

Please see the following message from Chief Reifschneider:

“The City has reviewed its files and has located records responsive to the request. Beginning this week, recognizing public interest on this topic, the Police Department will begin proactively posting on a monthly cadence partially redacted Flock search logs on the City’s ALPR website. These logs include information concerning ALPR queries performed by PAPD users, as well as queries performed by other agencies, that has not previously been released pursuant to a legal exemption. Additionally, the City continues to use best practices to secure Palo Alto ALPR data, including a 30-day limit on data retention, requiring MOUs with other agencies for data sharing, and internal policy controls.

In late 2023, unbeknownst to many users including PAPD, Flock added a new “Nationwide Lookup” search feature. Using this feature, an out-of-state local law enforcement or federal agency could perform a broad search of data from Flock’s entire nationwide network of over 6000 cameras, including the 20 cameras then-deployed in Palo Alto. The feature did not enable targeted searches of any specific agency’s data. These searches could only be performed system-wide when a full 7-digit license plate number was known and only based on the articulation of a legitimate law enforcement purpose.

PAPD was first made aware of this issue in December of 2025 and subsequently learned that Flock had already disabled the feature for PAPD by late October 2024 and for all California law enforcement agencies by March 2025.

While its data was included in the “Nationwide Lookup” searchable dataset during this period, PAPD has worked with Flock to confirm that no PAPD data (i.e., license plates captured by Palo Alto cameras) was actually received by any out-of-state agency or federal agency as a result of any “Nationwide Lookup” search. In other words, PAPD had no records that matched the “Nationwide Lookup” searches performed by out of state or federal agencies.

Even though no PAPD data was shared, PAPD reviewed the searches performed by out-of-state local law enforcement and federal agencies via the “Nationwide Lookup” feature and found no instances where a search appeared to have been performed for an improper purpose. Additionally, PAPD found that no searches had been performed by ICE, Customs and Border Patrol, or the Department of Homeland Security, and that no searches appeared to be associated with immigration enforcement or reproductive rights enforcement.

In January 2026, the Department added initial information on this issue to its [ALPR webpage](#) and previously updated the information in February of 2026.

PAPD has been in contact with Flock's executive leadership to express our concerns and, in response to PAPD's suggestion, Flock has expressed a strong willingness to pursue third party verification that this issue has been resolved. While the City's Auditor is unable to perform this task, work is underway to identify an alternate auditor. Our goal in this review would be to conduct a technical as well as operational review to confirm that Flock's practices address the City's expectations for security, transparency, and reporting of system features and changes.

The Department is confident that its training, Surveillance Use Policy, 30-day data retention period, and requirement of an MOU for each agency with which it shares, meet or exceed industry standards. With that, as recommended by the City Council's Policy & Services Committee, PAPD has discussed with the Independent Police Auditor a review of its internal policies and procedures with an eye toward areas where we may be able to do even better.

Staff anticipates reporting to Council in early June with further updates on this topic.

James Reifschneider, Chief of Police”