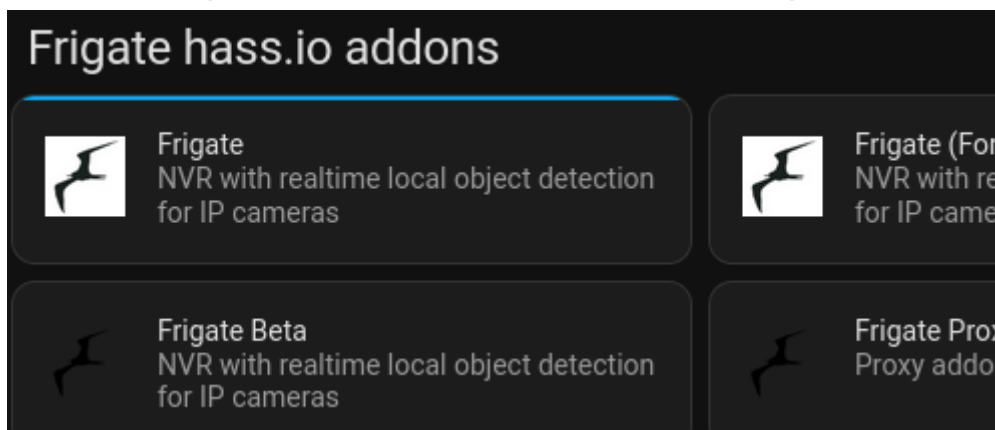
Setup Cameras

The first step is to setup your cameras and enable RTSP. This will vary based on the brand.

- Be sure to set a secure random username and password for your cameras when enabling RTSP
- In your router, reserve the camera's IP address so that it won't change on you. **Do not** expose the camera to the internet.
- Test your camera's RTSP stream in something like VLC. The exact string will differ based on the brand, but common examples are:
 - Tapo: `rtsp://username:password192.168.0.101:554/stream1`
 - Using `stream2` will load the low quality 720p stream.
- Make sure your RTSP stream is working before moving forward

Install Frigate

- In HA go to Settings > Add-Ons > Add-On Store
- In the upper right click the 3 dots, select Repositories.
 - Enter `https://github.com/blakeblackshear/frigate-hass-addons` and click **Add**
- Now under the **Frigate haas.io addons** section, select **Frigate** and click **Install**

