

OAKBORO POLICE DEPARTMENT

STANDARD OPERATING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

POLICY: 50

Use of Flock Safety License Plate Reader

Effective Date: December 12, 2025

Dates Revised:

DEPARTMENT POLICY

PURPOSE It is the policy of The Oakboro Police Department that all use of the Flock Safety ALPR shall be for legitimate law enforcement purposes only. The system is intended to enhance investigative capabilities, improve crime prevention efforts, and assist in locating vehicles related to criminal activity. Use of the system shall comply with all applicable laws, departmental policies, and privacy expectations of the public.

DEFINITIONS

A. Flock Safety ALPR System (Flock):

A network of automated license plate recognition (ALPR) cameras that capture still images of vehicles, license plates, timestamps, and related metadata to assist in law enforcement investigations.

B. Search:

The act of querying or reviewing data within the Flock system to obtain information related to a vehicle, license plate, or incident.

C. Reason Field:

The mandatory data entry field within the Flock system where officers must record the justification for their search. This must include an associated case number or specific investigative details explaining the purpose of the query.

D. Case Number:

The official number assigned by the Oakboro Police Department to identify a report, investigation, or call for service.

E. Outcomes Section:

The designated portion of the Flock interface used to record results or successes related to system use, such as identifying suspects, locating stolen property, or advancing investigations.

F. Hit:

A system-generated alert indicating that a vehicle of interest (e.g., stolen vehicle, BOLO, suspect vehicle) has been detected by a Flock camera.

G. Personal Use:

Any use of the Flock system for reasons not related to official law enforcement duties, including searches related to personal matters, acquaintances, or non-criminal interests.

PROCEDURES

A. Authorized Use

The Flock Safety ALPR System may only be accessed for official law enforcement purposes, including but not limited to:

1. Investigations of criminal activity;
2. Locating wanted or missing persons;
3. Identifying suspect vehicles;
4. Crime analysis and intelligence sharing with partnering agencies.

B. Prohibited Use

Personnel are strictly prohibited from using the Flock system for personal purposes, including searches related to private interests, acquaintances, or non-law enforcement matters. Unauthorized access or misuse of the system may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

C. Verification of Hit

If an officer receives a Hit Notification during their tour of duty it is mandatory to verify the hit through Stanly County 911 or by running the license plate through DCI, before stopping the identified vehicle if reasonably possible. (exemption exigent circumstances)

D. Documentation Requirements

When conducting a search in the Flock system, officers must enter a valid case number in the "Reason" field to document the purpose of the search.

If a case number is not practical or not yet assigned, officers shall enter specific details that clearly describe the reason for the search. Examples include:

- 1.. SCSO robbery, suspect vehicle, 123 Main St."
2. "Hit-and-run investigation, intersection of Elm & 5th."
- 3.. "Alleged burglary suspect vehicle reported by witness."

Entries must be sufficiently detailed to demonstrate a legitimate law enforcement purpose. Vague or incomplete entries (e.g., “investigation” or “checking vehicle”) are not acceptable.

E. LPR Manager Duties

The ALPR manager will be responsible for the management of OPD-owned ALPR systems, training, reports, and maintenance as follows:

1. Ensuring the ALPR system is integrated into the patrol and investigative functions and determining any restrictions for the use of ALPR system.
2. Recommending procedural changes to the Chief of Police.
3. Obtaining quarterly reports on the health of the Flock LPR system and any maintenance vendor. The report should include details of any calibration needed to the hardware or software used to operate the Flock ALPR system.
4. Ensure that neither the Flock ALPR equipment, including the software and operating system, is modified absent direction of the manager.
5. Ensuring that all maintenance and repair of the Flock ALPR equipment is completed.
6. Reporting all OPD-owned Flock ALPR systems when requested, including usage, training, camera reads, associated apprehensions, system health, and the maintenance and support contract status.
7. Ensuring the Flock ALPR training meets the following criteria:
 - a. Training will be timely, adequate, and documented.
 - b. Flock users will be trained before accessing Flock ALPR generated data or participating in ALPR field operations.
 - c. Supervisors will receive the information necessary to effectively oversee the Flock use.
8. Monitor the use of all systems and ensuring they are being used per the standard operating procedure.
9. Ensuring Flock ALPR exhibit reports are included in investigate reports and enforcement actions. Resulting from Flock ALPR generated leads.

F. Data Retention and Security

1. Per North Carolina General Statute 20-183.32, ALPR-generated data is not a public record. Data will be stored on a vendor approved cloud-based storage solution and will not be stored outside the control of Flock ALPR users.

2. Flock system data is retained for a limited period as established by the vendor and/or departmental agreement, typically not to exceed 30 days, unless it is downloaded and preserved as evidence in an active investigation or case file.
3. Once retained data has reached the expiration period, it shall be automatically purged from the system and no longer accessible.
4. Data downloaded and retained for investigative purposes shall be attached to the corresponding case report.
5. Personnel are prohibited from exporting or storing Flock data on personal devices or non-secure platforms.
6. The Oakboro Police Department may share Flock data only with authorized law enforcement agencies that have entered into a data-sharing agreement with the department.
7. Shared data must be used exclusively for official law enforcement purposes and in compliance with this policy and all applicable laws.
8. Any release of data to the public, media, or outside entities must be approved by the Chief of Police or designee and managed through established public records procedures.

G. Audits and Accountability

1. All access to the Flock system shall require user authentication, and all activity shall be logged and auditable.
2. The Department will conduct periodic audits of Flock system usage to ensure compliance with this policy.
3. Any misuse, failure to document searches appropriately, or omission of outcome reporting will be reviewed and addressed in accordance with departmental disciplinary procedures.
4. Supervisors are responsible for ensuring personnel comply with all aspects of this policy.

H. Training

During Field Training the Field Training Officer (FTO) shall instruct authorized users on the proper use of the Flock Safety LPR System, including data access protocols, documentation standards, privacy considerations, and this policy prior to receiving system access.

By order of:

Neil A. Preslar

Chief of Police