

When I first noticed Flock cameras in Riverside, I was interested in researching how Flock (and automatic license plate readers [ALPRs] in general) were used in Riverside. I have made multiple Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests to Riverside and surrounding towns since January of this year. I have obtained Audit Logs that enumerate all of the searches of the Riverside Flock system and have been analyzing its usage.

Recently, there were a lot of claims made by the [Riverside Police about Flock in an article from the Riverside Brookfield Landmark](#). However, many of these claims are misleading at best and dishonest at worse—or else they suggest that the Riverside police do not understand how their Flock system works. I will be going over several of these claims and will be highlighting when the actual usage data from the Flock system contradicts these statements. The majority of these claims can be rebutted using the Flock Network Audit from last month, August 2026, alone. Focusing on current usage highlights how pervasive these issues are and that they are on-going.

Claim: “All these are audited. Any search within our system is audited by the command staff here at the police department.”

Fact: This is the biggest claim in the article; that all searches in the system are audited, and therefore approved/condoned by the command staff. **However, in August of 2026 alone there were 153,600 searches of the Riverside flock data.** Did Public Safety Director Buckley look over all 153,600 of these searches?

If they were all audited, does that mean Buckley and the command staff approves of this search where the only justification is a suspicious vehicle?

Porter IN PD	1134 08/27/2026, 07:00:01 PM UTC	***	Traffic Infraction - <u>sus veh</u>
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Or this one where the reason is squealing tires?

Charleston IL PD	1433 08/02/2026, 09:30:01 PM UTC		Arson - <u>squealing tires</u>
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Does he approve this search originating in Rockford where they just don’t tell you their reason?

Rockford IL PD	1201 08/18/2026, 10:00:03 PM UTC	***	Other - Internal
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Does the Riverside Command Staff approve of this one where the Terre Haute Indiana police wanted to know if we have anyone who likes to hang out in Guthrie park?

Terre Haute IN PD	2495 08/13/2026, 04:00:00 AM UTC	***	Curfew/Loitering/Vagrancy Violations
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That last one was tongue-in-cheek, that search actually asks “has this person who was accused of loitering in Terre Haute visited Riverside?”

On a more serious note, do the command staff and Buckley approve of officers searching the Riverside cameras with no justification? Or worse yet, “LMAO” as the reason? [This LMAO search has been in the news recently](#); the Sheriff’s office in Lake County IN made 5 these searches in July of 2025 and each one pulled data from Riverside’s Flock cameras. Riverside still allows Lake County IN SO to access our cameras as of August 2026.

Lake County IN SO	1571 07/04/2025, 02:50:15 PM UTC	***	
Lake County IN SO	1558 07/11/2025, 03:00:00 PM UTC	***	<u>LMAO</u>

Either not all of these searches are audited, or else Riverside is okay with Flock cameras being used to violate our privacy.

Being generous and assuming that this claim only applies to searches done by Riverside PD themselves does little to allay fears of misuse as just **0.24% of searches of Riverside Flock cameras in August of 2026 originate from the Riverside PD.**

Claim: “Buckley said Riverside does not share its Flock data with Immigrations and Customs Enforcement in alignment with department policy and Illinois law.”

Fact: While Riverside does not allow for an ICE agent to *directly* search its cameras, at least six groups that Riverside shares flock data with have 287(g) agreements with ICE.

There are 6 groups with 287(g) agreements with ICE that Riverside currently allows to access our Flock cameras.

- [Hardin County Tennessee Sheriff's Office](#)
- [Montgomery County Tennessee Sheriff's Office](#)
- [Kenosha County Wisconsin Sheriff's Office](#)
- Lauderdale County Alabama Sheriff's Office ([Jail](#), [Task Force](#), [Warrant Service Officer](#))
- Lawrence County Tennessee Sheriff's Office ([Jail](#), [Task Force](#), [Warrant Service Officer](#))
- Wayne County Tennessee Sheriff's Office

1894	TENNESSEE	Wayne County Sheriff's Office	County	Wayne County
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Last month (August 2026), 4 of these departments (Hardin County TN SO, Montgomery County TN SO, Kenosha County WI SO, and Wayne County TN SO) did 1,540 searches of Riverside's Flock data. Sharing with organizations like these gives ICE a back door to search Riverside Flock cameras. [Audits by the Center for Human Rights at the University of Washington have shown that ICE does take advantage of this access.](#)

Riverside also shares its Flock data with the Illinois Attorney General. [According to the Chicago Sun Times, these prosecutors were recently caught sharing information with ICE.](#)

Additionally, these safeguards were only put in place recently. In June of 2025, the Riverside Flock system was searched by Lancaster County Nebraska for immigration enforcement.

