

Muskingum County Sheriff's Office Policy

Title: Flock Safety Camera System

Policy No: 41.4

Area: Patrol-Investigation and Information Technology System

New: X Addendum: Replace: Contract: Revised: Effective Date: 09/21/2026

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This policy is for internal use only and does not enlarge an employee's civil liability in any way. The policy should not be construed as creating a higher duty of care, in an evidentiary sense, with respect to third party civil claims against employees. A violation of this policy, if proven, can only form the basis of a complaint by this department for non-judicial administrative action in accordance with the laws governing employee discipline.

I. Purpose: To establish guidelines for the lawful and ethical use of automated license plate reader system technology, including systems provided by Flock Safety, while ensuring the privacy and civil liberties of all persons.

II. Policy: The Muskingum County Sheriff's Office authorizes the use of Flock Safety Camera System technology to support law enforcement operations, including crime prevention and investigation, while ensuring compliance with the United States and Ohio Constitutions and Ohio State Law.

Flock Safety Camera (or any other brand of automated license plate reader technology) use shall not infringe upon constitutionally protected rights or be used for discriminatory or unauthorized surveillance.

III. Authorization and Program Management

Flock Safety Camera technology, also known as "automated license plate readers," allows for the automated detection and reading of license plates. It is used by this agency to convert data associated with vehicle license plates for official law enforcement purposes, including identifying stolen or wanted vehicles, stolen license plates and missing or endangered persons. It may also be used to gather information related to active warrants, electronic surveillance, suspect interdiction and stolen property recovery.

The approval of all Flock Safety cameras deployment locations and ultimate program administration will be the responsibility of the Sheriff or his/her designee. The day-to-day administration and operation of the ALPR program will be the responsibility of the ALPR Program Administrator, who will be appointed by the Sheriff.

A. The designated ALPRE Program Administrator will:

1. Maintain audit logs

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2. Oversee user permissions for access
3. Coordinate with prosecutors on evidentiary use
4. Ensure that all deputies with access to the system have signed an "acceptable use" statement.

IV. Operational Use

A. Flock Safety camera data is an investigative lead, not sole probable cause. Deputies must verify information prior to enforcement action, and any data used in court must comply with evidentiary rules. Use of Flock Safety Camera data is restricted to the purposes outlined below. Department members shall not use, or allow others to use, the equipment or database for any unauthorized purpose.

B. Any use of an artificial intelligence-based technology is a tool to assist decision making not a tool to replace human decision making. Deputies must be aware that on the front end of license plate reading, the technology may have false positives with respect to reading the plate, such as misread of plate characters, lack of determination of plate type, i.e. commercial versus passenger, or the state of origin. There may also be false positives on the back end when the plate is compared to existing data. Deputies must ensure that steps are taken to verify the information before enforcement action is taken on a license plate hit from the technology.

C. Permitted Uses

Flock Safety camera and its data shall only be used for official law enforcement business, such as:

1. Criminal investigations
2. Stolen vehicle detection
3. Missing/endangered persons (e.g., AMBER Alerts)
4. Intelligence-led policing consistent with the Constitution and Ohio law

D. Prohibited Uses

This agency is mindful of individual privacy and civil liberties, and as such, the use of Flock Safety camera equipment and data in the following manner is strictly prohibited:

1. Monitoring of individuals based solely on political activity
2. Religious affiliation,
3. First Amendment conduct
4. Personal use of ALPR equipment
5. Random, curiosity-based searches
6. Avoid prolonged tracking of individuals without legal justification

It is the policy of this agency to limit the use of Flock Safety camera equipment and data strictly to legitimate law enforcement purposes. In our efforts to prevent misuse or overreach, any confirmed incident of improper use by an agency member may result in either (1) discipline, up to termination, as well as potential criminal and civil penalties.

E. Flock Safety Camera Access

Access to Flock Safety Camera equipment and data is limited to CJIS-compliant, trained personnel. CJIS compliance will feature system encryption, session timeouts, and personnel background screening. Flock Safety Camera equipment and data access will also feature the following mandatory system controls:

1. Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA)
2. Unique use credentials
3. Full audit trail of searches

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F. Training

No member of this agency shall operate Flock Safety Camera technology or access its data without first having successfully completed department-approved training. In addition to the initial training, annual refresher training shall be required of all agency personnel to utilize and/or access Flock Safety camera technology and/or data. Department-approved training shall consist of:

1. Flock Safety camera system training
2. Privacy and civil liberties protections
3. CJIS Security Policy compliance

V. Data Collection and Retention

The Flock Safety Camera Program Administrator shall be responsible for ensuring that all systems and processes are in place for the proper collection and retention of data in accordance with both Flock Safety program requirements and Ohio law. Data will be transferred from vehicles/readers to the designated storage in accordance with department procedures.

All stored Flock Safety camera data is maintained by FLOCK for 30 days and is then destroyed unless a specific file has been retained as part of an ongoing agency investigation. In that case it will be retained in accordance with the established records retention schedule. Thereafter, Flock Safety camera data shall be purged unless it has become, or it is reasonable to believe it will become, evidence in a criminal or civil action or is subject to a discovery request or other lawful action to produce records. In those circumstances, the applicable data should be downloaded onto portable media and booked into evidence

VI. Data Sharing

The Flock Safety camera technology data may be shared only with other law enforcement or prosecutorial agencies for official law enforcement purposes or as otherwise permitted by law, using the following procedures:

1. The agency makes a written request for the Flock Safety camera data that includes:
 - a) The name of the agency
 - b) The name of the person requesting
 - c) The intended purposes of obtaining the information
2. The request is reviewed by the Flock Safety Camera Program Administrator or the authorized designee and approved before the request is fulfilled.
3. The approved request is retained on file.
4. The Flock Safety Camera Program Administrator may:
 - a) Review for exemption as a criminal investigation record
 - b) Redact sensitive law enforcement information
 - c) Coordinate with legal counsel when necessary
5. Images and data captured by an automated license plate recognition system that are maintained in a law enforcement database are not a public record as they are specifically exempted by the Ohio Revised Code.

Requests for Flock Safety camera data by non-law enforcement or non-prosecutorial agencies will not be fulfilled unless required by law or court order

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VII. Auditing & Accountability

The Flock Safety Camera Program Administrator shall conduct audits of the Flock Safety camera equipment and data access records both quarterly and annually. The annual review will be overseen by the command staff and should occur in addition to Flock Safety's internal "Audit Assistance," that will lock out a user whose searches display "abnormal activity." An audit review must include:

1. A case number or justification for each search
2. A pattern analysis of user activity
3. Potential misuse indicators

VIII. Vendor Management

The agency Flock Safety Camera Program Administrator will ensure that Flock Safety continually maintains CJIS-compliant infrastructure and that Flock Safety adheres to all contractual privacy protections. Flock Safety does not sell or repurpose agency data.

IX. Policy Review

This policy shall be reviewed annually in order ensure it is compliant with emerging industry best practices, changes in Ohio state law, recent federal appellate court and U.S. Supreme Court decisions

Sheriff Review and Approval

Policy No: 41.4

MCSO Ref: 41.4

Policy Originally Adopted: 09/21/2026

Revised:

Policy Review Date: __/__/__, __/__/__, __/__/__


Signature Muskingum County Sheriff

9/16/2026

Date