

AUTOMATED LICENSE PLATE READER

Codified: 103.1

Effective: 4/7/2025

Rescinds/Amends: NEW POLICY

Pages: 5

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide officers with guidelines on the proper use of Automated License Plate Recognition (ALPR) systems, also commonly known as license plate reader systems.

DISCUSSION

The ALPR system is the use of automated readers that provide critical alerts based on user defined rules.

POLICY AND PROCEDURES

The availability and use of ALPR systems have provided many opportunities for the enhancement of productivity, effectiveness, and officer safety. It is the policy of this agency that all employees abide by the guidelines set forth herein when using ALPR systems.

DEFINITIONS

ALPR: Automated License Plate Recognition/Automated License Plate Reader

OCR: Optical Character Recognition

Read: Digital images of vehicle license plates, vehicles, and associated metadata (e.g. date, time, and geographic coordinates associated with the vehicle image capture) that are captured by the ALPR system.

Alert: A visual and/or auditory notice that is triggered when the ALPR system receives a potential “hit” on a vehicle license plate.

Hit: A read matched to a vehicle license plate that has previously been registered on an agency’s “hot list” of vehicle plates related to stolen vehicles, wanted vehicles, or other factors supporting investigation, or which has been manually registered by a user for further investigation.

Hot list: Vehicle license plate numbers of stolen cars, vehicles operated by persons of interest, and vehicles associated with Amber Alerts that are regularly added to the “hot lists” circulated among law enforcement agencies. Hot list information can come from a variety of sources, including stolen vehicle information from the National Insurance Crime Bureau

(NICB), and the National Crime Information Center (NCIC), as well as national Amber Alerts and Department of Homeland Security (DHS) watch lists. Departments of Motor Vehicles (DMV) can provide lists of registration tags and may provide lists of expired registration tags. Law enforcement agencies can interface their own locally compiled hot lists to the ALPR system. These lists serve an officer safety function as well as an investigatory purpose. In addition to agency supported hot lists, users may also manually add license plate numbers to hot lists in order to be alerted if and when a vehicle license plate of interest is “read” by the ALPR system.

Fixed ALPR System: ALPR cameras that are permanently affixed to a structure, such as a pole, a traffic barrier, or a bridge.

Mobile ALPR System: ALPR cameras that are affixed either permanently (hardwired) or temporarily (e.g. magnet mounted) to a law enforcement vehicle for mobile deployment.

Portable ALPR System: ALPR cameras that are transportable and can be moved and deployed in a variety of venues as needed, such as a traffic barrel or speed radar sign.

GENERAL USE

103.1.01: Use and operation

- A. The use of ALPR systems is restricted to public safety related missions of this agency.
- B. ALPR systems, associated equipment, and databases are authorized for official public safety purposes. Misuse of this equipment and associated databases or data may subject an employee to sanctions and/or disciplinary actions.
- C. ALPR systems and ALPR data associated media are the property of this agency and shall be utilized for use conducting official business only.
- D. Only sworn officers and civilian staff approved by the Chief’s Office may utilize ALPR systems. This is to ensure the integrity of the system as well as compliance with policy.

ADMINISTRATION

103.1.02: System Administration

- A. The administrative oversight for ALPR system deployment and operations fall under the Administrative Lieutenant and Administrative Captain, who reports to the Administrative Deputy Chief of Police. The Administrative Lieutenant/Captain is responsible for the following:
 - 1. Establishing protocols for access, collection, storage, and retention of ALPR data and associated media files.

2. Establishing protocols to preserve and document ALPR read, alerts, or hits that are acted on in the field or associated with investigations or prosecutions.
3. Establishing protocols to establish and ensure the security and integrity of data captured, stored, and/or retained by the ALPR system.
4. Ensuring the proper selection of personnel approved to operate the ALPR system and maintaining an adequate number of ALPR trainers.
5. Maintaining records identifying approved ALPR deployments and documenting their results, including appropriate documentation of significant incidents and arrests that are related to ALPR usage.
6. Authorizing any requests for ALPR systems use or data access according to the policies and guidelines of this agency.

TRAINING

103.1.03: Field Training

- A. Designated and trained personnel shall check equipment on a regular basis to ensure functionality and camera alignment. Any equipment that falls outside expected functionality shall be removed from service until deficiencies have been corrected.
- B. Use of ALPR is prohibited until each individual user has received proper training and instruction for the ALPR.
- C. ALPR systems repairs (hardware or software) shall be made by agency authorized sources.
- D. All ALPR users shall have a training refresher at least every 2 years or when deemed necessary to maintain current practices.

DEPLOYMENT

103.1.04: Sworn personnel with access to the use of the ALPR system shall ensure they understand the practical uses for the ALPR system and are familiar with the different functions prior to its use as described below.

103.1.05: ALPR alerts/hits prior to initiation of the stop:

- A. Visually verify that the vehicle license plate number matches the vehicle license plate number ran by the ALPR system, including both alphanumeric characters of the license plate and the state of issuance.
- B. Verify the current status of the vehicle license plate through dispatch or Computer Automated Dispatch (CAD) query when circumstances allow.
- C. In each case in which an alert or a hit is triggered, the user shall record the disposition of the alert and the hit into the ALPR system.

- D. Hot lists may be updated manually only by the administrator or designee. Whenever a plate is manually entered into the ALPR system, the officer shall document the reason.
- E. Special details: ALPR use during non-traditional deployments (e.g. special operations or during a criminal investigation) shall be approved by the Administrative Lieutenant/Captain.
- F. Searches of historical data within the ALPR system shall be done in accordance with directive 62.1 entitled, "Control of Criminal Justice System Information," directive 33.1 entitled, "Records," and established Departmental procedures with approval from the Administrative Lieutenant/Captain
- G. All ALPR hits shall be considered an investigative lead/reasonable suspicion and are not considered probable cause absent additional confirmation.
- H. A reasonable effort shall be made by the officer to confirm the validity of an ALPR hit with dispatch prior to initiating a traffic stop based upon an ALPR hit.

FILE SHARING

103.1.06: ALPR data sharing and dissemination


- A. ALPR data shall be considered restricted and confidential and may be shared for legitimate law enforcement purposes with approval from the Chief's Office.
- B. When ALPR data is disseminated outside the agency, it shall be documented in a secondary dissemination log.

RETENTION

103.1.07: Retention/Destruction

- A. Media and files generated from the use of the ALPR systems shall be maintained for a minimum of 90 days on each device.
 - 1. Should files need to be retained longer than 90 days, a memo requesting the extension of the retention must be sent through the officer's chain of command to the Administrative Lieutenant/Captain.
 - 2. Destruction of files will occur automatically after 90 days unless the files need to be retained longer due to open and active investigations.
 - 3. The Criminal Investigations Section may request special retention and or use of the ALPR system when authorized by the Chief's Office for an ongoing investigation.

Drafted (bdg/03-25)

Approved: 
Chief Paul Joye

Date: 4/7/25