

pco.[®]

pco.pixelfly 26 CLHS

GLOBAL SHUTTER sCMOS CAMERA




excelitas[®]

**Excelitas PCO GmbH asks you to carefully read and follow the instructions in this document.
For any questions or comments, please feel free to contact us at any time.**

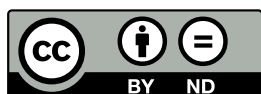


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pco.pixelfly 26 CLHS user manual 1.0.0

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1 Safety

This camera system is scientific measuring equipment designed to capture images for analysis. It is intended to be used by technicians, engineers, and scientists. Before using the camera system, read this manual carefully and keep a copy accessible for future reference. The camera system may only be used indoors and according to the instructions in this manual. Provisions, limitations, and operating conditions stated herein must be observed. For safety reasons, unauthorized modifications and alterations of the system are prohibited. Opening the camera voids the warranty.



DANGER

POWER SUPPLY, CABLE OR PLUG: Risk of electric shock, which can cause death or serious injury. Before each use, inspect the power supply, cable, and plug for damage. Do not use if damaged.



WARNING

VOLTAGE-CARRYING PARTS INSIDE: Risk of electric shock or injury. Do not insert any objects into the camera through its openings.



WARNING

MOISTURE ENTERS CAMERA: Risk of electric shock or injury. Keep the camera dry and protect it from extreme ambient temperature changes to prevent water condensation and damage. Operate and store the camera only within the specified temperature and humidity ranges.



CAUTION

CABLES: Risk of injury from tripping over loose cables. Keep cables organized and out of the way to prevent tripping hazards.



NOTICE

HUMIDITY, DUST, OR RADIATION: Humidity, dust, or X-rays may damage the camera. Do not operate the camera in humid or dusty environments or areas with high levels of X-ray radiation.



NOTICE

LIQUIDS: If liquids have penetrated the camera, damage may occur. Switch off the camera immediately, disconnect it from power, and contact [customer support](#).



NOTICE

SHOCK AND VIBRATIONS: Falling, dropping, or exposure to vibrations may cause damage or affect device performance over time. Always place the camera on a flat, stable surface or mount it securely using the mounting threads.



NOTICE

HOUSING DAMAGE: If the camera has been dropped or the housing is damaged, switch off the camera immediately, disconnect it from power, and contact [customer support](#).



NOTICE

LENS (ADAPTER) MOUNTING: Forcing lens mount adapters or lenses onto the camera may damage the threads. Always screw them gently onto the camera flange.

2 Introduction

Thank you for choosing our high-performance PCO® sCMOS camera, designed for demanding industrial imaging applications. Engineered for high-resolution acquisition and fast data throughput, it combines excellent image quality with a robust high-speed data interface. Optimized for precision, stability, and efficient system integration, it delivers accurate results across a wide range of scientific and industrial applications.

Key features¹

- **True charge domain global shutter** stores charge directly in-pixel, reducing noise and preserving fullwell capacity for clean, distortion-free images.
- **Color sensor** option with Bayer pattern filter array for true-color image acquisition and visualization of samples and structures.
- **Compact housing** to minimize installation space and enable easy integration into industrial and OEM systems.
- **Air-cooled design** for stable imaging performance and reliable image quality in demanding environments.
- **Camera Link HS**, renowned for its exceptional speed, reliability, and bandwidth, is combined with a fiber-optic link (FOL) for high-speed data transmission.



INFO This user manual covers the setup, configuration, and operation of the **pco.pixelfly™ 26 CLHS** and the **pco.pixelfly 26 C CLHS**. For technical specifications, refer to the camera datasheet on our [website](#). The following icons are used to highlight information throughout the manual:

Icon	Meaning
	Difference between the two camera variants.
	Important information to protect the camera system.
	Helpful tips on how to use the camera system.
	Additional equipment required to use the described function.
	Brief instructions on how to use pco.camware.

¹ Available features may vary by camera variant.

3 Package contents

Standard camera system



Ordering information	Camera system
85108076026	pco.pixelfly 26 CLHS
85108076027	pco.pixelfly 26 C CLHS

When unpacking, ensure all items are present and in good condition. If anything is missing or damaged, immediately contact our [customer support](#).



Retain the packaging box and any protective covers for future transport or storage of the system.

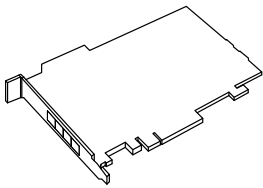
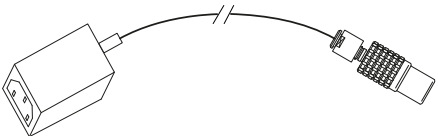
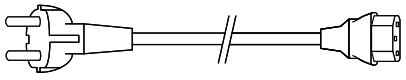
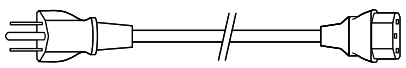
The following items are included in standard delivery²:

Item	Illustration
Camera pco.pixelfly 26 CLHS or pco.pixelfly 26 C CLHS	
Lens mount adapter (on camera installed) F-mount	
Lens mount adapter (on camera installed) F-mount cover	
Lens mount adapter C-mount	
Lens mount adapter C-mount cover	

Continued on next page

²The illustrations are provided to assist in identifying the items. They are not to scale.

Continued from previous page

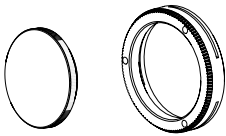
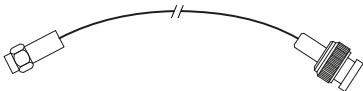
Item	Illustration
Frame grabber card CLHS compatible (SFP+ modules included)	
Data cable FOL cable (pink, 5 m)	
Power supply 24V / 36W	
Power cable EU	
Power cable USA	
QR code card camera control software interface driver web support form	Links to: pco.camware PCO driver customer support



Download all PCO software products from our [website](#) free of charge.

Optional Accessories

The following accessories are compatible with the system and can be purchased separately:

Item	Illustration	Article number
Lens mount adapter TFL-mount + cover		30109000070
Coaxial cable SMA - BNC		10307000116
Data cable FOL cable (pink, 10 m)		20307500842
Data cable FOL cable (pink, 20 m)		20307500845



To find additional compatible accessories, visit our [website](#) or use our **MachVis™ System Configurator**. Feel free to [contact us](#) with any questions or special requests.



4 Quick Start Guide



For your first images, choose a compatible lens and an object that is visible under normal light conditions as well as easy to focus on.

Required setup

Your computer:

- is equipped with the provided **frame grabber** (CLHS interface),
- has the latest version of **pco.camware** (or pco.vision™),
- has the latest version of the **PCO CLHS Driver** installed.

Your camera:

- is powered by the provided power supply and power cable and
- is connected to the computer via the provided FOL cable.

1 The camera switches on once powered up.

2 Start pco.camware.

3 Start Live Preview.

4 Right-click, check Continuous Auto Range.

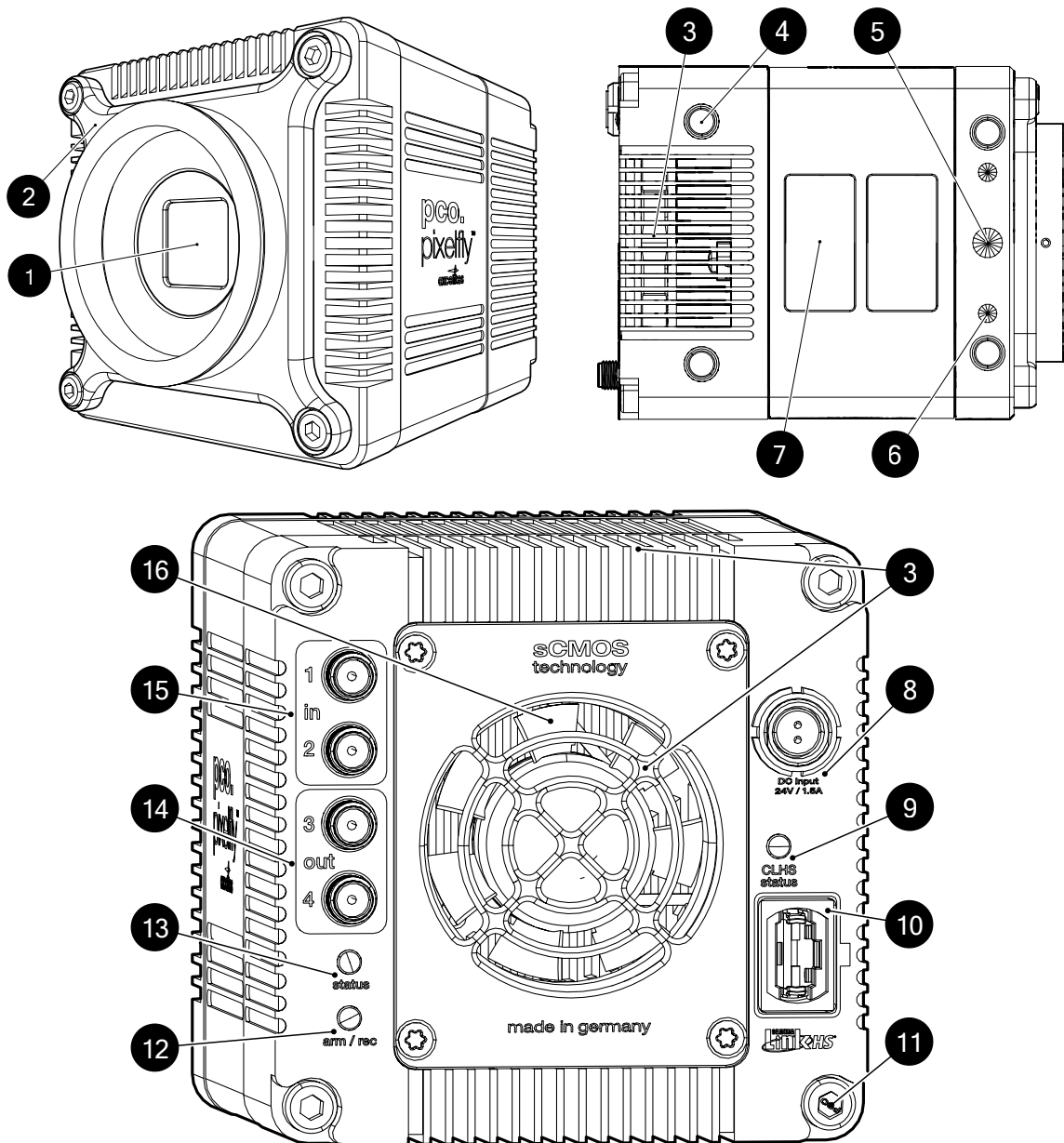
5 If necessary, adjust the Exposure time.