786ab2b1-a334-4689-b13a-2dda1b1c73f0 ***	Lancaster County NE SO	05/03/2025, 04:38:10 PM UTC 6343 06/02/2025, 04:38:10 PM UTC 06/02/2025, 04:41:12 PM UTC	***	Immigration_Temperly
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That same month, it was also searched by an officer from Matteson IL on behalf of HSI (a division of ICE) for an immigration case.

fbfd50bc1-9fda-4bd7-870d-f9a50da2b7dc ***	Matteson IL PD	05/26/2025, 07:52:58 PM UTC 1523 06/02/2025, 07:52:58 PM UTC 06/01/2025, 08:00:52 PM UTC	***	HSI FCC Criminal Immigration
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Riverside still shares data with Matteson IL PD. They searched the Riverside cameras 309 times in August 2026

In June of 2025, **Buckley let US Border Patrol directly search Riverside Flock data.** They did 197 searches. 39 of those searches had unauditable reasons for the search like “usbp” and “inv”. (Note, it is listed as [Inactive] because they doesn't have access *now*, but they did have access then)

[Federal] US Border Patrol [Inactive]	6437	06/02/2025, 06:44:53 AM UTC 06/09/2025, 06:44:53 AM UTC 06/09/2025, 07:00:50 AM UTC	***	USBP
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This is still happening as of August 2026. Illinois agencies that we share data with are running Flock searches on behalf for DHS. Hanover Park did 9 searches last month on behalf of HSI.

Hanover Park IL PD	2731	07/12/2026, 06:56:59 PM UTC 08/11/2026, 06:56:59 PM UTC 08/11/2026, 07:00:00 PM UTC	***	Financial Crime (Embezzlement/Fraud) - HSI Investigations (Only Used by TFO)
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This means that Riverside does share its data with ICE.

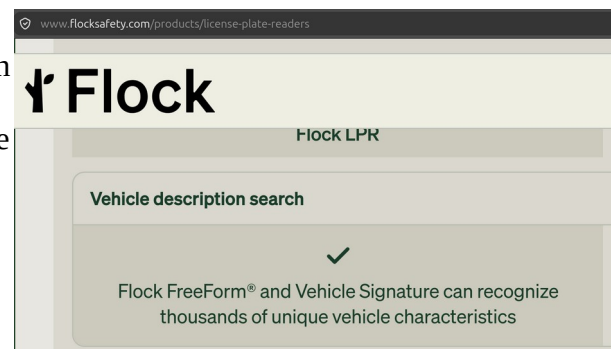
Claim: “Buckley said the village has only heard concerns from residents recently and not in the first years of the cameras’ use.”

Fact: This rhetoric suggests that these concerns aren’t real because they are new, and when coupled with statements from [Flock calling concerned citizens terrorists](#), can be interpreted to imply that these concerns are being fueled by outside agitators. However, the reason that theses concerns are new is because people are just now beginning to understanding how invasive these cameras are. **That doesn’t make their concerns less valid.**

Claim: [Buckley] he said... “automatically scan license plates while officers are on patrol and check them through the authorized state law enforcement database, similar to an officer manually entering a plate on the in-car computer.”

Fact: This claims tries to minimize the scale of surveillance that Flock and similar ALPRs enable by equating it with the deliberate and slow manual process of an officer looking up a specific plate they are physically looking at. It is also trying to imply that because most people are fine with the police manually looking up your plate then they should be okay with Flock. In fact, the two are incredibly different in terms of what information is collected, the scale of how often information on your vehicle is collected, and the reasons your vehicle was scanned. Now lets look at just how different these settings are.