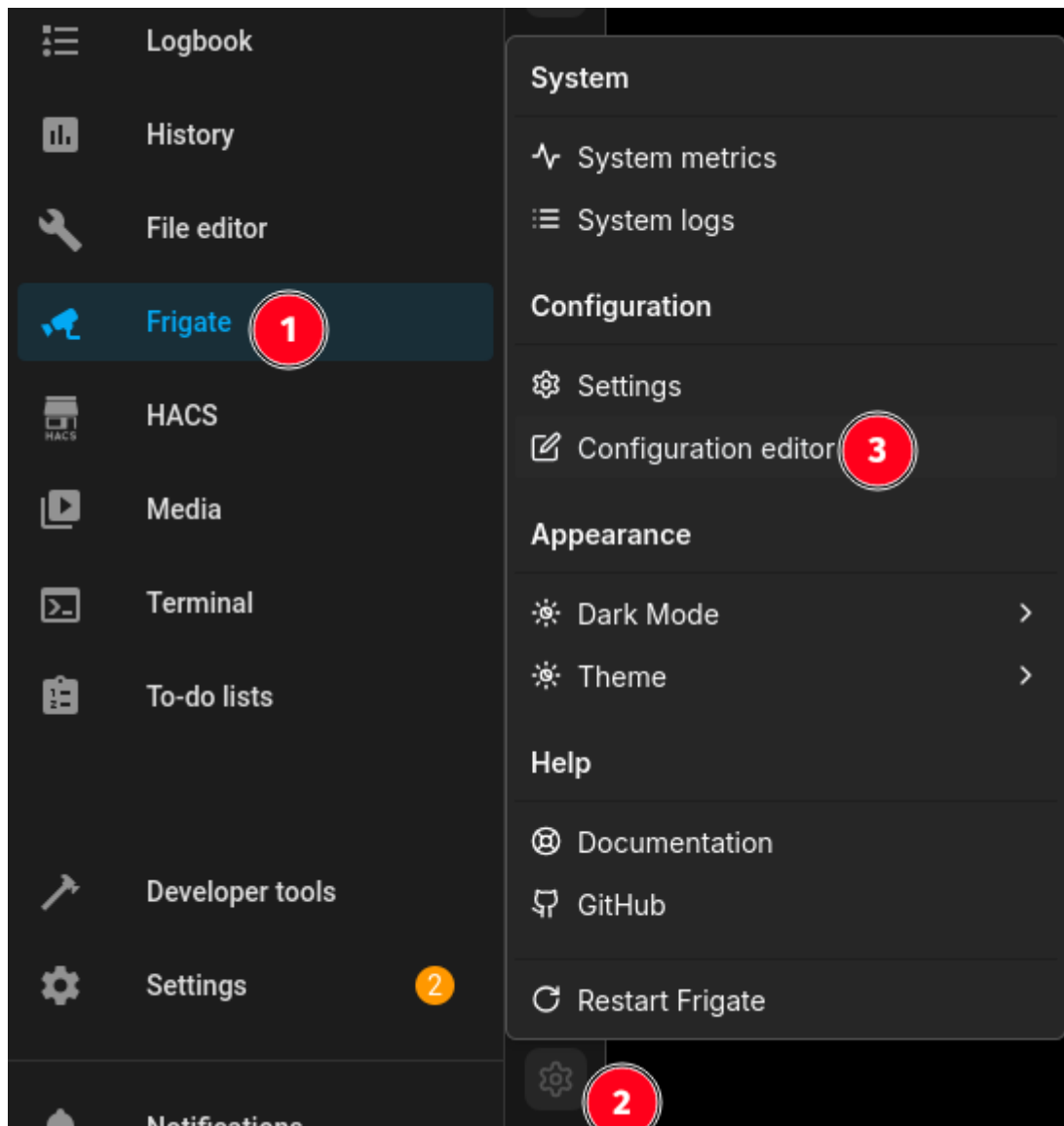


- Frigate (Full Access) is another option that can be used if the regular Frigate is not able to properly connect to your devices. It is not recommended unless absolutely needed since it has unrestricted access to your computer. Install the regular Frigate for now and you can always install Full Access later without requiring any additional configuration. Unfortunately they are not clear about exactly what reasons the Full Access version may be needed for.
- Enable the **Start on boot**, **Watchdog**, and **Show in sidebar** options.
- Click Start to start Frigate

Add-On Configuration

We now need to update the configuration file for Frigate to tell it about any cameras. To do that you need a way to upload or edit files in Home Assistant. If you have a favorite way, use that. For this demo I will use the File Editor built into Frigate itself.

- From the Frigate menu option, click the gear icon at the bottom of the page and then select **Configuration editor**



- The default Frigate config file will be displayed in YAML format. We need to add our first camera to it.
- Under the **cameras:** section lets add our camera:

Expand to see frigate.yaml

Keep any code above and below the cameras section that is already in the config file

```
cameras:
  C210: # <----- Name your camera
    enabled: true
    ffmpeg:
      inputs:
        - path: rtsp://username:password@192.168.0.101:554/stream1 # The High Quality stream you want to
          use for recording
      roles:
```

- record

- path: rtsp://username:password@192.168.0.101:554/stream2 # The Lower Quality stream you want to use for detection

- roles:

- detect

- detect:

- enabled: false # Disable until you have a working camera feed and hardware acceleration

- width: 1280 # The resolution of the detection camera feed.

- height: 720

- fps: 5 # This can be raised later if we have the processing power

- record:

- enabled: false

- retain:

- days: 7 # The number of days a recording will be kept for after a motion is detected

- mode: motion

- events:

- retain:

- default: 30 # The event data will be kept for 1 day. After this period, the event data will be automatically deleted.