6 Check the image, use your lens or adapter to set the aperture and focus.

7 Once the object is in focus, end Live Preview and click Record.

5 Camera overview

5.1 Camera components



- | | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 input window | 5 tripod mount | 9 LED "CLHS status" | 13 LED "status" |
| 2 camera flange | 6 mounting threads | 10 data port (CLHS) | 14 SMA output connectors |
| 3 air vents | 7 serial number label | 11 tamper seal | 15 SMA input connectors |
| 4 rubber foot | 8 power port | 12 LED "arm/rec" | 16 cooling fan |

5.2 Ports, connectors and cables

Ports and connectors:

All electrical ports and connectors are located on the rear panel of the camera.

Type	Description
Data	Camera Link HS (F3,1X1,S10)
Power	LEMO ECG.0B.302 (2-pin)
SMA (input/output)	jack, 50 Ω , straight panel mount, DC-6 GHz, gold-plated

Cables:

The standard camera system includes a power supply, two power cables, and an FOL cable for data transfer. Optionally, add one to four coaxial cables for status or trigger functionality, depending on the setup.

Type of cable	Length	Description
Data cable	5.0 m	FOL MTP/LC (Female B/4X) BREAKOUT OM4
Power supply	1.0 m	IEC 60320 C14 to LEMO FGG.0B.302 (2-pin) Input: 100 - 240 VAC Output: 24 VDC, 1.5 A, 36 W
Power cable (EU)	2.0 m	Type F (Schuko) to IEC 60320 C13
Power cable (US)	2.0 m	Type B (NEMA 5-15 P) to IEC 60320 C13
Coaxial cable	0.3 m	SMA (plug, 50 Ω , straight connector, DC-6 GHz, gold-plated) to BNC (jack, 50 Ω , straight connector, DC-6 GHz, nickel-plated)



NOTICE: Note that other cables may not be suitable for the camera system. If other cables are used, full functionality and regulatory compliance cannot be guaranteed.

5.3 Input/Output signal specifications

The camera is equipped with four SMA connectors, two of them designated for input signals and two for output signals:

Connector	Input/Output	Signal	Sensitivity type
SMA 1	input	exposure trigger	edge
SMA 2	input	acquire enable	level
SMA 3	output	status	level
SMA 4	output	status	level

The input signals need to meet the following electrical requirements:

Input	Requirements
Type	digital
Level	3.3 V LVTTTL (5 V tolerance)
Coupling	DC
Impedance	1 k Ω
Slew rate	>1 V/ms

The output signals have the following electrical properties:

Output	Properties
Type	digital
Level	3.3 V LVTTTL
Coupling	DC

5.4 Lens mount adapter system

Our cameras are equipped with the camera flange as interchangeable lens mount adapter system. With the camera flange and our lens mount adapters the cameras can be used with a wide range of standard lenses.



NOTICE: Dust particles can damage the camera sensor's input window. When changing lens mount adapters or lenses, work in a clean environment and ensure not to touch the input window.



Use our free online tool [MachVis™ System Configurator](#) to find a suitable lens for your camera system.

5.4.1 How to switch to C-mount/TFL-mount

For standard delivery the camera is equipped with an F-mount adapter. To attach a C-mount lens, observe the following steps to switch from the F-mount adapter to the C-mount adapter.

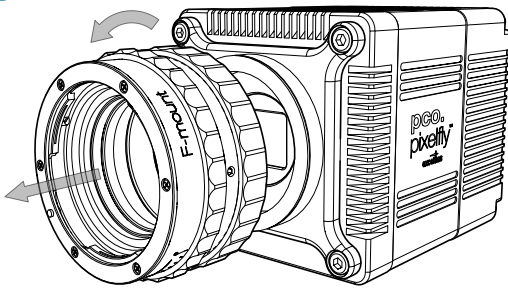
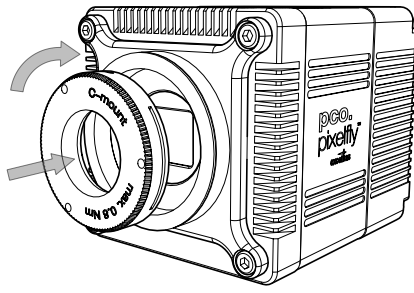
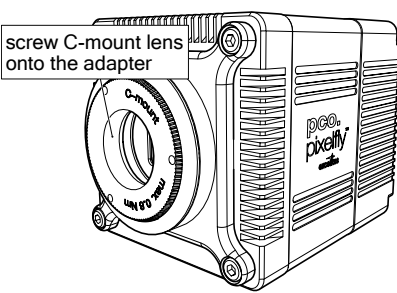
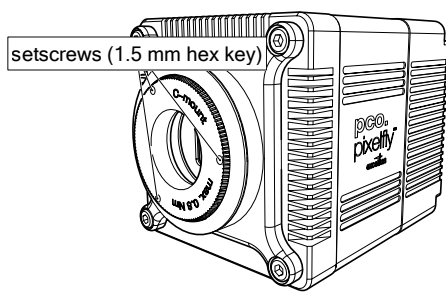
For TFL-mount lenses follow the same steps to switch to the TFL-mount adapter.



NOTICE: Dust particles can damage the camera sensor's input window. When changing lens mount adapters or lenses, work in a clean environment and ensure not to touch the input window.



NOTICE: Using too much force may damage the setscrews. To secure the adapter, apply a maximum torque of 0.8 Nm. Keep the front of the camera turned sideways or down when securing the adapter to prevent dust particles from falling onto the input window.

1  Turn the F-mount adapter counterclockwise to loosen it.	2  Turn the C-mount adapter clockwise and screw it in gently until it sits snugly.
3  screw C-mount lens onto the adapter Screw a C-mount lens onto the adapter and perform the fine focal adjustment to set the flange focal distance to 17.526 mm.	4  setscrews (1.5 mm hex key) Hold the adapter in place and secure it with the three setscrews and a 1.5 mm hex key.



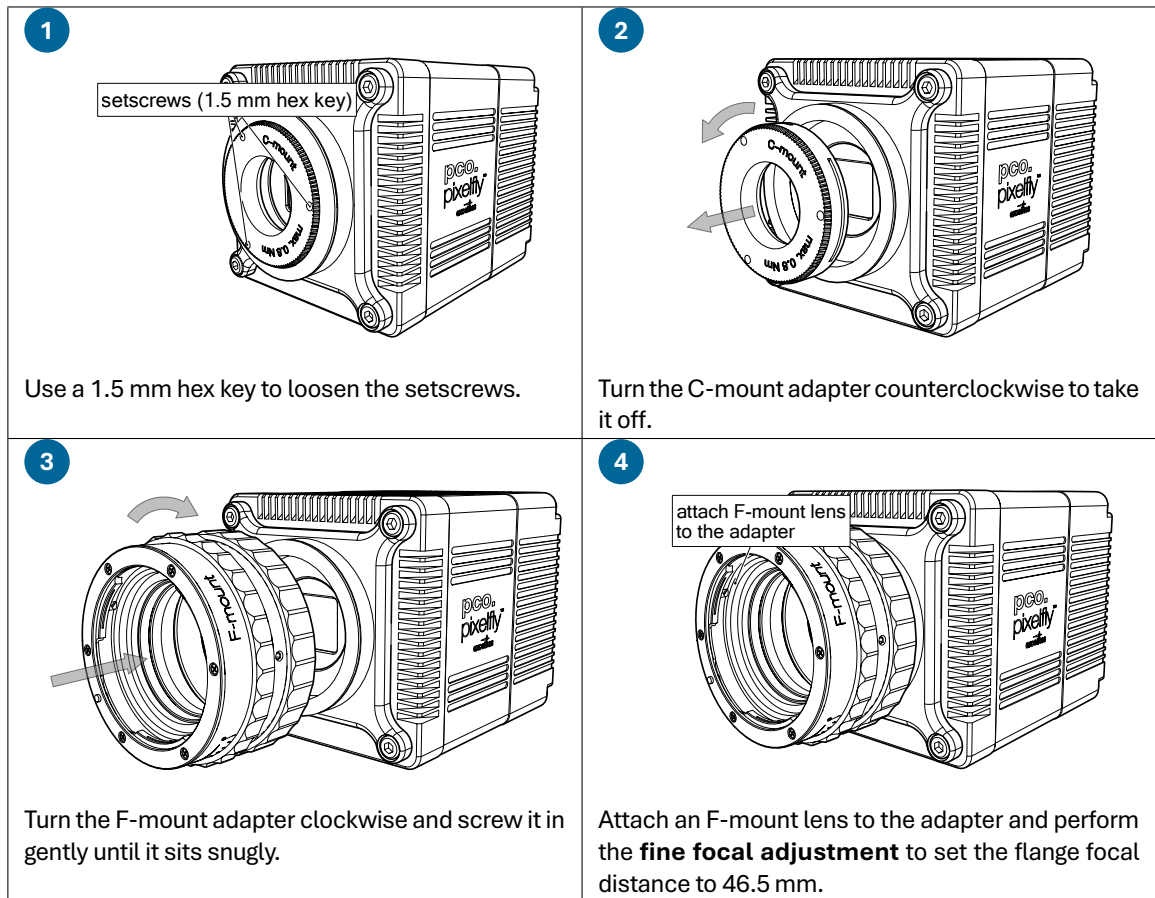
Keep in mind that C-mount lenses might cause vignetting in full-resolution images. To avoid vignetting with a C-mount lens, use the **Region of Interest (ROI)** function to limit the resolution.