What is collected: When a officer manually enters your plate in the in-car computer the only information that is collected is the plate number and, if time and GPS coordinates are logged, the fact that your vehicle was there. In contrast, when scanned by a Flock camera, both the plate and “thousands of unique vehicle characteristics” are saved.



As an example, in [this video](#) a flock spokesperson states that one of these characteristics are things like bumper stickers (there is also [additional reporting corroborating this](#)). To contextualize this, vehicle fingerprinting features would allow Riverside PD to do searches like “Truck with Winfield Scott Society bumper sticker and gas-powered leaf blower in the bed.”

Additionally, based on Riverside’s Flock order form—obtained via a FOIA request—we know that Riverside’s Flock cameras do capture these vehicle fingerprints.

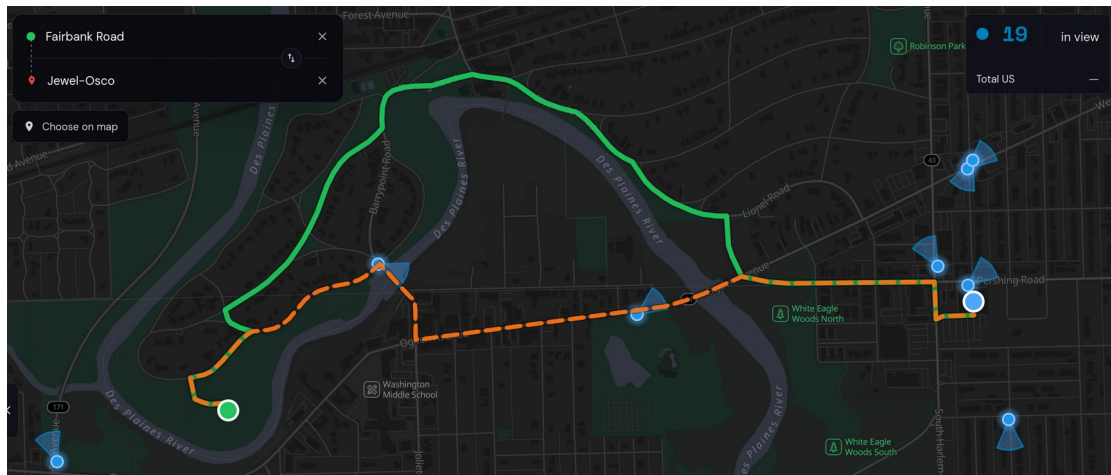
Product and Services Description

Flock Safety Platform Items	Product Description	Terms
Flock Safety Falcon ®	An infrastructure-free license plate reader camera that utilizes Vehicle Fingerprint® technology to capture vehicular attributes.	The Term shall commence upon first installation and validation of Flock Hardware.

Additionally, we do know that Riverside subscribes to Vehicle Fingerprint Search.

Vehicle Fingerprint Search	Search footage using Vehicle Fingerprint™ technology. Access vehicle type, make, color, license plate state, missing / covered plates, and other unique features like bumper stickers, decals, and roof racks.
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How often it is collected: With [19 sworn officers](#), there is a limited number of plate look ups that Riverside PD can do manually. Additionally, when a manual look up happens, it creates a single data point—your vehicle was at that place at that point in time. In contrast, driving from Riverside to the Jewel-Osco in Stickney means your car will be logged by two Flock cameras unless you add 35% distance to your route to avoid them. ([route generated by deflock.org](#))



Instead of the single datum from the manual case, with ALPRs, multiple data points over the course of your entire drive are tracked. It also doesn't just happen once in a while, it *happens every single time you drive, everywhere you drive*.

Why it is collected: When an officer decides to check your plate on the in-car computer, he/she implicitly weighs the cost of doing that search (time, manual effort, the opportunity cost of checking your plate vs my plate) against how likely that search is to yield results. This barrier helps move toward plate checks that are only done when there is reasonable suspicion or probable cause. On the other hand, Flock logs your plate every single time, no matter what. Plus, it isn't just logging your plate. It is logging everyone's plates. Flock will never decide to not record your plates because it doesn't have probable cause to do so.

