

SULLIVAN'S ISLAND POLICE



Glenn Meadows
Chief of Police

Monty L. Anders
Deputy Chief

2056 MIDDLE STREET
SULLIVAN'S ISLAND, SC
29482

Telephone: 843-883-3931
Business: 843-883-9636
Fax: 843-883-3239

Flock Safety License Plate Reader (LPR) System FAQs

What is a License Plate Reader (LPR)?

A License Plate Reader (LPR) is a camera that captures an image of a vehicle's license plate and certain identifying characteristics, such as the vehicle's make, model, color, and direction of travel.

How does a LPR benefit law enforcement and the greater community?

The system helps law enforcement locate stolen vehicles, identify vehicles connected to criminal investigations, and assist in locating missing or endangered persons.

How long has the Sullivan's Island Police Department used License Plate Reader technology?

License Plate Reader technology is not new to our department.

Prior to implementing the Flock Safety platform, the department participated in the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division's (SLED) statewide License Plate Reader program.

The transition to Flock Safety was an upgrade in technology that provides improved investigative capabilities along with enhanced transparency and accountability.

Why did the department switch to Flock Safety?

The Flock Safety platform provides:

- *Better investigative tools*
- *Improved officer accountability*

- *Comprehensive audit capabilities*
- *Greater administrative oversight*
- *Enhanced transparency through a public Transparency Portal*

The change was made to improve both public safety and public accountability.

Does the camera recognize who is driving the vehicle?

No. The cameras are designed to identify vehicles, not people. They do not use facial recognition technology and are not intended to identify drivers or passengers.

Does the LPR system record video of everything that happens?

No. The system captures still images of vehicles as they pass the camera. It is not a continuous video surveillance system.

Does the Police Department track where people go?

No. The Sullivan's Island Police Department does not use the LPR system to monitor the movements of law-abiding citizens.

The system is used only for legitimate law enforcement purposes, such as investigating crimes, locating stolen vehicles, locating missing people, or responding to alerts for vehicles associated with criminal activity.

How is my privacy protected?

Protecting privacy is one of the department's highest priorities.

Our safeguards include:

- *Written department policies governing all use.*
- *Access limited to authorized personnel.*
- *Every search requires documented justification.*
- *Automatic logging of every search.*
- *Monthly audits conducted by the Patrol Commander.*
- *Participation in Flock's "Audit Assistance" feature which detects abnormal activity and flags it for executive review*
- *Executive review by the Deputy Chief and Chief of Police.*
- *Public access to our policies through the Transparency Portal.*

Can an officer search for my vehicle just because they're curious?

Absolutely not. Every search requires the officer to document a legitimate law enforcement reason before the search can be conducted. All searches are logged and records of searches are maintained indefinitely.

Every search is permanently logged and subject to supervisory review.

Unauthorized use of the system is prohibited.

Who makes sure the system is being used appropriately?

The Sullivan's Island Police Department has multiple layers of accountability.

- *Every search is automatically logged.*
- *Every search requires a documented investigative purpose.*
- *The Patrol Commander conducts a comprehensive audit of system activity every month.*
- *Those audits are personally reviewed by the Deputy Chief of Police and Chief of Police to ensure compliance with department policy and applicable law.*

These safeguards help ensure the technology is used responsibly and ethically.

What happens if an officer misuses the system?

Misuse of the Flock LPR system is taken very seriously.

Every search is permanently logged and cannot be deleted or altered. If an audit identifies a search that was not supported by a legitimate law enforcement purpose or otherwise violated department policy, the incident is investigated. Depending on the circumstances, misuse may result in disciplinary action, loss of system access, retraining, or other more serious corrective measures.

The integrity of the system depends on accountability, and the Sullivan's Island Police Department is committed to ensuring it is used only in accordance with the law, department policy, and the ethical standards expected by our community.

Can the Police Department share information with other agencies?

Yes, but only under controlled circumstances.

The Sullivan's Island Police Department decides whether to participate in information sharing through the Flock network. Sharing is limited to legitimate law enforcement purposes and may be modified or revoked at any time by the department.

The department maintains control over its own data and follows department policy regarding access and sharing.

Can immigration authorities use Sullivan's Island cameras?

No. The Sullivan's Island Police Department does not authorize the use of its LPR system for civil immigration enforcement.

Who owns the data collected by the cameras?

The Sullivan's Island Police Department maintains control over the data generated by its LPR system.

Access is limited to authorized personnel performing legitimate law enforcement duties in accordance with department policy.

Data is only maintained for 30 days currently, but the police department intends to adopt Flock's new recommendation to limit it to seven (07) days.

Can someone request my license plate information through the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?

Not generally.

Many law enforcement records, including information related to active investigations or records that could compromise public safety or individual privacy, are exempt from public disclosure under South Carolina law.

Each request is evaluated on a case-by-case basis in accordance with applicable law.

Is this technology replacing police officers?

No. Technology does not replace officers or their judgment.

The Flock system is simply another investigative tool that helps officers solve crimes more efficiently and locate vehicles connected to criminal activity.

Every investigative decision is still made by a trained law enforcement officer.

What types of crimes can this technology help solve?

LPR technology has helped law enforcement agencies nationwide investigate:

- *Stolen vehicles*
- *Burglaries*
- *Robberies*
- *Vehicle thefts*
- *Missing person cases*
- *AMBER Alerts*
- *Silver Alerts*
- *Violent crimes*
- *Hit-and-run collisions*

Like fingerprints or surveillance cameras, it provides investigative leads that can help officers identify suspects or vehicles associated with criminal activity.

Why is the Police Department making this information public?

Because transparency builds trust.

Chief Meadows believes residents should understand not only what technology is being used, but how it is governed.

The Sullivan's Island Police Department voluntarily created its Transparency Portal so residents can review our policies, understand our safeguards, and see the accountability measures that guide our use of this technology.

Our commitment is simple:

Public safety and personal privacy are not competing values. They are complementary responsibilities. By using technology responsibly, maintaining rigorous oversight, and being transparent with our community, we strive to protect both.

Are Flock cameras used in the maritime forest?

No. The Town of Sullivan's Island uses standard commercial-off-the-shelf game cameras to monitor for illegal cutting in the maritime forest.

Myths vs Facts:

Myth: "The cameras record everyone's daily movements."

Fact: The system is used only for legitimate law enforcement purposes and is not used to monitor the routine travel of law-abiding citizens.

Myth: "The cameras use facial recognition."

Fact: No. The system identifies vehicles and license plates. It does not use facial recognition technology.

Myth: "Officers can look up anyone they want."

Fact: Every search requires a documented law enforcement purpose, is permanently logged, and is subject to monthly audits and executive review.