- mode: motion

- # Leave out this section if camera is not PTZ or does not support ONVIF

- onvif:

- host: 192.168.0.101

- port: 2020 # Port may differ for your camera brand!

- user: username

- password: password

- autotracking:

- enabled: false # Disable until you have hardware acceleration

- calibrate_on_startup: true

- zooming: disabled # Can enable if camera supports Zoom

- track:

- person

- objects:

- track:

- person

- car

- Click the **Save & Restart** button



- If Frigate fails to restart due to an error in your configuration file, in HA go to: **Settings > Add-Ons > Frigate > Log** to see the error message. Be very careful about your file formatting and spacing. Indentation and whitespaces matter in YML files.
- Going back to **Frigate** from the HA side menu, you should now see your camera feed. Clicking the camera feed opens it in full view and if you enabled ONVIF will also show your PTZ controls



Additional Setup and usage instructions are coming soon. In the meantime go ahead and setup more cameras and play around with Frigate. You can try enabling detection in your Frigate config file, but without Hardware acceleration it may bring everything to a grinding halt.

Using go2rtc - Viewing High Quality Streams

Wait, you setup the high quality camera stream in your Frigate config, but when viewing it from the web UI you're seeing a low resolution stream!?

While this setup is optional, it will allow for viewing higher quality streams in the Frigate UI and also reduce the number of direct concurrent connections to your cameras. This also allows for more connection types to cameras than just RTSP. You can see the full list of [supported connection types here](#).

Open your `frigate.yaml` file again for some editing. We are going to add a new main section titled `go2rtc:` and also add the cameras to this section, then we will update the `cameras:` section to point to this stream instead of directly to the camera.

Expand to see frigate.yaml

Add the following section right above the existing `cameras:` section. If using rtsp, you can copy the rtsp connection string from the cameras section to this section.

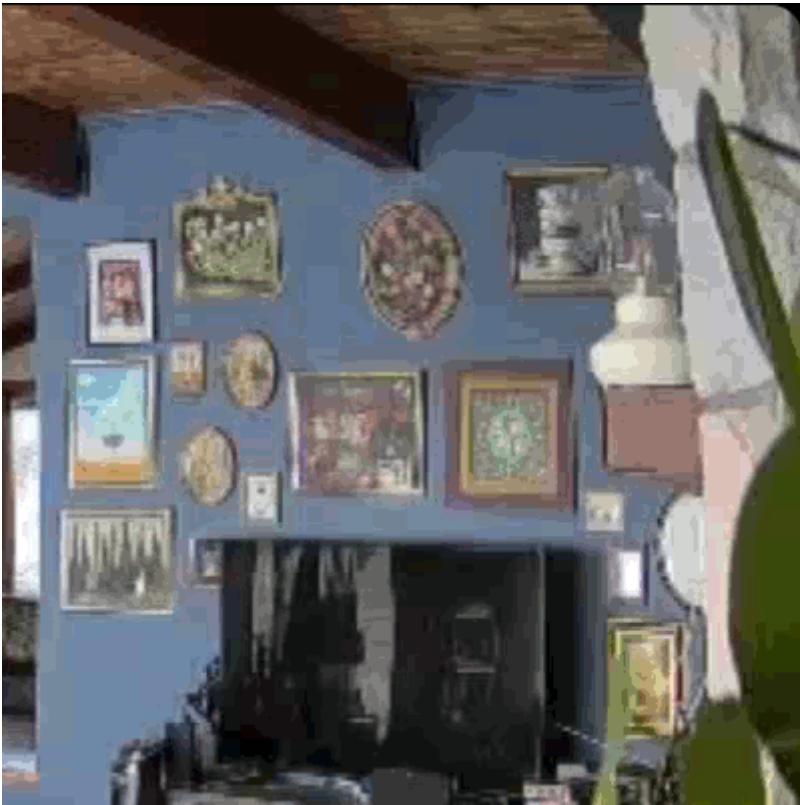
```
go2rtc:
  streams:
    C210: # <-- Name the camera, use the same name as in the cameras section
      - rtsp://username:password@192.168.0.101:554/stream1 # <-- stream which supports video & aac
        audio
      - "ffmpeg:C210#audio=opus" # <-- Optional, This creates a copy of the stream which transcodes audio
        to opus for webrtc support
    C210_sub: # <-- Optional low-quality substream
      - rtsp://username:password@192.168.0.101:554/stream2 # <-- Low Quality stream which supports
        video & aac audio
      - "ffmpeg:C210_sub#audio=opus" # <-- Optional if auto is needed for substream
```

If you have issues with the rtsp connection string, you can try adding ffmpeg: to the start of it. This supports more encoding types, but does cause the camera connection to be slower.