So when compared to manual searches, Flock and ALPRs 1) collect way more information when recording a plate 2) collects plates way more often (and in a far more places) and 3) collects plates indiscriminately. You can't build a history of all your trips to the grocery based on all the times Riverside PD manually looked up your plates, but you can with Flock. **Flock and ALPRs are clearly in a class of their own when it comes to how invasive they are.**

Claim: "[a search] requires a documented case-related purpose."

Fact: In August of 2026, 46 searches (12%) by Riverside Police did not have case numbers attached. 55,461 (36.11%) of all of the searches of the Riverside Flock network did not have case numbers associated with them. **Clearly, Riverside does not actually audit or enforce the connection of a search to a case.**

Claim: "After a crime, only authorized users can search by plate, vehicle description, location and time to corroborate information or narrow possible leads."

Fact: This claim implies that ALPR searches are only done after a crime is committed and if there is good reason too. This is contradicted by the queries we have seen above with reasons like "loitering" and "sus". Additionally, according to Riverside's Policy on ALPRs (which I obtained via a FOIA request, pictured below) searches don't have to be related to a crime. They don't even need to be reasonably suspicious, they don't need a reason at all.

- (b) An ALPR may be used in conjunction with any routine patrol operation or criminal investigation. Reasonable suspicion or probable cause is not required before using an ALPR.

This part of the policy is also at odds with the claim that all searches require a documented case-related purpose. If reasonable suspicion is not required before using an ALPR, how can that search possibly have case-related purpose?

Claim: “[flock gives] timely, objective vehicle information”, “[flock allows us to] develop objective investigative leads to crimes”

Fact: This claim paints data from Flock as infallible and objective, thus making it a strong foundation for police action. However, [404 media’s reporting on the LAPD’s use of Flock cameras](#) found that it had had an error rate of 32.3%, meaning **officers had a one-in-three chance of pulling over innocent people**. Even using Flock’s own reported error rate of 7%, the system makes an unacceptably massive number of mistakes when deployed at scale to try to track all of the cars, all day, every day, across the USA, [see this analysis of compounding errors at scale for more details](#). Similarly, many claims about the effectiveness of Flock are based on [a study that 404media describes as fraudulent based on concerns raised by the academic researcher Flock paid to do the study \[video summary\]](#).

Additionally, Riverside PD’s policy on ALPR use puts very little emphasis on verifying data provided by Flock. If *practicable*, the officer *should* instead of the officer *shall*

- (f) If practicable, the officer should verify an ALPR response through the appropriate law enforcement database before taking enforcement action that is based solely upon an ALPR alert.

This lack of verification is especially worrisome as there are countless cases where errors from flock result in innocent people getting stopped by law enforcement, see [\[1\]](#) [\[2\]](#) [\[3\]](#) [\[4\]](#) [\[5\]](#) [\[6\]](#) [\[7\]](#) for a small subset. [Outlets have complied larger lists](#) that include cases where **innocent people are pulled out of their cars at gunpoint** [\[8\]](#) [\[9\]](#) and cases where **innocent people end up in jail** [\[10\]](#).

Claim: “While there is interagency sharing within Illinois...”

Fact: This claim tries to assuage fears that departments not bound by laws like the Illinois Trust Act are accessing the Riverside Flock data by implying that Riverside only shares data with departments in Illinois. This is not the case. **Based on documents obtained via FOIA, the Riverside Flock system is currently configured to share with 38 organizations from outside of Illinois** and are therefore not subject to the Illinois Trust Act:

- Cedar Lake IN PD
- Chesterton IN PD
- Crown Point IN PD
- De Pere WI PD
- Elm Grove WI PD
- Franklin WI PD
- Gary IN PD
- Griffith IN PD
- Hardin County TN SO
- Hebron IN PD
- Henderson KY PD
- Highland IN PD
- Hobart IN PD
- Kenosha County WI SO

- Kenosha WI PD
- Lake County IN SO
- Lauderdale County AL SO
- Lawrence County TN SO
- Madisonville KY PD
- Marinette County SO (WI)
- Menomonee Falls WI PD
- Michigan City IN PD
- Milwaukee WI PD
- Montgomery County TN SO
- Mount Pleasant WI PD
- Mount Vernon IN PD
- Portage IN PD
- Porter County IN SO
- Porter IN PD
- Racine WI PD
- St John IN PD
- Terre Haute IN PD
- Valparaiso IN PD
- Vanderburgh County IN SO
- Waukesha WI PD
- Wayne County TN SO
- West Terre Haute IN PD

In August 2026, 32 of these 38 organizations searched Riverside cameras 20,018 times. When looking at past Audit logs, the Riverside Flock camera system has been searched 1,833,981 times by 3,800 different agencies outside of Illinois since June of 2025.

