

For this week's assignment I decided to do research on surveillance equipment employed by my local police department. The different surveillance equipment that I found are described below. I'm familiar with some of the equipment but was not really surprised to learn that such surveillance tools are already in use. During my research I found that the California Senate passed SB 21 that empowers communities and their local elected officials to stop secret and discriminatory use of police surveillance technologies.⁶ SB 21 would require police departments to create and make public updated policies before procuring new surveillance technology. SB 21 also encourages public discussion of whether and how surveillance technology will be employed.⁷ Although the California Senate passed the bill, the California Legislature will also need to pass the bill before it becomes law.

License plate readers – license plate reader scans a vehicle's license plate and stores plate number, time, date and GPS location when plate was scanned. San Diego Sheriff's Department has stored photos of 8 million license plates and according to the Electronic Frontier Foundation the San Diego Police department shares plate data with more than 500 local, state and federal agencies.¹

Facial recognition software – software that analyzes aspects of a person's face and creates a template that can then be used to compare a database of photographs.⁴

Stingrays – the device works by mimicking cellphone towers that trick mobile phones in an area into transmitting identifying information including location, unique ID and outgoing calls and texts.³

Drones – Drones or unmanned aerial vehicles are used for a variety of purposes including surveillance.⁵ The use of drones has many issues including unwarranted surveillance and violation of privacy.

ShotSpotter – this surveillance technology works by detecting the sound of gunshots and alert the police to allow them to respond to the area where gunshots were detected.²

Body cameras – cameras that attach to an officer's chest, shoulder or sunglasses.⁴

1. <https://www.nbcsandiego.com/news/local/License-Plate-Surveillance-Prompts-New-Concerns-about-Your-Privacy-481120481.html>
2. <http://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/news/public-safety/sd-me-annual-shotspotter-20171218-story.html>
3. <https://inewssource.org/2014/12/18/san-diego-police-department-sued-for-withholding-records-about-spy-technology/>

4. <http://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/sdut-police-technology-devices-surveillance-privacy-2015may21-story.html>
5. <http://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/news/public-safety/sd-me-sheriffs-drones-20171025-story.html>
6. <https://www.aclunc.org/blog/promising-california-bill-could-help-communities-stop-secret-and-discriminatory-police>
7. <http://www.latimes.com/opinion/editorials/la-ed-surveillance-bill-sb21-20170901-story.html>