

WA Surveillance Watch Template

SIMPLIFIED PUBLIC RECORDS REQUEST

Law Enforcement Surveillance Camera Systems - Brief Template

Washington State RCW 42.56

Date: [INSERT DATE]

To: [POLICE DEPARTMENT NAME] - Public Records Officer
Email: [DEPARTMENT EMAIL]

From: [YOUR NAME] | [YOUR EMAIL] | [YOUR PHONE]

PUBLIC RECORDS REQUEST

IMPORTANT: A November 2025 Skagit County Superior Court ruling confirmed that surveillance camera data collected by law enforcement qualifies as public records under RCW 42.56, even when it includes images of individuals not suspected of crimes.

Dear Public Records Officer,

Pursuant to Washington State's Public Records Act (RCW 42.56), I request copies of the following public records:

REQUESTED RECORDS

All records related to automated surveillance camera systems operated by, accessible to, or used in partnership with [DEPARTMENT NAME], including:

Technology Systems Covered: - Automatic License Plate Readers (ALPR): Flock Safety, Motorola/Vigilant, Genetec, ELSAG, Neology, or similar - Video surveillance: Ring Law Enforcement Portal, Axon systems, Real-Time Crime Centers, community camera registries - Facial recognition systems integrated with camera networks - Any other mass surveillance camera technology

Specific Camera Locations: - [INSERT LOCATION 1 - e.g., "Main St & 5th Ave - Flock ALPR"] - [INSERT LOCATION 2] - [INSERT LOCATION 3] - All other surveillance camera locations operated by your department

Specific Records Requested:

- Contracts & Costs:** All agreements with surveillance technology vendors (Flock Safety, Ring/Amazon, Axon, Motorola, Genetec, etc.), purchase orders, invoices, and total program costs

2. **Policies:** All policies and procedures governing surveillance camera use, data retention policies, privacy assessments, and policies regarding federal agency access
3. **Camera Details:** Installation dates, locations (with maps if available), complete inventory by type/manufacturer, and operational status of all surveillance cameras operated by your department
4. **Data Sharing & Federal Access:**
 - Lists of agencies with access to your surveillance data
 - Data-sharing agreements (local, state, federal)
 - **Network audit logs showing all searches by any agency, including federal agencies**
 - Records of whether “National Lookup” features were enabled
 - Documentation of federal agency access (ICE, Border Patrol, FBI, etc.)
 - Records showing whether your agency was aware of federal access
5. **Usage Data:** For the period [START DATE] to [END DATE]:
 - Total license plate reads or footage hours per camera/system
 - Number and types of alerts generated
 - Cases where alerts led to stops or arrests
 - Statistics on external agency access
6. **Communications:** Emails between department staff and surveillance technology vendors from [START DATE] to [END DATE], and communications regarding federal agency access

Time Period: [INSERT DATES or “All records since program inception”]

Format: Electronic copies via email (PDF preferred)

RESPONSE REQUIREMENTS

Per RCW 42.56.520, please respond within five (5) business days. If any records are partially exempt, please provide all non-exempt portions with redactions explained per RCW 42.56.210.

Please acknowledge receipt of this request and contact me if clarification is needed.

Contact: [YOUR EMAIL] (preferred) | [YOUR PHONE]

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

[YOUR NAME]
[DATE]

Submission Checklist: Fill in all [PLACEHOLDERS]
 Add camera locations and technology types
 Verify department contact info
 Set time periods
 Keep copy for records
 Document submission date

Legal Support: If denied based on privacy concerns, reference the Skagit County Superior Court ruling (*Rodriguez v. City of Sedro Woolley*, Nov. 2025) that confirmed surveillance data is subject to

RCW 42.56. The court found that “broad and indiscriminate” surveillance collection does not create a privacy exemption.

Key Issues to Monitor: Based on recent UW findings, many WA agencies may be unaware of federal access to their surveillance systems. Your request helps ensure transparency and accountability regarding who accesses this data.