Riverside also shares Flock data with non-law enforcement groups like “University of Illinois – Springfield”, the “Illinois Department of Natural Resources”, and the “Illinois Attorney General.” It is not clear what standards these non-law enforcement groups are held to with respect to data access and security.

Additionally, claims like “...responsible interagency access...” suggest that all the other agencies who access the flock cameras are just as trustworthy as the Riverside police. However, in August of 2026, there were 54 searches, by non-Riverside police, with the reason simply being “Test”. There are also an additional 70 searches where the reason is “Training”. ***These are real searches that look up real people—us here in Riverside—without traceable reasons.*** There is no way to actually audit these searches, in fact [404media found that Flock employees used “Test” or “Demo” searches like this to watch little kids doing gymnastics \[1\]](#). Flock’s CEO personally apologized to the [community center, thereby confirming that it happened](#). Not only do these other agencies have more instances of inappropriate searches appearing in the audit logs than Riverside PD has, but they also make up the majority of searches. Just 0.24% of searches of Riverside Flock data originate from the Riverside PD. **This is not responsible access.**

Claim: “Buckley said federal agencies do not have access to Riverside’s data”

Fact: As established before, this claim is only true with respect to federal agencies having direct access. Federal agencies still have indirect access. Additionally, this claim was not true as recently as June of 2025 when US Border Patrol were directly accessing Riverside Flock cameras and October of 2025 when far flung out-of-state agencies like Texas and Massachusetts had access to our cameras. Even now, in August 2026, the Riverside Flock system is configured to allow access from the Lauderdale County Sheriff’s Office in Alabama, who have signed a “Warrant Service Officer”

287(g) agreement with ICE meaning these officers actually go out and arrest suspected undocumented immigrants.

Buckley paints Riverside PD as a responsible stewards of your data, but earlier this year, Riverside PD claimed they did not even know that Flock data was accessible to other Police departments. (This was relayed to me by a member of the Illinois State Attorney General's office. He said this was Riverside's excuse as to why they did not release the Network Audit—which shows when people outside of the Riverside PD network access Riverside Flock data—in accordance with my FOIA request. I had to have this call with the Illinois State Attorney General to force Riverside to comply with my FOIA request.)

Even if these loopholes get closed, it doesn't change the fact that Riverside PD's use of Flock and ALPRs have exposed Riverside residents' most personal data to a plethora of agencies in the past. They were irresponsible with our data then, should we really trust that they are responsible with it now?

Claim: "The installation was budgeted at \$12,000 for fiscal year 2024"

Fact: This claim tries to paint the Flock cameras as a cheap tool. According to invoices obtained via a FOIA request, the actual cost was \$13,300.00.

Additionally, **Riverside was given a \$30,000 discount on its two Flock cameras.** Clearly Flock is either expecting us to buy more, or they will be increasing their rates once the initial contract is over.

Billing Schedule

Billing Schedule	Amount (USD)
Year 1	
At Contract Signing	\$7,300.00
Annual Recurring after Year 1	\$6,000.00
Contract Total	\$13,300.00

*Tax not included

Discounts

Discounts Applied	Amount (USD)
Flock Safety Platform	\$30,000.00
Flock Safety Add-ons	\$0.00
Flock Safety Professional Services	\$0.00

Claim: "Buckley said Riverside's Flock cameras do not use facial recognition, record audio, identify the occupants of vehicles"

Fact: Flock also makes this claim, however, as reported by Wired, hackers who have reverse-engineered the cameras software have shown that the cameras explicitly detect people and bicycles. Additionally, Wired reporting finds that Flock is selling a dashboard, called FreeForm Search, to the police that have the ability to track and search for people based on things like race and reporting from 404media found that things like the clothes you are wearing can be used to track you. Atlanta News First reports that Flock training videos include examples of tracking people. There are numerous reports of Flock cameras are being installed at places like College Campus Walkways, hiking trails, and parks where no cars are present. Reporting shows that Flock cameras have also be used right here in Illinois to investigate "loitering" [2]. None of this make any sense if Flock does not have the ability to track people.

