
Automated License Plate Readers (ALPRs)

462.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR) technology, also known as License Plate Recognition, provides automated detection of license plates. ALPRs are used by the Ventura County Sheriff's Office to convert data associated with vehicle license plates for official law enforcement purposes, including identifying stolen or wanted vehicles, stolen license plates and missing persons. ALPRs may also be used to gather information related to active warrants, homeland security, electronic surveillance, suspect interdiction, traffic enforcement, and stolen property recovery.

348.2 ADMINISTRATION OF ALPR DATA

All installations and maintenance of ALPR equipment, as well as ALPR data retention and access, shall be managed by the Patrol Services Assistant Sheriff. The Patrol Services Assistant Sheriff will assign personnel under his/her command to administer the day-to-day operation of the ALPR equipment data.

462.3 ALPR OPERATION

Use of an ALPR is restricted to the purposes outlined below. Department personnel shall not use, or allow other to use, the equipment or database records for any unauthorized purpose.

- (a) An ALPR shall only be used for official and legitimate law enforcement business.
- (b) An ALPR may be used in conjunction with any routine patrol operation or criminal investigation. Reasonable suspicion or probable cause is not required before using an ALPR.
- (c) While an ALPR may be used to canvass license plates around any crime scene, particular consideration should be given to using ALPR-equipped cars to canvass areas around homicides, shootings and other major incidents. Partial license plates reported during major crimes should be entered into the ALPR system in an attempt to identify suspect vehicles.
- (d) No member of this department shall operate ALPR equipment or access ALPR data without first completing department approved training.
- (e) No ALPR operator may access California Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (CLETS) data unless otherwise authorized to do so.
- (f) Deputies shall visually verify the vehicle's license plate to ensure the LPR read the plate correctly. Additionally, deputies shall confirm the alert/want is still active with Sheriff's Dispatch prior to stopping a vehicle based upon the LPR alert alone.

462.4 ALPR DATA COLLECTION AND RETENTION

All data images gathered by an ALPR are for the official use of the Ventura County Sheriff's Office and because such data may contain confidential CLETS information, it is not open to public review. ALPR information gathered and retained by this department may be used and shared with prosecutors or others as permitted by law.

Ventura County Sheriff's Office

Policy Manual

Court Appearances And Subpoenas

The Sheriff's Systems Bureau is responsible for ensuring proper collection and retention of ALPR data, and for transferring ALPR data stored in department vehicles to the department server on a regular basis, not to exceed 30 days between transfers.

Pursuant to Government Code §34090.6 the ALPR data downloaded to the server shall be stored for a minimum of one year. The ALPR Server will be set to retain the data for five years, unless it is being used in a criminal or civil action. When this occurs the data will be retained until the disposition of the case, even if it exceeds the normal purging schedule. In those circumstances the applicable data should be downloaded from the server onto portable media and booked into evidence.

462.5 ACCOUNTABILITY AND SAFEGUARDS

All saved data will be closely safeguarded and protected by both procedural and technological means. The Ventura County Sheriff's Office will observe the following safeguards regarding access to and use of the stored data:

- (a) All non-law enforcement requests for access to stored ALPR data shall be referred to the Records Manager and processed in accordance with applicable law.
- (b) All ALPR data downloaded to the mobile workstation and server shall be accessible only through a login/password-protected system capable of documenting all access of information by name, date and time.
- (c) Persons approved to access ALPR data under these guidelines are permitted to access the data for legitimate law enforcement purposes only, such as when the data relate to a specific criminal investigation or department related civil or administrative action.
- (d) Such ALPR data may be released to other authorized and verified law enforcement officials and agencies at any time for legitimate law enforcement purposes.
- (e) ALPR system audits should be conducted on a regular basis.