

There is a lot of news going around about Flock Safety. It can be hard to keep up with the partnerships, concerns, and facts.

So let's clear up what we can.

Who is Flock, how are they related to your Ring doorbell camera, and how can you make informed decisions about the privacy of your video data?

Who is Flock Safety?

Flock Safety is a company based out of Georgia with a mission of using technology to more effectively prevent and solve crime.

Some of Flock's primary technology components are automated license plate readers (ALPRs) and Vehicle Fingerprint, which captures and stores license plate data and descriptive information (like make, model, and other unique features of cars) for every vehicle that passes by ([404 Media](#), [Lookout Santa Cruz](#), [Flock Safety](#)). The ALPRs are intended to only capture information about cars and not the individuals who drive them ([Lookout Santa Cruz](#)).

Flock maintains a database of information collected by their cameras. Agencies that are connected to Flock Safety may be able to share this information with each other, depending on their state's data sharing laws.

Why has Flock Safety been in the news?

There have been incidents of Flock devices, surveillance networks, and the governments using these tools breaking state laws about data sharing ([Santa Cruz Local](#), [The San Francisco Standard](#), [City of Lorain](#)). For example, in some states like California and Illinois and cities like Lorain, OH, it is illegal to share ALPR data for reasons like immigration enforcement or healthcare purposes, or to share data with agencies that are not based in the state ([404 Media](#), [Santa Cruz Local](#)).

Ohio as a state does not enforce strict regulations surrounding ALPR data sharing.

What are people concerned about when they talk about Flock?

Generally, people are concerned about:

- The privacy of their data
- Whether or not data is shared, stored, and utilized by non-local agencies
- Whether or not data is stored and utilized for purposes beyond the initial request
- Flock Safety's partnerships with other corporations that have histories supporting social ideas some people don't support

How does Flock Safety interact with local law enforcement agencies?

Flock has several contracted partnerships with over 5000 law enforcement agencies, as well as some cities homeowners associations, schools, and other organizations ([Lookout Santa Cruz](#)). These partnerships give agencies the ability to utilize Flock's national database of information

collected from their cameras ([404 Media](#)). So a partnership between Flock and the city of Cleveland would mean that police officers in the Cleveland Police Department would be able to access footage from across the US through Flock's database in exchange for offering data from their own Flock devices to the national database ([404 Media](#)).

How does Flock Safety interact with federal agencies?

Flock does not have any direct contracts with any federal agencies at this time. They have formal partnerships with police departments and city governments across the country. Some states like California have specific laws that actually make it illegal for local law enforcement agencies to share ALPR data with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and other federal agencies ([404 Media](#)). Ring has also said that video doorbell data is only shared with local law enforcement agencies when users grant specific permission for the video to be shared ([NYT Wirecutter](#)).

However, there are concerns that some police departments are still allowing their Flock-connected ALPR databases to be searched by federal agencies for drug and immigration enforcement purposes. Federal agencies may not be directly accessing the data, but there are concerns that some police departments are being asked by federal agencies to gather information from the Flock database on their behalf and turn it over to agencies like ICE, Customs and Border Patrol (CBP), or the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) ([Lookout Santa Cruz](#), [The San Francisco Standard](#)).

Currently, there are no strong systems in place that regulate how data is used by other local or federal law enforcement agencies once it has been collected ([Lookout Santa Cruz](#)).

How does Flock Safety interact with Ring?

In 2025, Amazon (who owns Ring) announced a partnership with Flock Safety ([NYT Wirecutter](#)). The partnership would mean that if something occurred in the vicinity of your Ring camera, local law enforcement could send out a Community Request via Ring's app. If you accepted the Community Request and decided to share footage, law enforcement would have access to your footage. If Flock works with your local law enforcement agencies, that data may be able to be stored and shared between other agencies that also use Flock's information database ([NYT Wirecutter](#)).

However, at this time, the partnership between Ring and Flock has been canceled, after public concern and pushback regarding privacy concerns ([CNBC](#)).

Does Flock have partnerships in Ohio?

In 2024, it was reported that over 400 law enforcement agencies in Ohio had partnerships with Flock ([News5 Cleveland](#)). Several cities including Kettering, Riverside, Dayton, Columbus, and Lorain currently have contracts with Flock ([Police1](#), [The Columbus Dispatch](#), [City of Lorain](#)). Additionally, the Ohio State Highway Patrol has a contract with Flock Safety ([Scene](#)).

The city of Cleveland already has a Flock ALPR system installed, and they have been considering expanding their contract with Flock in order to gain gunshot detection capabilities ([Cleveland.com](#)).

So, does Flock Safety have access to my video doorbell data?

Flock Safety and several news outlets report that Flock does *not* have direct access to your doorbell camera footage. This seems especially true now that Ring and Flock report they canceled their contract plans.

Do federal agencies have access to my video doorbell data?

Ring has stated that federal agencies do *not* have the ability to directly request or access video doorbell data from Ring devices ([NYT Wirecutter](#)).

Do my local police department or the city of Cleveland have access to my video doorbell data?

Law enforcement and the city of Cleveland also do *not* have direct access to your doorbell camera footage. Local law enforcement agencies can make Community Requests through the Ring app for footage, but you do not have to respond to these requests. You can also choose to register your doorbell camera with the police department so that they can contact you directly with requests for footage, but you do not have to register your device, nor do you have to give them your footage just because they request it.

There are rare cases and emergency situations where things like search warrants, subpoenas, court orders, and threats of imminent harm may allow law enforcement to access your data without your permission ([NYT Wirecutter](#)).

Does Ring use any technology similar to Flock?

Ring does have a feature that was launched at the end of 2025 called Familiar Faces, which uses AI facial recognition to tell camera owners when someone they know is at the door ([Reader's Digest](#)). Additionally, the Search Party feature uses similar AI technology to allow you to search for and report sightings of lost pets or natural hazards like wildfires ([Ring](#)).

The features are not available on all models of Ring doorbell cameras, and may require a Ring subscription to function. If you are interested in activating or deactivating these features, you can explore [Ring's webpage on Search Party](#).

What if I don't want any third party to have access to any of my video doorbell data?

Ring provides instructions for activating a process called end-to-end encryption (E2EE) that keeps your video secure and prevents it from being viewed by anyone except the owner of the video ([NYT Wirecutter](#)). Turning on E2EE does restrict some of your Ring camera's functions, like Shared User access, AI video search, 24/7 recording, mobile device live views, and more ([NYT Wirecutter](#)). You will need to weigh your privacy concerns against the functions you want your Ring doorbell camera to be able to serve. If you want to enable E2EE, you can find the instructions you need [here on Ring's website](#).