Example: `ffmpeg:rtsp://username:password@192.168.0.101:554/stream1`

Save the changes to this file and restart Frigate to test this stream and see if it works.

Below is an example of quality difference when viewed in the Frigate UI before and after enabling go2rtc. This is just one corner of the camera view and there is quality lost from converting this to a gif for display here, but it still makes the quality difference clear.



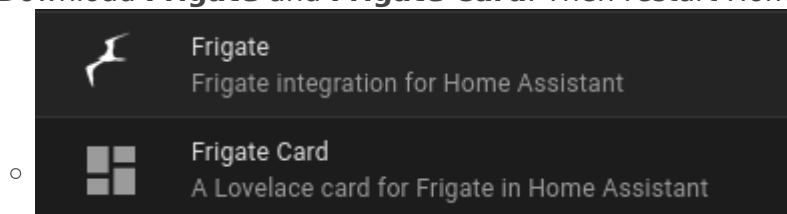
You can now change the `path:` element under the `cameras:` section to point to the go2rtc stream instead of directly to the camera. This will again reduce the number of connections made directly to the camera. No credentials need to be specified here. Example: `path: rtsp://127.0.0.1:8554/C210`

More go2rtc docs: https://docs.frigate.video/guides/configuring_go2rtc/

Notifications & MQTT Integration

Now that Frigate is installed and working, you'll need to install the Frigate HACS integration to integrate it with the rest of Home Assistant. If you have not yet enabled HACS, [see here first](#). This also assumes you have already installed the MQTT Add-On and Integration. If not, [see here](#).

- From HACS, search **Frigate**
- Download **Frigate** and **Frigate Card**. Then restart Home Assistant



- In HA, go to **Settings > Devices & Services > Add Integration > Frigate**
- Leave the default URL in place (`http://ccab4aaf-frigate:5000`) and click **Submit**
 - The default URL works if you've install Frigate as an Add-On in Home Assistant. If you have installed Frigate elsewhere, you need to enter the URL/IP to access it here.
- Your configured camera(s) should pop up so you can add them to an Area.

- Go to **Settings > Add-ons > Mosquitto broker > Configuration**
 - If you haven't setup a user here yet, add one using this format in the **Logins** field
 - Setting whatever username and password you want. This user is only for applications to access MQTT and Frigate requires a user to exist, it cannot use MQTT unauthenticated like some other services can.
- - username: mqtt-user
password: mqtt-pwd
- Click **Save** to save your new MQTT user
 - Open your `frigate.yaml` file again for more editing. We are going to edit the section titled `mqtt:` so that Frigate can access MQTT. If the mqtt section is missing you can add it.

Expand to see frigate.yaml

The mqtt section is usually at the very top of the frigate.yml file and is disabled by default. Enable it as shown here and add your Home Assistant server's local IP address as well as the user and password you just setup in the MQTT Mosquitto broker config.

```
mqtt:
  enabled: true

  host: 192.168.1.100 # <-- Local IP of your HA server. Does not work with localhost/

  port: 1883

  user: mqtt-user

  password: mqtt-pwd
```

- Save the changes to this file and restart the Frigate Add-on
- Go to **Settings > Devices & Services > Frigate**, and select one of your cameras.
 - You should now see a bunch of Sensors available.
 - If MQTT is not working, these sensors will show unavailable. If that's the case, check the Frigate logs (Settings > Add-Ons > Frigate > Log) and search for anything referencing `mqtt`. Also make sure Frigate was restarted after the latest changes. Make sure the host value you entered in frigate.yml is correct and is the IP address and not something like `localhost` or `homeassistant.local` as those won't work.
- Now you need to import this blueprint which will allow you to finally setup notifications:
 - **Import blueprint**
- To setup a notification rule after importing this blueprint: Go to **Settings > Automations & Scenes > Create Automation > Frigate Notifications**
- As a basic notification example, Select a camera and a device to be notified.
 - If not devices show up, make sure you've installed the Home Assistant phone app and logged in with it
 - If your device shows up twice, it's probably the last one listed, but you may need to try and come back and change it if it doesn't work.