5.4.2 How to switch to F-mount

To use an F-mount lens, observe the following steps to switch from the C-mount/TFL-mount adapter to the F-mount adapter.



NOTICE: Dust particles can damage the camera sensor's input window. When changing lens mount adapters or lenses, work in a clean environment and ensure not to touch the input window.



Our F-mount adapter supports lenses with automatic diaphragm, allowing you to set the aperture using the adapter's aperture ring. F-mount lenses without an automatic diaphragm can still be mounted, but their aperture cannot be controlled via the adapter and must be set manually on the lens.

5.4.3 How to perform fine focal adjustment

For the fine focal adjustment of any of the lens mount adapters, use compatible lenses with a large aperture.

Follow these steps:

- 1 Screw a lens with a large aperture onto the adapter, turning it clockwise.
- 2 Follow the **Quick Start Guide** to see an image.
- 3 Set the lens focus to infinity.
- 4 Point the camera at a distant object.
Rule of thumb: The distance to the object must be at least 200 times the focal length of the lens. The further away, the better.
- 5 Adjust the adapter until the object is in focus.
- 6 Set the lens focus to minimum working distance (opposite to infinity).
- 7 Point the camera at an object placed at the minimum working distance.
- 8 Adjust the adapter until the object is in focus.
- 9 Repeat steps 3 - 8 until the focus is consistently sharp in both positions.



5.5 Camera mounting

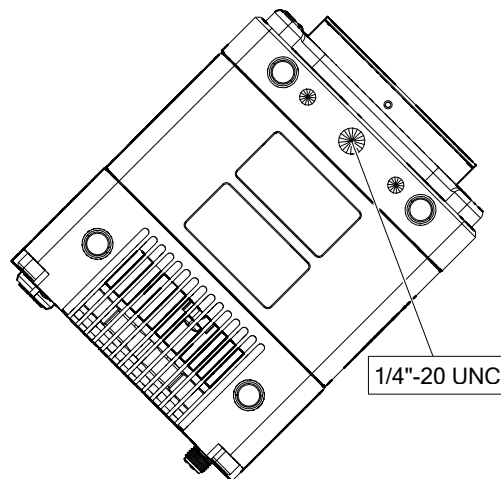
To reduce vibrations when placed on a flat surface, the camera is equipped with rubber feet. Additionally, there are several options to mount the camera. Ensure the camera is mounted firmly to prevent vibrations from affecting image quality.



NOTICE: Dropping the camera may damage the camera housing or internal components. When mounting the camera, make sure it is mounted securely. If the camera has been dropped, disconnect it from power and contact [customer support](#).

5.5.1 Tripod mounting

The camera can be mounted on a tripod via the tripod mount located toward the front of the bottom of the housing. To ensure the camera's compatibility with most conventional tripods, this mount is equipped with a 1/4"-20 UNC thread.



NOTICE: Do not overtighten, as this might damage the mounting stud or thread. For the 1/4"-20 UNC thread the maximum recommended torque is 7 nm.

5.5.2 Custom mounting

The camera housing includes several attachment points on the bottom and front, offering flexibility for accommodating customer-designed mounting solutions. It is recommended to use more than one attachment point to stabilize the camera.



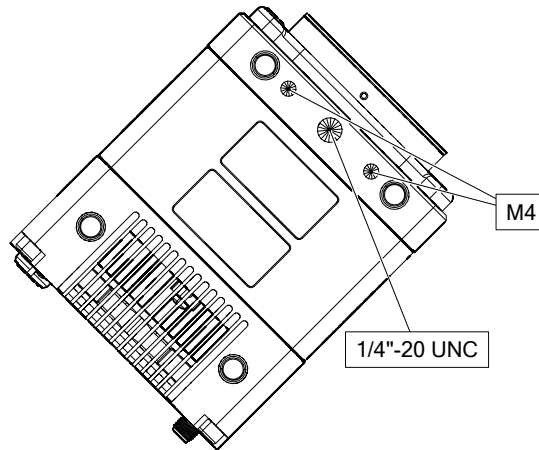
When designing a mounting device, keep the camera's weight and dimensions in mind. For more information, refer to the camera's [datasheet](#) and download the supporting drawings from our [MachVis System Configurator](#).



NOTICE: Overtightening the screws when mounting the camera may cause damage. The maximum recommended torque for the M4 threads is 2.2 Nm. For the 1/4"-20 UNC thread do not exceed a torque of 7 Nm.

Bottom mounting:

There are two M4 threads located at the bottom toward the front. In addition, feel free to use the tripod mount in the center.



Front (Direct) mounting:

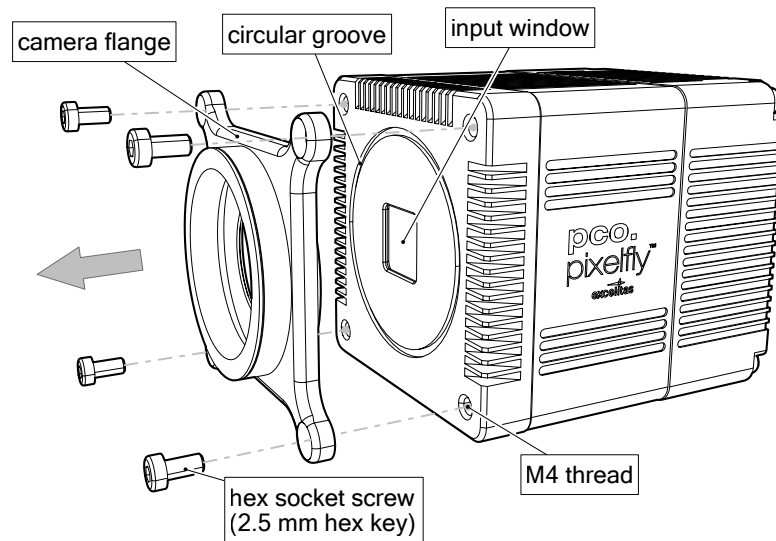
There are four M4 threads located at the front of the housing, usually used to attach the camera flange to the camera. The camera flange is detachable and the four threads may be used to secure the camera directly (without a lens or lens mount adapter) to a mounting device.



By direct mounting you can make use of the minimum distance between the camera's housing and its focal plane.



NOTICE: Dust particles can damage the camera sensor's input window. When changing lens mount adapters or lenses, work in a clean environment and ensure not to touch the input window.

**Follow these steps:**

- 1 Remove the lens, lens mount adapter and camera flange.
- 2 Seal the circular groove with an O-ring or design the mounting device to block any parasitic light.
- 3 Secure the camera to the mounting device by using the M4 threads.

6 Setup and configuration

This chapter explains the minimum requirements for a computer to operate the camera, how to setup the hardware, and the available software options for camera control.

6.1 System requirements



These are the minimum requirements for a computer to facilitate installation, smooth operation, and performance of the camera system:

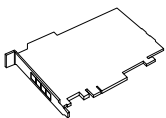
System components	Minimum requirements
OS (64-bit) ^a	Windows 10 or later Ubuntu 20.04 or 22.04 Debian 11 or 12 RHEL 8 or 9 Rocky Linux 8 or 9
CPU	i7 or XEON > 2.8 GHz
RAM	16 GB
Storage	500 MB (SSD; NVMe)
GPU	Nvidia (CC $\geq$ 8; VRAM $\geq$ 2 GB)
Display	Full-HD resolution display
PCIe slot	Gen 3 x8

^aNot all products in our software suite are compatible with every operating system listed.

We recommend to use only currently supported operating systems.

Download the latest versions of our PCO software and camera drivers from our [website](#).

6.2 Frame grabber



A CLHS-compatible frame grabber card is included on delivery as part of the camera system. This card is to be used to establish the CLHS connection for data transfer between the computer and the camera. Download and install the PCO CLHS Driver from our [website](#) to use the frame grabber with the camera.

Follow the installation guidance in our [PCO driver manual](#) and any information given by the manufacturer.



Since this camera requires only one CLHS link, a single 4-channel CLHS frame grabber can support up to four cameras.

