LOS ALTOS POLICE DEPARTMENT

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS - FAQs
(Provided by Flock Safety)

How do Automated License Plate Readers (ALPRs) help solve crimes?

Seven out of every 10 crimes are committed with a vehicle. License plate numbers give law enforcement the objective, actionable leads needed to solve the investigation. Using ALPR cameras, detectives can pinpoint the suspect's last known location which narrows down the search radius.

Flock Safety ALPR cameras go beyond capturing license plates. Unlike traditional license plate readers, the unique Vehicle Fingerprint™ technology accelerates investigations by allowing users to filter their search based on the vehicle's specific characteristics, including body type, make, color, and more. This is key in producing an investigative lead for law enforcement when a suspect vehicle has no visible license plates.

How does a Flock camera compare to other types of security cameras?

Flock cameras are optimized for license plate capture. Flock camera sensors are optimized for objects that are well-lit or illuminated by infrared technology. Standard Flock cameras have an intentionally short shutter speed (how long the camera is open). This setting allows the camera to wake up and start taking pictures in a fraction of a second, and to capture multiple frames of a car traveling up to 75 MPH. Flock cameras have an intentionally narrow field of view capable of capturing about one and a half lanes of traffic.

Unlike an LPR camera, a doorbell camera is optimized for surveillance — its settings are optimized for low light, and the shutter speed is slower. It captures non-reflective objects moving slowly (i.e. pedestrians), but not reflective objects moving quickly (i.e. cars & license plates).

How does installation and maintenance work?

Installation and most maintenance are included in the annual cost. If a camera is damaged or malfunctioning, Flock Safety will provide the first replacement camera free of charge. Flock Safety takes care of all requests for service within 72 hours, pending extenuating circumstances.

Where can a Flock Camera be installed?

Flock Safety cameras can be installed almost anywhere. Flock Safety leverages solar and battery for power, and cellular (LTE) for data communications, removing any upfront wiring or labor costs. The cameras only require a few hours of sunlight a day, making them ideal for both rural and urban neighborhoods.

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How does Flock Safety protect citizen privacy?

Flock Safety has strict measures in place to protect resident privacy. Flock Safety believes that we can successfully reduce crime while protecting and preserving privacy. Here are a few of the ways Flock Safety have ethically-engineered their suite of products to ensure privacy protection: All data is stored for only 30 days (or in adherence with local laws). The police department will own all of the data — Flock will never share or sell data with third parties. The police department is the only one to determine who has access to the footage.

The Safe List feature allows neighborhood residents to register their license plate number and opt to be eliminated from captured footage. This way, police can easily separate residents from nonresidents and allow residents with privacy concerns to opt out of the system altogether. All data is stored in the cloud through Amazon Web Services (AWS) using AES256 bit encryption, a standard encryption system used by both the Federal Government and the National Security Agency.

What is required for an officer to conduct a data search in the Flock Safety Portal?

Any time an officer conducts a search in the Flock Safety portal, they will be required to enter an event number or case number per department policy. Additionally, the officer will have to give a reason for why they are conducting the search. Each individual officer will have their own login, so we will be able to audit each of the officer's activities as they go through the portal.

How will an officer be alerted to a stolen vehicle?

Every officer will have their own login for the Flock Safety portal. At the beginning of the officer's shift, they will log into the Flock Safety portal utilizing their Mobile Dispatch Terminal (MDT) inside their vehicle. The Flock Safety portal will be running in the background on their computer, when an alert is indicated, the alert will show on the officer's screen. Additionally, our dispatchers will have their own logins so our dispatchers will also receive the alerts, which will allow them to start checking the appropriate systems to ensure the vehicle is still wanted.

Is an alert alone sufficient for an officer to stop the vehicle?

No, per policy, the officer must verify the vehicle in the photo is the correct vehicle and they must also verify the vehicle was still wanted through dispatch or utilizing their MDT.

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How will you address cybersecurity related to the cameras?

The cameras use cellular signals and there i is no possible incoming connection to the camera. The cameras use ADF-256 encryption protocols, so any data that is actually on the camera itself is fully encrypted at all times. The data is encrypted in transit when it is being sent to the cloud and Amazon AWS government cloud storage will be used, and all data is encrypted at rest in the cloud.

Will Flock Safety cameras be used for traffic or immigration enforcement?

Simply put, no! Per the American Values Act, we will not share any of the data with any federal immigration agencies at all. Additionally, the technology for either traffic or immigration enforcement is not built into the solution. This is by design based on the fundamental beliefs of Flock Safety. The company is guided by their founding principle that it is possible to build technology that is effective for law enforcement to help solve and prevent crimes, while at the same time protecting the average person's privacy and rights.