
License Plate Surveillance in South Carolina

Key facts for your city or county council meeting

BY THE NUMBERS

422 million plate reads in SLED's statewide database, kept for 3 years

1,000+ Flock cameras on SC roads, scanning every car that passes

99%+ of scanned plates belong to people not suspected of any crime

200+ cameras installed on SC roads without SCDOT permits

0 SC laws governing ALPR data collection, sharing, or deletion

WHAT HAPPENED

- Two Greenville women were handcuffed at gunpoint after a Flock camera wrongly flagged their rental car as stolen. They are suing.
- Flock secretly gave Border Patrol access to local police cameras nationwide without telling agencies. The CEO denied it on camera, then admitted it three weeks later.
- A SLED officer used the plate database to search for his own vehicle and altered the record. When a newspaper asked for misconduct records, SLED refused.
- Security researchers found Flock cameras can be hacked in under 30 seconds. They run software Google stopped updating in 2021.

WHAT WE'RE ASKING FOR

Moratorium

Pause any expansion of ALPR cameras until oversight is in place.

Oversight ordinance

Require council approval for data-sharing agreements and new camera deployments.

Data audit

Public report on how many plates have been scanned, who has accessed the data, and how long it is retained.

Retention limits

Set a local retention period shorter than SLED's 3-year default.