IOWA COLONY
POLICE DEPARTMENT

3144 Meridiana Parkway
Iowa Colony, Texas 77583

Aaron I. Bell
Chief of Police

Phone: (281) 369-3444
Fax: (281) 406-3722

Mayor and Council, October 19, 2026

I would like to address the questions that have been raised regarding our Flock camera system, including how the program was approved, the number of cameras within the city, their cost, who has access to the information, and how the cameras have benefited the Police Department.

Approval and Authority

The Flock camera program was originally approved by City Council through a contract in September 2022. It was not established through a separate ordinance.

The Police Department maintains operational control over 27 Flock cameras in and around our city limits.

As far as removing or shutting down the cameras, that can be accomplished through the appropriate contractual process. Which is providing a notice of non-renewal at least thirty days prior to the end of the then current term.

Number of Cameras, Funding, and Renewal Dates

Although the Police Department manages the cameras, they are funded by three separate entities.

Funding Entity	Number of Cameras	Contract Renewal Date
City of Iowa Colony	10	November 1, 2026
Brazoria County MUD 31	6	November 1, 2026
Brazoria County MUD 32	11	December 3, 2026

The City budgets $30,000 annually for its 10 cameras, which is $3,000 per camera per year.

The remaining 17 cameras are funded through a reimbursement agreement withh MUD 31 ($18,000) and MUD 32 ($33,000), so their costs are not included in the City's annual expenditure.

Agency Access and Information Sharing

One of the questions raised was how many outside agencies have access to our cameras and what benefit the City receives from sharing that information.

We allow limited outside agency access to our cameras. We have reciprocal sharing arrangements with 12 law enforcement agencies, primarily within Brazoria County and our surrounding area.

These arrangements include agencies such as Alvin ISD Police Department, City of Alvin Police Department, Brazoria County PCT's 3 and 4 Constables Offices, City of Pearland Police Department, City of Sweeny Police Department, Texas Department of Criminal Justice, Texas Department of Public Safety, Alvin College Campus Police Department, Brazoria County Sheriff's Office, City of Clute Police Department, and the City of West Columbia Police Department.

This is particularly useful when investigating crimes involving vehicles that travel between jurisdictions. Criminal activity does not stop at city limits, and having access to information from neighboring communities can help our investigators identify vehicles, develop leads, and locate suspects more efficiently.

Searches Conducted by Our Department

From August 2025 through August 2026, Iowa Colony Police Department personnel conducted 1,361 searches using the Flock system.

These searches were associated with a variety of legitimate law enforcement activities, including calls for service, criminal investigations, arrests, and other incidents requiring investigative follow-up.

During the most recent 30-day reporting period, our personnel conducted only 5 searches.

It is important to understand that a search does not necessarily represent a separate criminal case or an enforcement action. An investigation may require multiple searches as officers attempt to identify a vehicle or establish information relevant to a particular incident.

Oversight and Auditing

We have a departmental policy specifically governing the use of Automated License Plate Readers.

Our officers are required to have a legitimate law enforcement purpose for accessing the system and must enter a case or incident number associated with their search.

Each month, an audit report is generated and reviewed by our Operations Lieutenant. This allows us to examine system activity and determine whether searches are consistent with departmental policy.

Our audits have not identified any improper use of the system by Iowa Colony Police Department personnel.

Data Retention

Another important safeguard is our data retention policy. Information collected by our Flock cameras is retained for only seven days, after which it is automatically deleted from the system.

However, the audit records documenting who accessed the system, when it was accessed, and the reason for the search are maintained for a longer period to allow for continued oversight and accountability.

This allows us to limit the amount of historical vehicle information stored in the system while preserving the records necessary to ensure the technology is being used appropriately and in accordance with departmental policy.

If misuse were discovered, it would be investigated and addressed appropriately.

I believe this oversight is important because technology such as this should never be used for personal reasons or outside the scope of legitimate law enforcement activities.

Changes to Departmental Access

As an additional safeguard, I have significantly reduced the number of personnel within our department who are authorized to access and conduct searches within the Flock system.

Currently, access is limited to just five individuals: the Chief of Police, Operations Lieutenant, Administrative Sergeant, and our two Investigators.

Previously, our patrol officers had access to the system, which allowed them to receive and act upon information more quickly. While restricting access does reduce some of the system's operational effectiveness, I believe it is an appropriate precaution given the concerns surrounding ALPR technology.

Our officers can still request a search when there is a legitimate law enforcement need, and one of the authorized individuals can conduct that search.

We have a 7 day retention period on the data being stored.
This allows us to continue benefiting from the investigative capabilities of the system while maintaining tighter control over who can access the information and ensuring greater accountability.

Transparency Portal

Another step toward greater public transparency is Flock Safety's Transparency Portal.

The portal provides information about our camera program, including the total number of cameras, system alerts, search activity, data usage, and other available statistics.

The purpose of the portal is to give residents an opportunity to better understand how the technology is being utilized.

This information is available through the City's website so that residents can review the information themselves.

Rather than duplicating the search statistics in our monthly Police Department report, the portal will provide a dedicated source for that information.

How Flock Cameras Have Assisted the Police Department

I also want to address what I believe is one of the most important questions: Has this technology actually helped our department?

The answer is yes.

So far in 2026, information obtained through Flock cameras has assisted our department in:

- Locating two missing persons.
- Locating two wanted persons.
- Solving an aggravated assault investigation.
- Solving a criminal case involving damage to a vehicle.

One of our most recent examples occurred approximately a week ago when we investigated an incident involving someone discharging a firearm.

Initially, our officers had very little information to work with other than a description of the vehicle involved.

By utilizing Flock cameras in the area, our investigators were able to locate a vehicle matching that description and develop information that helped identify the person responsible for discharging the firearm.

Without that technology, identifying the vehicle and developing a suspect could have required considerably more investigative time and resources.

These are actual examples of how the system has benefited our department and the community.

In addition to helping solve crimes, I believe the presence of these cameras can serve as a crime deterrent by increasing the likelihood that vehicles associated with criminal activity can be identified.

Closing Remarks

Flock cameras have proven to be a valuable tool for the Iowa Colony Police Department. They have helped us develop investigative leads, solve crimes, and locate individuals. We have policies and procedures in place to ensure the system is used appropriately, and we regularly audit its use to maintain accountability. My goal is to continue using technology responsibly to help keep our community safe while respecting the rights and privacy of our citizens.