Given that Flock clearly has, or is at least working on deploying, the ability to track people and bicycles at scale and reporting from security researchers who found that many Flock camera videos are available in the cloud (demonstrating that the raw video itself is sent), it is safe to assume that

when the large group from Ride Riverside, including a countless number of children, rode down Selborne Rd and crossed Longcommon Rd (passing in front of one of Riverside's Flock cameras just a block away on Byrd) a lot footage of the neighborhood kids got sent off to the cloud.

Additionally, this claim implies that since the current Flock cameras that Riverside uses do not do facial recognition *on-device right now* it means that it doesn't happen and will never happen. However, the cameras upload images and videos to the cloud where all of these things can happen after the fact. As discussed above, the vehicle fingerprinting feature is built from the video data sent by cameras (this is [stated by Flock](#)). Therefore, this vehicle fingerprinting is always happening, even if Riverside wasn't subscribed to do vehicle fingerprint search. Similarly, when Flock starts to roll out people tracking it will surely be based on our video data, even if Riverside PD doesn't pay to search it.

Clearly, Flock can, has, and plans to track people.

Claim: "Buckley said the Riverside police department stores data from the Flock cameras for 30 days"

Fact: This claim talks about how long *Riverside* stores data from Flock cameras, however it does not account for how long Flock hangs on to this data. [Flock itself keeps this data much longer than the claimed 30 days, as evidenced by them trying to sell 5 years of flock data to the city of Sheboygan.](#)

In fact, Flock Terms and Conditions state that **Flock is granted an irrevocable and perpetual license to videos captured by Riverside's Flock cameras** meaning they can keep it forever if they think having it will "support and improve" their product.

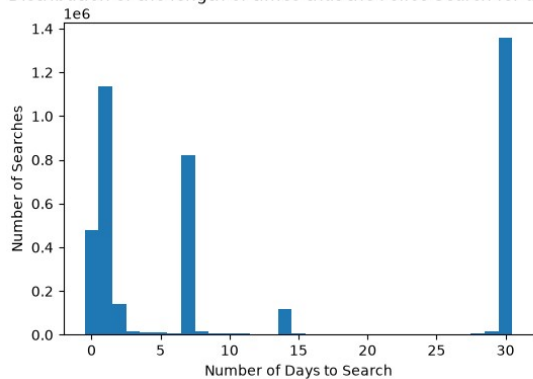
4. DATA USE AND LICENSING

4.1. Customer Data. As between Flock and Customer, all right, title, and interest in and to Customer Data belong to and are retained by Customer. Customer hereby grants to Flock a limited, non-exclusive, royalty-free, irrevocable, perpetual, worldwide license to (a) use and disclose Customer Data to provide the Flock Services; and (b) use Customer Data to support and improve Flock's products and services. For the

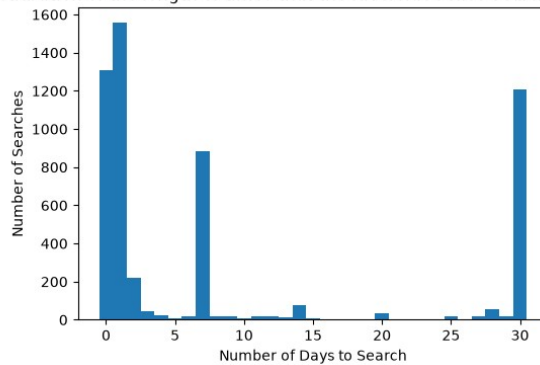
The Flock data is also a lucrative target for hackers as it is stored on Public Cloud infrastructure (AWS). Additionally any Flock employee has the ability to access, view, or save that data during this window, we simply have to trust that they aren't.