6.3 Cooling system

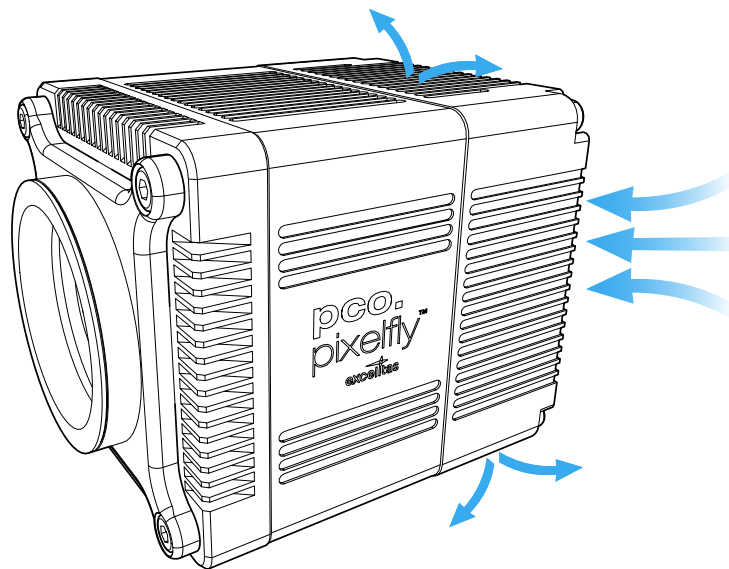
The camera is cooled by forced air. The fan turns on when the camera is powered on, and its speed is controlled automatically by default.

For vibration-sensitive applications, the fan speed can be adjusted manually.



Keep ambient temperature stable for optimal performance.

The rear-mounted fan draws air into the camera, directing it toward the air vents at the top and bottom. To ensure a constant operating temperature, the camera needs a sufficient supply of fresh air.



NOTICE: Do not obstruct the air vents or the fan. Ensure sufficient clearance around the air vents. Reduced or disabled fan operation or inadequate ventilation may cause excessive heat, which can wear out components and lead to more frequent repairs or even replacement.



pco.camware:

Manual fan control is available by switching off Automatic Fan Control and setting Fan Speed to the desired percentage.

6.4 Hardware setup

This section explains the hardware setup to use the camera system, including the most common optional components.



NOTICE: Do not bend, kink, or sharply twist the FOL cable at any time to avoid damage and signal loss. The minimum bend radius is 7.5 mm.



NOTICE: Do not force any connectors. All connectors can be connected properly without excessive force. Improper alignment or forcing may damage the connector or the device.

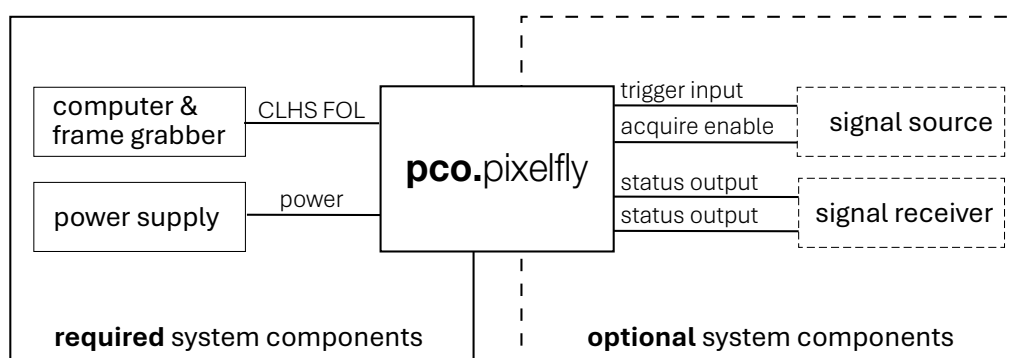
These components are essential:

- 1 Install the **frame grabber**.
- 2 Power the camera via the included power supply and cable.
- 3 Remove any plastic covers and connect the FOL cable for data transfer. Align the protrusion on the single-connector end with the slot on the camera and press gently until it clicks. Connect lane pair 1 on the multi-connector end to the frame grabber.

These components are optional:

- 4 Attach a coaxial cable for signal input to one or both SMA input connectors.
- 5 Attach a coaxial cable for status signal output to one or both SMA output connectors.

Example setup:



6.5 Software options

This section provides an overview of the available software needed to control the camera. In addition to our GUI-based camera control software, **pco.camware** and **pco.vision**, we offer both **software development kits** and third-party **application integrations** to address the full range of user needs.

All PCO software products are available on our [website](#) free of charge.

Unless otherwise stated, all software-related instructions and explanations in this manual pertain to the GUI software **pco.camware**, which is used for demonstration purposes due to its broad applicability and ease of use.

6.5.1 PCO user interface software



Our graphical user interface (GUI) camera control applications, **pco.camware** (Windows) and **pco.vision** (Linux/Windows), are suitable for all our camera systems. We recommend using them for initial setup and to become familiar with the camera.

These applications enable control of most camera settings and facilitate image acquisition and storage. You can tailor them to your needs by choosing from different layouts, styles, and features.

Download the latest version from our [website](#) and follow the installation guide in the respective software manual.

→ During installation, when the window **Choose Components** appears, make sure **Camera Link HS DLL (CLHS)** is checked.

6.5.2 PCO software development kits

PCO offers [software development kits \(SDK\)](#) for a wide range of different programming languages to be used for customized applications. They are compatible with Windows and Linux platforms.

We feature the high-level SDKs **pco.cpp**, **pco.python**, and **pco.csharp** for C++, Python, and C# applications, respectively. To control the camera in MATLAB, LabVIEW, and Java, use **pco.matlab**, **pco.labview**, and **pco.java**.

For users requiring a low-level C interface, we also provide the general SDKs, **pco.sdk** and **pco.recorder**.

More detailed information can be found on our [website](#).

Visit our [GitHub repositories](#) for example projects.

6.5.3 Application integrations

In case you are already used to a different software, PCO cameras are also integrated in a variety of widely used third-party applications.

We provide and manage the **PCO µManager Integration**, which allows for camera control directly in µManager.

Other integrations are developed and maintained by third-party software providers. For microscopy this includes applications such as **NIS-Elements** and **VisiView**.



7 Operation modes

This chapter provides a detailed overview of the camera's functions and features, outlining the various operation modes.



The **pco.camware logo** indicates short instructions on how to use the respective settings in pco.camware. For detailed instructions, refer to the [pco.camware user manual](#).

7.1 Basic operation

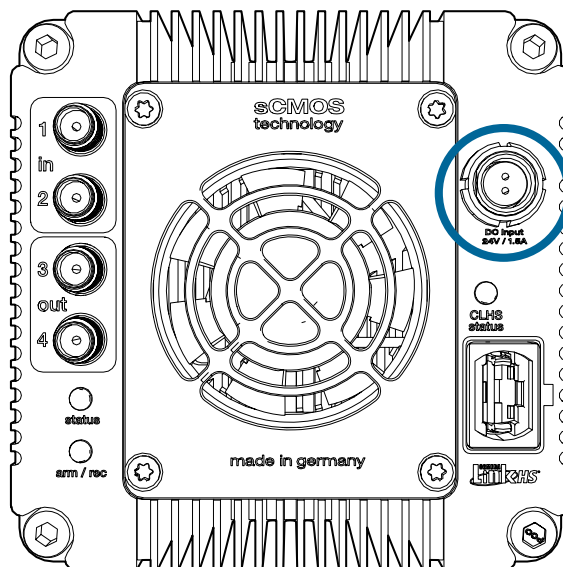
This section covers the basic operation of the camera, including switching it on or off, understanding the provided LED signals, and how to set the exposure time for image acquisition.



Follow the **Quick Start Guide** to capture your first images.

7.1.1 Switching the camera on/off

After the hardware setup is finished and the camera is powered up, the camera is ready for use.



- 1 The camera turns on automatically as soon as it is powered up.
- 2 To turn off the camera, disconnect it from power.

7.1.2 LED signals and their meanings

The camera is equipped with three LEDs, labeled "status", "arm/rec" and "CLHS status". These LEDs are **located on the rear panel** of the camera and provide information about the state of the camera.



For light-sensitive environments the LED lights can be switched off via software. However, as these signals give important information, they should be switched on to check the state of the camera if issues arise.

LED "status"

This LED indicates the general state of the camera. It displays three colors, which have the following meanings:

Color	Meaning
 (off)	camera is without power / switched off
 orange	camera is booting
 green	camera is ready for use
 red	error (see the Troubleshooting chapter)

LED "arm/rec"

This LED only lights up when the status of the camera is "ready for use" (green light LED "status"). When the status is different, the LED "arm/rec" is off. It is capable of displaying orange, either solid or blinking, with the following meanings:

Signal	Meaning
 (off)	camera is disarmed
 solid orange	camera is armed/ready to record
 blinking orange	camera is recording

LED "CLHS status"

This LED provides information about the status of the camera's CLHS connection. It is capable of displaying green, with the meaning:

Signal	Meaning
 (off)	camera is without power / switched off
 solid green	camera is waiting for CLHS connection CLHS connection is established



pco.camware:

In Camera Properties (Expert) switch off/on Camera LED.

7.1.3 Setting the exposure time

Set the exposure time via software. If the image is too bright, decrease it. If the image is too dark, increase it.



Keep in mind that longer exposure times may affect the frame rate.

Because the exposure duration depends on the camera's internal timing constraints, it can only be adjusted in fixed, predefined steps:

Camera	Exposure time range	Step size
pco.pixelfly 26 CLHS	7.8 μ s - 30 s	tbd μ s

Adding delay:

For precise synchronization with external devices, there is the option to add delay before the exposure of each frame. Delay may be added in predefined steps. Adding delay will reduce the frame rate.

Camera	Delay time range	Step size
pco.pixelfly 26 CLHS	0 μ s - 1 s	tbd μ s



pco.camware:

Set the exposure time in nanoseconds, microseconds or milliseconds. The software automatically adjusts the time to the nearest supported timing increment. It may be adjusted during recording. The same applies to the delay time.