- For **Base URL**, you can start by leaving it blank. A value of `homeassistant://` will open links in the app but not work for TVs. Setting your public home assistant URL will open links in a browser, but will work for TVs.
- No other fields are required. You can come back later to customize your notifications further or setup additional notifications for other devices/groups.
- Click **Save** and name your notification. It is now active. You can find it in the **Settings > Automations & scenes** page.
- Try walking in front of your camera and see if it triggers.
 - If it does not trigger there are a few things to check:
 - Check frigate.yml and make sure you have the `detect:` element under your camera enabled.
 - Check the Frigate Review page to see if it's detecting events. If it's not, it's a camera config issue.
 - Open your camera in Frigate and make sure Detection is enabled there. This option seems to work separately from the frigate.yml setting, and both need to be enabled.
 - Make sure the correct device is selected in the Automation you just setup

Motion Tracking

Coming Soon, detailed instructions on setting up motion tracking and other features

Cameras Tested

| Camera Brand | Model | Features | Substream | Works? | Notes |
|--------------|---------------------------|----------------|-----------|--------|---|
| Tapo | <u>C210</u> | 2k, Pan & Tilt | 720p | ✓ | Internet Required for Setup P&T work in Frigate w/ manual controls but not automatic tracking. |
| Tapo | <u>C110</u> / <u>C120</u> | 2k, Cheap | 720p | ✓ | Internet Required for Setup. C120 has better performance and clarity. I recommend it. |

| Camera Brand | Model | Features | Substream | Works? | Notes |
|--------------|-------|----------|-----------|--------|---|
| Reolink | | Cheap | 360P | ✓ | Substream quality lower than ideal for object detection. Some models may have higher substream resolution. RTSP sometimes unstable. Untested, but supports RTMP and may be more reliable. |
| Eufy | | | X | X | No longer supports RTSP. Eufy pulled RTSP from cameras previously supporting it via a firmware update. Some models may still support RTSP, but it's a gamble. |
| <u>Wyze</u> | | Cheap | 360P | X | No RTSP Support. <u>Hacky workaround available</u> but it's not super reliable. |

What is a substream?

A sub-stream is a secondary camera stream at a lower resolution. Without a substream, object detection needs to happen on the main stream, which can take a lot of resources if it is high quality. However, if the substream resolution is too low then it's not very useful. Usually 720p is a good middle ground. If you have the resources to perform detection on the full resolution stream, go for it!

Common Issues

Devices Missing in Settings > Devices & Services > Frigate

The Frigate Devices don't update automatically until Home Assistant has been restarted. The most reliable way to get this updated is:

1. Restart Frigate
2. Restart Home Assistant

If you don't restart just Frigate first, then it won't pick up the Frigate config changes in time to update the Device list.

Changing Camera Names

Changing camera names in Frigate is a bit difficult as you need to update all the references manually. Note, the connection to the Frigate Camera Devices in Home Assistant will break and new devices will be created. These are the steps you need to take:

1. Update ALL references to the camera name (and any sub-stream names) in your frigate.yml file
2. Restart Frigate and wait for everything to load back up
3. Verify in the Frigate UI that all cameras are loading and the settings show the new camera names
4. Restart Home Assistant
 1. Yes, do this
5. After Home Assistant is back up, go to: Settings > Devices & Services > Frigate
 1. Verify that all the new names are displaying and the old ones are gone
6. Go to Settings > Automations & scenes
7. Manually update (and Save) every automation or scene that references your cameras so reference the new name

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