Additionally, looking at the "Time Frame" of these searches (i.e. the search is "Find me the car with plate xyz from June 3rd to June 10th). **We see that 3.15% of searches done by Riverside have time frames longer than 30 days. Is data being stored for longer than 30 days? Or does the Riverside PD not understand that data is only stored for 30 days?** Riverside PD makes these longer than 30 days requests almost twice as much as other departments (1.76% of all searches since June 2025 are longer than 30 days). Looking at the distribution of Time Frames from searches we see a large spike at the 30 day limit suggesting the often when the police make a search they don't try to get the minimum amount of location information they need; they just grab all they can. In fairness, this is one dimension where the Riverside PD is more conscientious about privacy than other jurisdictions.

Distribution of the length of times that the Police Search for a plate.



Distribution of the length of times that the Riverside Police Search for a plate.



Claim: “He [Buckley] said the police department has a policy against misuse of license plate reader data that officers read and sign, knowing the consequences if they go against it.”

Fact: Policy documents obtained via FOIA requests do not include possible consequences, nor does it appear to have a place to sign.

Claim: “Riverside’s Flock cameras do not... even enforce speed limits, like some cameras do in Chicago”

Fact: This claim tries to paint Flock cameras as something that the police only use for serious cases. However, **in August of 2026, 9,027 searches of Riverside Flock were traffic related.** We even see searches for mundane traffic infractions like failure to signal.

Winnebago County IL SO	08/19/2026, 08:30:31 PM UTC		Sex Offenses - Suspect Search
	1608/08/19/2026, 08:45:31 PM UTC	***	Traffic Infraction - Speeding, Failure to signal
	08/18/2026, 09:00:13 PM UTC		

Claim: “Buckley said Riverside police make use of three non-Flock license plate readers elsewhere in town as well as mobile readers that squad cars are equipped with...”

“A previous version of this story misstated the location of one of two Flock cameras in Riverside, confusing it for a regular police camera.”

“In Brookfield, police do make use of pole-mounted cameras, but none of them are license plate readers, said Bob Uphues, the village’s communications manager and the former Landmark editor, in an email. Uphues said Brookfield does not make use of Flock cameras, either.”

Fact: These statements paint Flock as a uniquely bad implementation of ALPRs and imply that if we decide to get rid of Flock, then we shouldn’t worry about the other cameras and ALPRs that the Riverside Police use. While Flock may currently be in the hotseat of the public consciousness, the truth is that all of the ALPR and cameras system are dragnet policing which are generally unconstitutional as it is an unreasonable search.

The main justification used to claim that cameras, ALPRs, and the like in public spaces are not considered a search (and therefore you are not protected by the fourth amendment from the police using them to investigate you without a warrant) is [US vs Knotts \(1983\)](#) where the government used a beeper planted on a vehicle to track a suspect without a warrant. However, that decision itself specifically says “if such dragnet-type law enforcement practices as respondent envisions should eventually occur, there will be time enough then to determine whether different constitutional principles may be applicable.” This means that eventually, as Flock, ALPRs, and police cameras permeate every inch of public life, there will eventually be a Supreme Court ruling on if they are unconstitutional. Similar [dragnets—like geo-fenced warrants—have recently been ruled unconstitutional](#). In [Carpenter v. United States \(2018\)](#), the Supreme Court affirmed that there is a reasonable expectation of privacy in long term movements. According to [reporting from the](#)

[Electronic Privacy Information Center](#), in a currently active court case ‘The U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia found that the city’s tracking of individuals through the use of Flock was “notably similar to [the facts] in Carpenter.”’ The court drawing parallels between Flock and dragnet-style policing that was just ruled unconstitutional does not bode well for Flocks future. Multiple technology-based dragnets have been declared unconstitutional and it is only a matter of time before systems like Flock and ALPRs are deemed illegal.

Once this happens, there may be class-action suits where the Riverside PD is found liable for damages and responsible for restitution due to its violation of our civil rights. Is that included as a budget-line under the cost of Flock?

Do not let them convince you that Flock is the only issue. Ubiquitous cameras and ALPRs, no matter who installed them, are a gross invasion of privacy and are fundamentally a violation of your constitutional rights.