7.2 Defining Regions of Interest (ROI)

A Region of Interest (ROI) limits readout to a specific part of the sensor, reducing image resolution and possibly affecting the frame rate. This saves processing time and resources by focusing only on the relevant area. Using an ROI improves efficiency and accuracy in tasks like detection, measurement, and monitoring.

The ROI can be adjusted vertically, horizontally, or in both directions, using predefined step sizes:

Vertical ROI (step size 4 rows):

Setting a vertical ROI speeds up frame rate and reduces the amount of image data.

Horizontal ROI (step size 32 columns):

Setting a horizontal ROI reduces the amount of image data, it does not affect frame rate.



pco.camware:

Select the intended values for the sensor sides (Left, Right, Top, and Bottom) in the ROI section.

7.3 Applying binning



Note:

only available in the *pco.pixelfly 26 CLHS* (monochrome variant)

Binning combines adjacent pixels (horizontally, vertically, or both) to form super-pixels. This process improves the signal-to-noise ratio (SNR) by increasing the overall signal, which is useful to enhance image quality in low-light conditions. At the same time the image's spatial resolution is reduced. Note that since binning is performed digitally after signal readout, readout noise will not be reduced.

This camera supports binning for 2 or 4 pixels horizontally, vertically, or in both directions. The two most common types can be applied:

Sum binning:

The process of combining the values of the adjacent pixels by adding them together.

Average binning:

The process of combining adjacent pixels by calculating their average value.



pco.camware:

In Camera Properties (Expert) -> Binning mode choose "Sum" or "Average".
Specify the number of pixels to combine horizontally and vertically.

7.4 Using global shutter mode

The camera is equipped with a global shutter sensor.

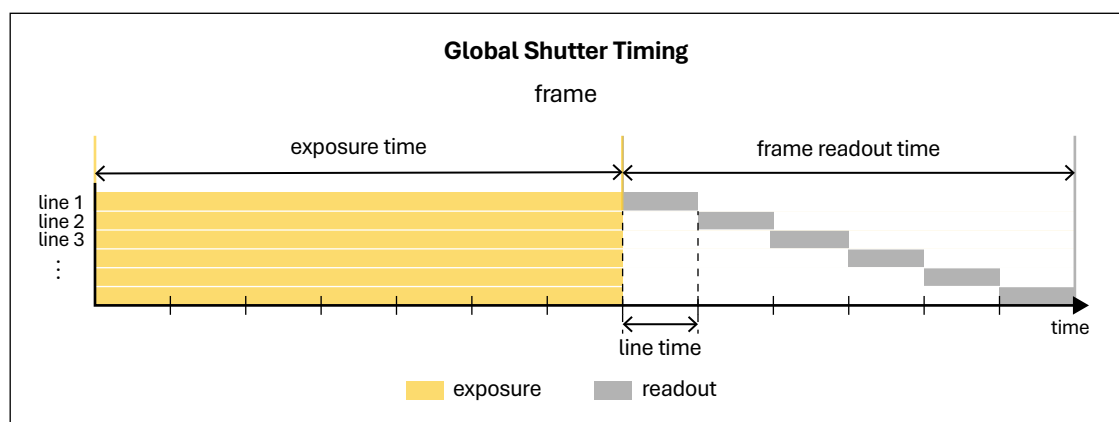


For simplicity, the sensor size, indicated by the number of lines, has been limited in the timing diagrams in this chapter. For details on how a line is defined, see the Dual-row readout section.

In general, a global shutter captures an image by exposing all lines of the sensor at the same time.

The exposure starts and ends simultaneously for all lines, and after the exposure has finished, readout is done line by line. Readout can begin only at regular intervals called the line time.

The diagram below depicts the timing characteristics of a single frame captured with the global shutter:



The exposure time range and the line time are fixed:

Camera	Exposure time range	Line time
pco.pixelfly 26 CLHS	7.8 μ s - 30 s	tbd μ s

Frame readout time

While the exposure time is set directly, the frame readout time is calculated as follows:

$$\text{frame readout time} = \text{line time} \times \text{number of lines}$$

Keep in mind that setting a Region of Interest (ROI) might affect the number of lines.

Exposure while readout

Exposure while readout means that while frame (n) is still being read out, the camera can already begin exposing the next frame (n+1). This enables higher frame rates and more efficient data acquisition, which is especially relevant during continuous image acquisition.

Note that even with exposure while readout the readout process is still strictly sequential. As a result, the frame readout time defines the minimum possible frame time³. Depending on the configuration, the highest achievable frame rate may be limited by either the frame readout time or the exposure time.

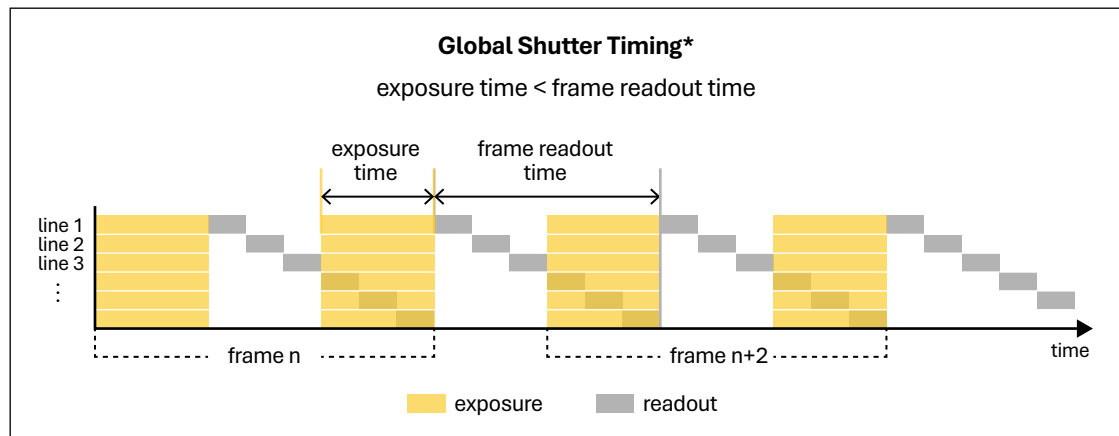
³In practice, a small processing delay is added to each frame, slightly increasing the actual frame time; this delay becomes more noticeable with very small vertical ROIs.



The following diagrams depict the limiting factors during continuous acquisition, illustrating image capture timing at the highest achievable frame rate.

Exposure time < frame readout time

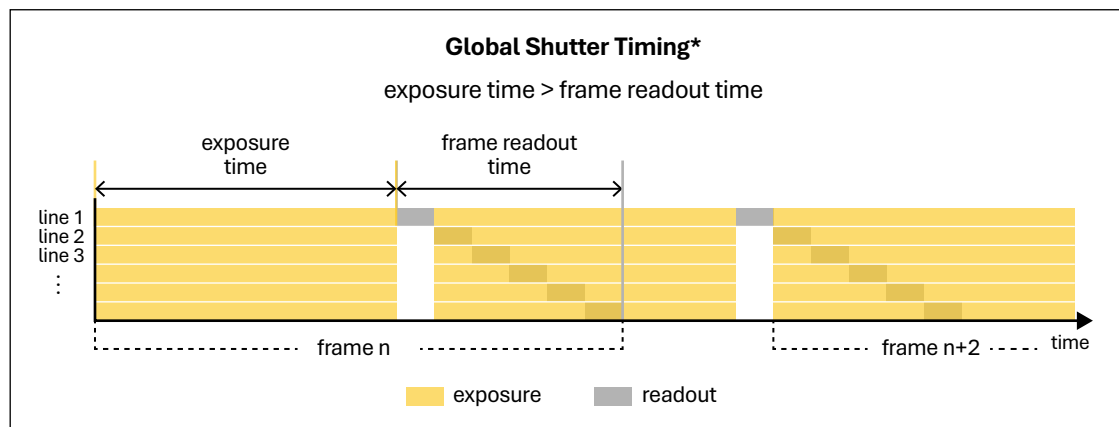
When the exposure time is shorter than the frame readout time, the readout time becomes the bottleneck. The frame rate does not increase even if the exposure is shortened further.⁴



*Overlap shown only applies to models supporting exposure while readout; for other models, exposure always starts after frame readout, directly affecting the frame rate.

Exposure time > frame readout time

However, when the exposure time is longer than the frame readout time, the exposure time becomes the limiting factor. Shortening it will directly increase the frame rate.



*Overlap shown only applies to models supporting exposure while readout; for other models, exposure always starts after frame readout.

Output signal for exposure timing

The camera provides an output signal, Status Exposure, which conveys information about the exposure timing.

For detailed information about this signal and its timing characteristics, please refer to the chapter **Understanding status signals** and the section **Status Exposure**.

⁴This only applies for models supporting exposure while readout; for other models, exposure always starts after frame readout, directly affecting the frame rate.

Adding delay

For precise synchronization with external devices, there is the option to add delay before the exposure of each frame. Delay may be added in predefined steps. Adding delay will reduce the frame rate.

Camera	Delay time range	Step size
pco.pixelfly 26 CLHS	0 - 1 s	tbd μ s

7.5 Understanding status signals



Additional equipment required:

The status signal feature requires a compatible signal receiver and a connecting cable.

The camera can output two real-time status signals, **Status Busy** and **Status Exposure**, which may be used for synchronization purposes.

Use output ports SMA 3 and SMA 4 to measure the signals. With two cables connected, the camera can send two status signals simultaneously.

Via software you can:

- switch the signals on and off,
- select the signal polarity.

7.5.1 Status Busy

This status signal indicates whether the camera is ready to accept a trigger. The active state of Status Busy shows that the camera is unable to process new trigger events.

Parameter	Value
Assigned port	SMA 3
Status	Off On
Signal polarity	High Low

Description for signal polarity 'High':

A high signal on Status Busy means no trigger can be accepted (the camera is busy), while a low signal shows that the camera can accept a new trigger.



Timing diagrams of Status Busy in combination with different trigger modes are included in the chapter **Configuring trigger modes**.



pco.camware:

In Camera Properties (Expert) -> Hardware I/O Control -> Status Busy choose "On".
Set Signal Polarity to "High" or "Low".



7.5.2 Status Exposure

This signal indicates the exposure phase of the sensor.

Parameter	Value
Assigned port	SMA 4
Status	Off On
Signal polarity	High Low

Description for signal polarity 'High':

A high signal on Status Exposure means the sensor is currently exposed, while a low signal shows that the sensor is not exposed.



Timing diagrams of Status Exposure in combination with different trigger modes are included in the chapter **Configuring trigger modes**.

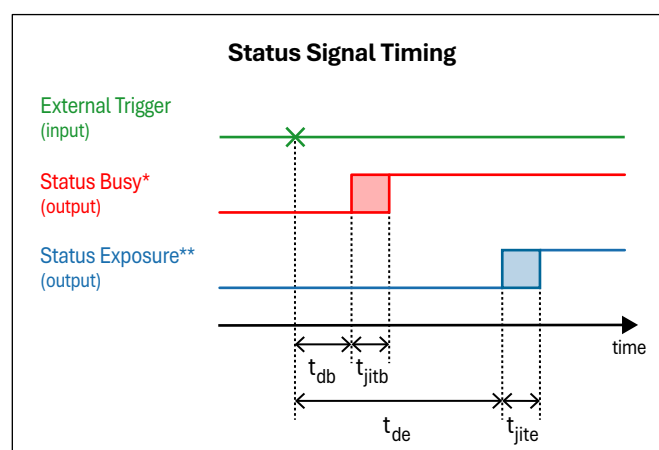


pco.camware:

In Camera Properties (Expert) -> Hardware I/O Control -> Status Expos choose "On".
Set Signal Polarity to "High" or "Low".

7.5.3 Timing characteristics

After the camera receives a trigger signal, there is a short processing delay before the signals for Status Busy and Status Exposure are updated. The following timing diagram illustrates these delays, followed by a table presenting precise delay measurements⁵.



*Status Busy is shown with signal polarity: High.

**Status Exposure is shown with signal polarity: High.

⁵Values are rounded to the nearest nanosecond and to one decimal place for microseconds.



Parameter	pco.pixelfly 26 CLHS
t_{db} (delay Status Busy)	tbd ns
t_{jtb} (jitter Status Busy)	tbd ns
t_{de} (delay Status Exposure)	tbd μ s
t_{jte} (jitter Status Exposure)	$\leq$ tbd μ s

7.6 Configuring trigger modes

The camera supports several trigger modes. You can choose between **Auto Sequence**, **Software Trigger**, **External Exposure Start** and **External Exposure Control**. Select the trigger mode via software. The signal for external triggering is received via input port SMA 1.

Adding delay

For precise synchronization with external devices, there is the option to add delay via software before the exposure of each frame in all trigger modes but External Exposure Control. Delay may be added in predefined steps. Adding delay will reduce the frame rate.



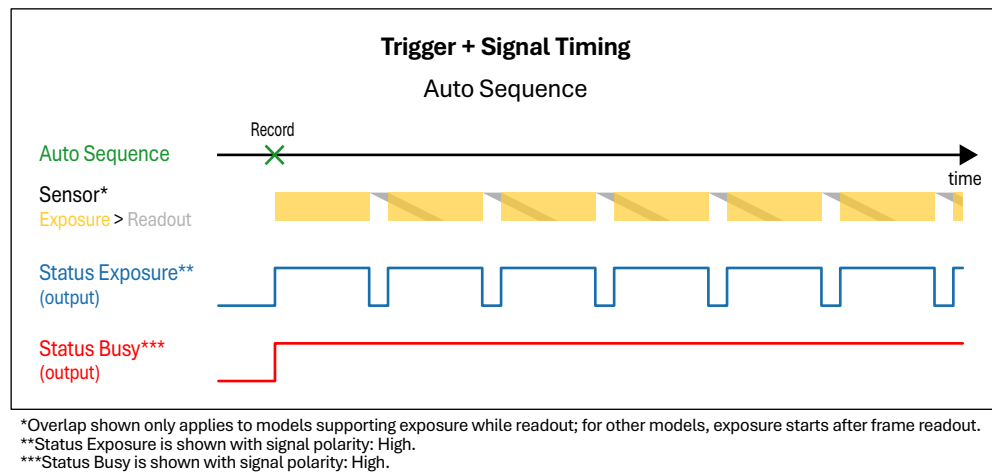
The diagrams shown in this chapter do not include any system delay or jitter times for either trigger or status signals, unless explicitly stated.

7.6.1 Auto Sequence

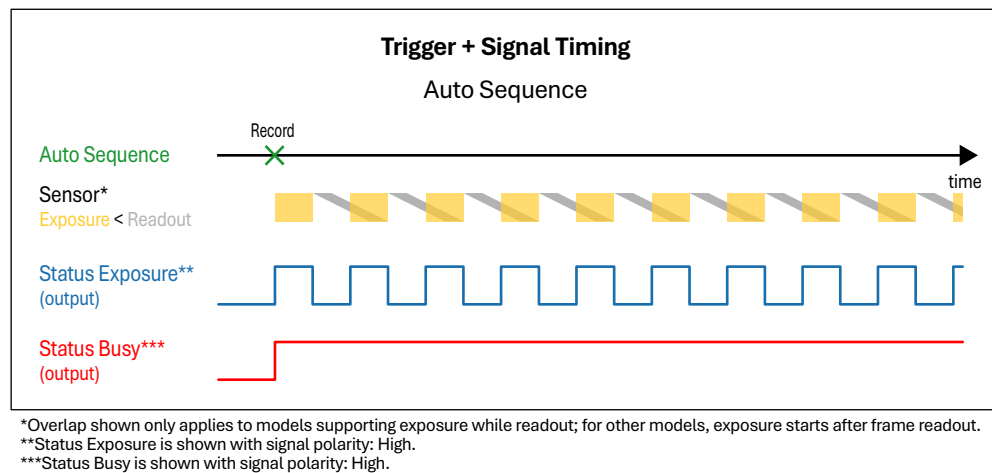
This is the default trigger mode. In this mode, image acquisition runs continuously between a start command and a stop command.

Use this mode when the focus is on capturing the maximum number of frames per second.

The camera optimizes image acquisition by computing the highest achievable frame rate based on the current configuration. When the exposure time is longer than the frame readout time, the next frame begins exposure immediately after the first line of the previous frame has been read out. In this case the exposure duration is the limiting factor for achieving a high frame rate, as shown in the diagram below.



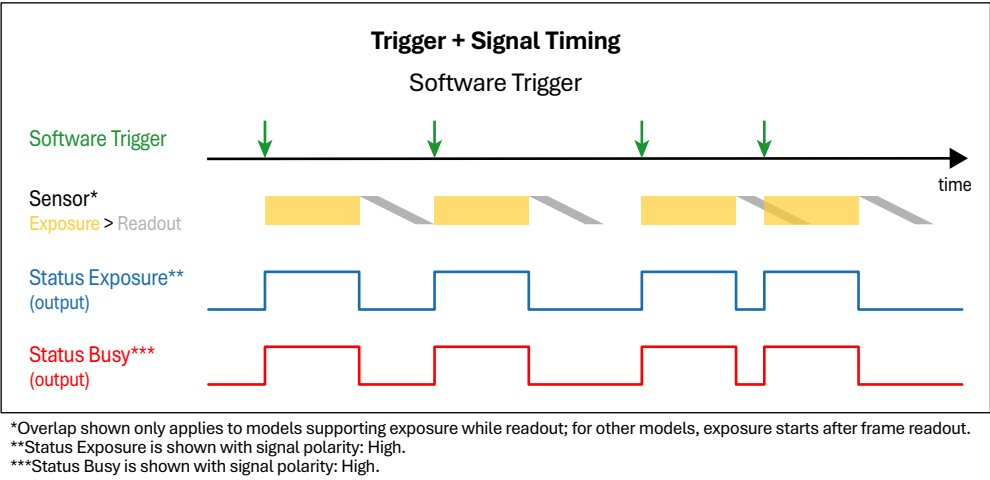
When the exposure time is shorter than the frame readout time, the camera schedules the next exposure of the first line based on the readout timing. It is timed so precisely that when the readout of the last line of one frame finishes, it immediately continues with the readout of the first line of the next frame. The result is a seamless transition between the readout of two consecutive frames, making the frame readout time the limiting factor for a high frame rate, as illustrated in the following diagram.



pco.camware:
 Choose Trigger Mode **Auto Sequence**.
 Click 'Record' and continuous image acquisition starts.

7.6.2 Software Trigger

This trigger mode is for the acquisition of single images via software command. Its focus is on capturing a specific event on demand.
 Use this mode for low-frequency image acquisition of static objects, where precise timing is not critical.



pco.camware:
Select Trigger Mode **Soft Trigger**.
Click 'Record' and the 'Trigger' button appears next to it.
With every click on 'Trigger' a single image is captured.

7.6.3 External Exposure Start



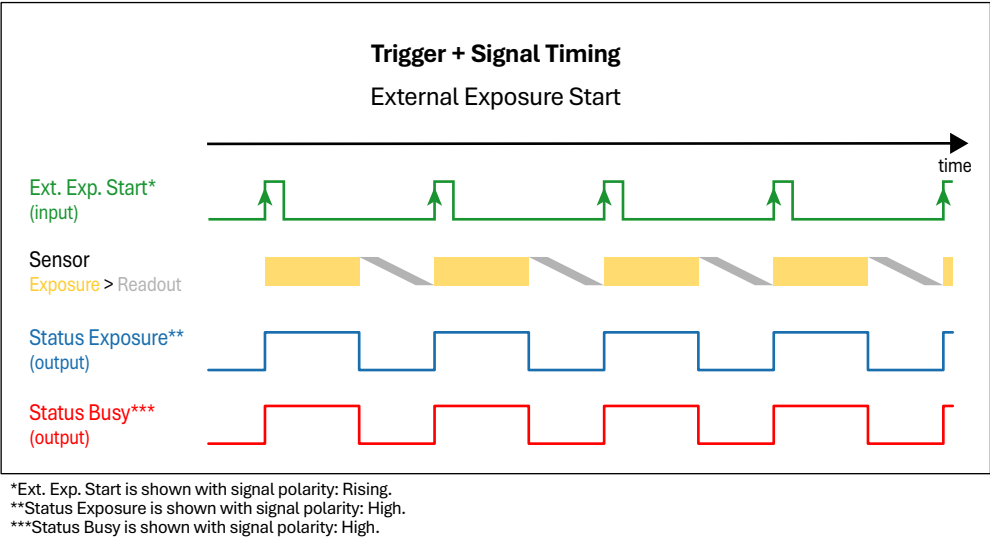
Additional equipment required:
This mode requires an external trigger source and a connecting cable.

In External Exposure Start, each exposure is initiated by an external trigger signal.
Use this mode for precise timing of image capture and to synchronize the camera with external devices.

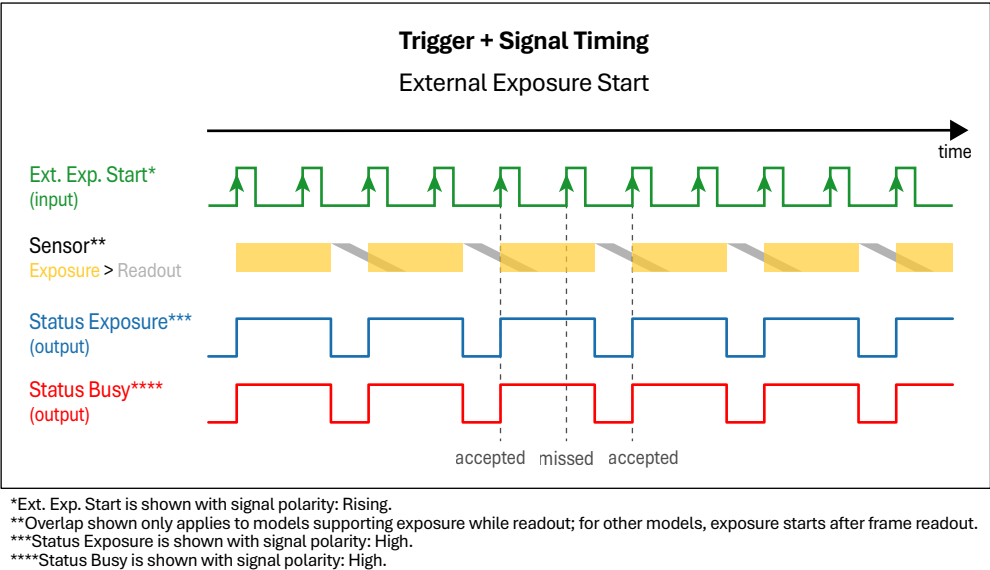
Parameter	Value
Assigned port	SMA 1
Status	Off On
Signal polarity	Rising Falling

Due to the readout of the sensor, exposure only starts at specific times determined by line timing. The exact timing is explained in the section **Timing characteristics** below.

By default, each rising edge of the signal triggers the capture of a single image. The signal frequency directly determines the frame rate. Without a trigger, no image is acquired.



The possible frame rate is limited by sensor exposure, readout, and processing time, depending on the current configuration. In the External Exposure Start trigger mode, trigger events can be accepted during readout, as indicated by the Status Busy signal. If trigger pulses exceed the camera's capacity, some may be missed, resulting in fewer images captured than expected from the signal frequency.

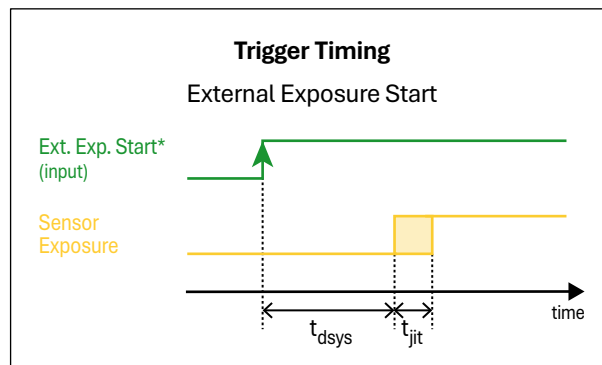


If the external trigger input rate is too close to the maximum frame rate, it becomes unpredictable whether a trigger is accepted or missed. Check the Status Busy signal to confirm that the camera can accept a new trigger.

Timing characteristics

After the camera receives the external trigger signal, there is a short processing delay before the sensor is exposed. The following timing diagram illustrates this delay, followed by a table presenting precise delay measurements⁶.

⁶Values are rounded to one decimal place.



Parameter	pco.pixelfly 26 CLHS
t_{dsys} (system delay)	tbd μ s
t_{jit} (jitter)	$\leq$ tbd μ s



pco.camware:

In Camera Properties (Expert) -> Hardware I/O Control -> Exposure Trigger choose "On".
 Select Trigger Mode **Ext. Exp. Start**.
 Click 'Record' and trigger from external source.

7.6.4 External Exposure Control



Additional equipment required:

This mode requires an external trigger source and a connecting cable.

In External Exposure Control, both the start and duration of each exposure are defined by an external trigger signal.

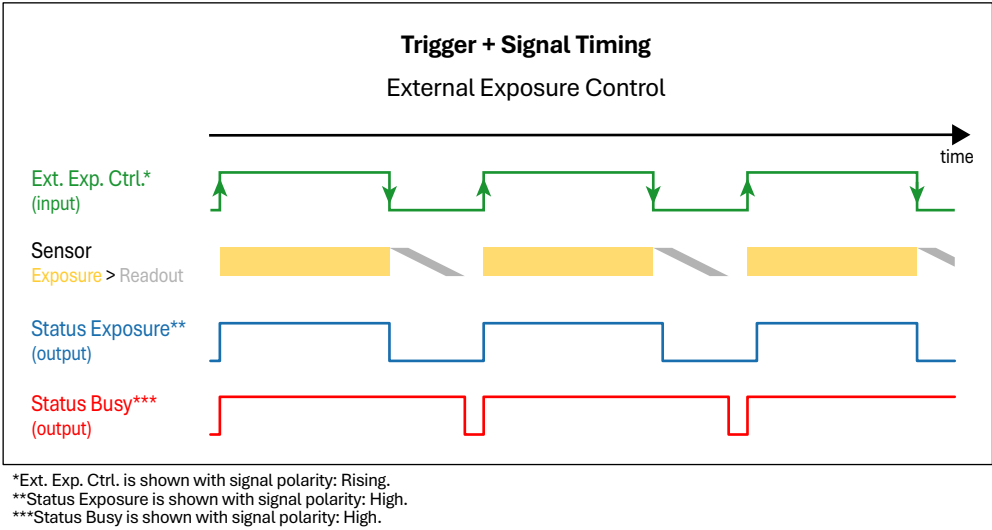
Use this mode for precise timing of image capture and to synchronize the camera with external devices.

Parameter	Value
Assigned port	SMA 1
Status	Off On
Signal polarity	Rising Falling

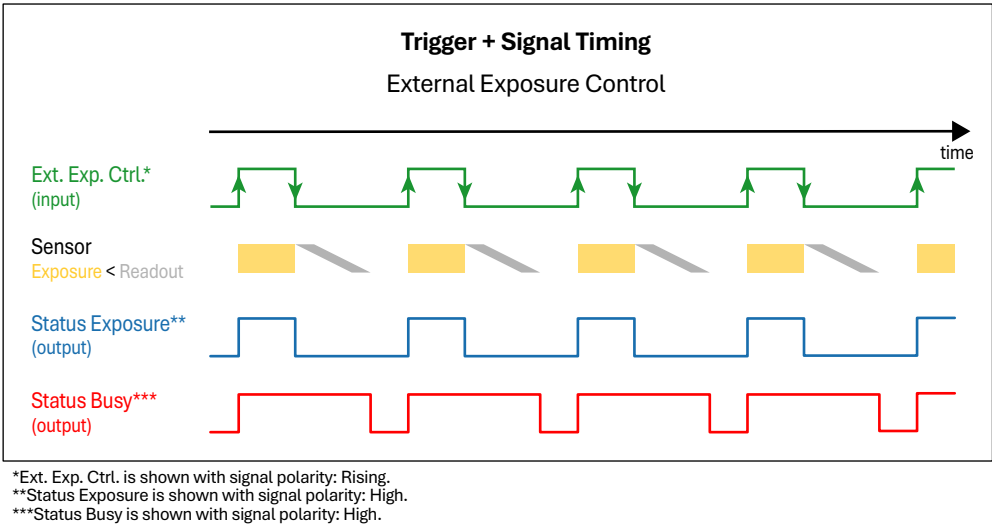
Due to the readout of the sensor, exposure only starts and ends at specific times determined by line timing. The exact timing is explained in the section **Timing characteristics** below. Since the camera's exposure time is limited, exposure stops automatically once the maximum exposure time is reached.

By default, exposure begins by the rising edge of the trigger signal and ends when the falling edge is detected. The signal frequency directly determines the frame rate as well as the duration of exposure. Without a trigger, no image is acquired.





The possible frame rate is limited by sensor readout and processing time, depending on the current configuration. In the External Exposure Control trigger mode, trigger events cannot be accepted during readout, as indicated by the Status Busy signal.



If trigger pulses exceed the camera’s capacity, some may be missed, resulting in fewer images captured than expected from the signal frequency.

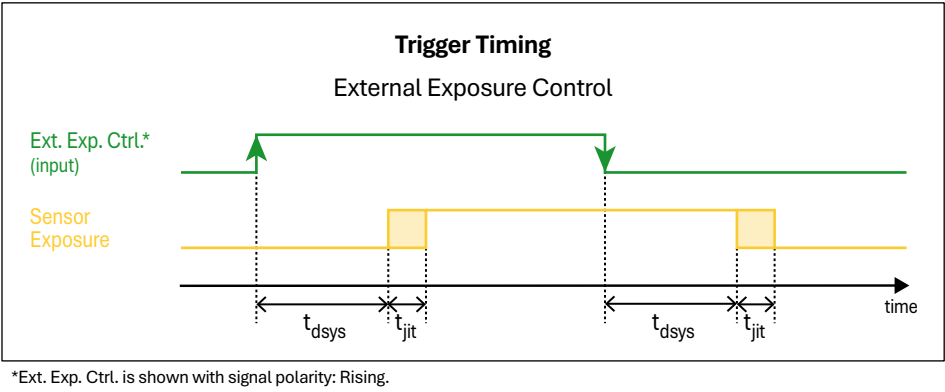


If the external trigger input rate is too close to the maximum frame rate it becomes unpredictable whether a trigger is accepted or missed. Check the Status Busy signal to confirm that the camera can accept a new trigger.

Timing characteristics

After the camera receives the external trigger signal, there is a short processing delay before the start and end of sensor exposure. The following timing diagram illustrates this delay, followed by a table presenting precise delay measurements⁷.

⁷Values are rounded to one decimal place.



Parameter	pco.pixelfly 26 CLHS
t _{dsys} (system delay)	tbd μs
t _{jit} (jitter)	≤tbd μs



pco.camware:
In Camera Properties (Expert) -> Hardware I/O Control -> Exposure Trigger choose "On".
Select Trigger Mode **Ext. Exp. Ctrl.**
Click 'Record' and trigger from external source.

7.7 Utilizing Acquire Enable



Additional equipment required:
The Acquire Enable feature requires an external signal source and a connecting cable.

This feature is an additional option to control image acquisition by administering an external signal.

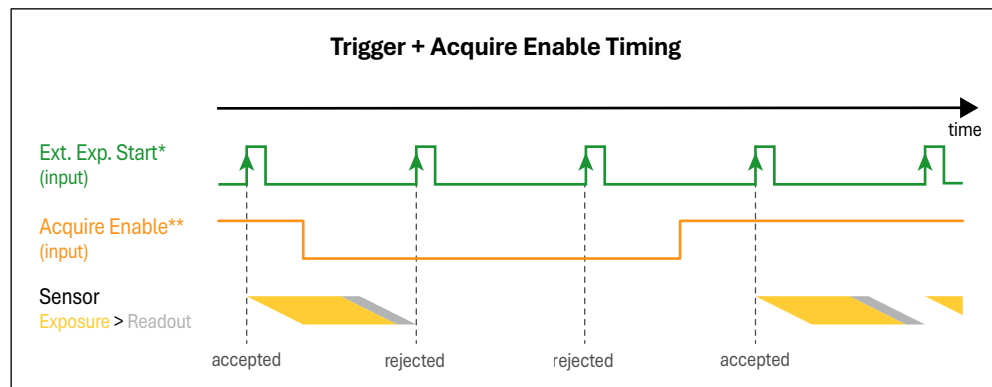


Acquire Enable can be used with the trigger modes Auto Sequence, External Exposure Start, and External Exposure Control. The Software Trigger is not affected by this signal.

Parameter	Value
Assigned port	SMA 2
Status	Off On
Signal polarity	High Low

As gate signal, Acquire Enable enables or disables image capture by permitting or rejecting trigger events. When the signal is active, the camera is allowed to capture images based on the selected trigger mode. When it is changed to inactive, image capture is blocked.

The signal polarity 'High' means a high-level signal input enables image acquisition while a low-level signal input disables it. For the signal polarity 'Low', the opposite applies.



*Ext. Exp. Start is shown with signal polarity: Rising.

**Acquire Enable is shown with signal polarity: High.

Description for signal polarity 'High':

While the Acquire Enable signal is high, images are captured based on the settings of the trigger mode. Once the Acquire Enable signal changes to low, new trigger signals are rejected and image acquisition is paused. As soon as the Acquire Enable signal returns to high, image acquisition resumes.



pco.camware:

In Camera Properties (Expert):

1. Hardware I/O Control -> Acquire Enable choose 'On' and desired signal polarity.
2. Recording Control -> Acquire Mode select 'External'.

8 Maintenance

This chapter provides essential guidance on the proper cleaning and storage of the camera to ensure long-term performance and reliability.

8.1 Cleaning



CAUTION

Risk of injury due to electric shock. Before cleaning any component unplug the camera.

8.1.1 General cleaning

Camera housing:

Use a soft, dry cloth to dust off the camera housing.

Data port/FOL connectors:

Use specialized MTP/MPO cleaners to clean the data port or any FOL connectors.

Power port and SMA connectors:

Use compressed air or a soft, anti-static brush to remove dust.

Lens:

Refer to the manual of the respective lens for information.

8.1.2 Input window cleaning



NOTICE: Only clean the sensor's input window if absolutely necessary. Do not touch the input window, as this may scratch and damage the glass.

How to be sure the dust is on the input window:

- Capture a uniform image, e.g. of a white sheet of paper.
- Rotate the camera lens.
- Capture another image, are the dark spots in the same position?
 - ⇒ NO: Dust is not on the input window, no need to clean it.
 - ⇒ YES: Dust is on the input window.

Clean with compressed air:

- Disconnect from power and any cables.
- Remove the lens and lens mount adapter.
- Blow out the input window with clean compressed air.



8.2 Storage

Read this section to learn about the proper storage conditions to protect the camera system.

Dust-free environment:

Store the camera system in a dust-free environment to keep dust from entering the camera housing.

Dry environment:

Store the camera in a non-condensing environment within the specified humidity range to keep moisture from entering the camera housing.

Temperature:

Store the camera within the specified temperature range.

Secure location:

Make sure to keep the camera in a secure location so it does not fall down or get damaged.

Protect input window:

Always store the camera with the protective cover or a lens attached to avoid dust and dirt on the input window.

Protect FOL cable:

Do not bend the FOL cable for storage to avoid breaking the fibers.

Protect FOL connectors:

Always store the camera with the protective covers on the data port and the FOL cable to avoid dust and dirt on the connectors.



9 Troubleshooting

Issue	Solution
Status LED red, indicating error	Check camera health status or contact our customer support .
Software does not recognize camera	• Check that lane pair 1 is connected. • Check FOL cable for kinks. • Clean all connectors with an MTP/MPO cleaner. • Reattach the connectors: The single connector on the camera needs to lock in with a noticable click, while the one required multi-connector slides in with light resistance. • Check frame grabber. • Update/Reinstall software.
Camera shuts off by itself	Check if the camera is overheating.
Issues with frame grabber	Refer to the troubleshooting guide for frame grabbers (CLHS interface).

Where to find the camera's serial number:

- Camera housing: The serial number is on a label on the **bottom of the camera**.
- pco.camware: In the Camera Properties menu in the Camera section at the top.

Where to find the installed firmware version:

- pco.camware: In the Camera Properties menu in the Camera section at the top.

For any other questions or problems, feel free to use the following options:

- Read the [pco.troubleshooting manual](#) for help with a PCO software product.
- Fill out the [support ticket](#) on our website.



10 Recycling



The camera and its accessories include electronic devices, which contain materials harmful to the environment. These electronic devices must be recycled.

To safely dispose of your camera, take it to your local recycling center or return it to Excelitas PCO GmbH.

11 Warranty

Please be advised that all quotations and sales of products by Excelitas PCO GmbH are subject to the General Terms and Conditions of Sale. Within these terms, we stipulate a 12-month warranty period commencing from the date of shipment to the buyer.

In the event of a claim under this guarantee, the equipment is to be sent, including a description of the fault, to Excelitas PCO GmbH. Returned equipment will not be accepted without a ticket number issued by the support team, which is available under the email address pco@excelitas.com.

Follow shipping instructions provided by the service technician. The unit should be returned in its original packaging if possible. In the case of damage caused by wear and tear, careless handling, neglect, by the use of force or in the case of interventions and repairs not carried out by Excelitas PCO GmbH, the guarantee ceases to be valid. This guarantee may not form the basis for any claims for damages, in particular not for compensation of consequential damages. The warranty is not transferable.

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