

Surveillance Use Policy-Fixed Automated License Plate Readers (ALPRs)

1305.1 PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance for the capture, storage and use of digital data obtained through the use of Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR) technology. Department Personnel shall adhere to the requirements of the Surveillance Use-Fixed ALPRs in this policy as well as the corresponding Use Policy -422.

The policy of the Berkeley Police Department is to utilize ALPR technology to capture and store digital license plate data and images while recognizing the established privacy rights of the public.

All data and images gathered by the ALPR are for the official use of this department. Because such data may contain confidential information, it is not open to public review.

The Berkeley Police Department does not permit the sharing of ALPR data gathered by the City or its contractors/subcontractors for federal immigration enforcement, pursuant to the California Values Act (Government Code § 7282.5; Government Code § 7284.2 et seq) – these federal immigration agencies include Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border Patrol (CBP).

1305.2 DEFINITIONS

- (a) Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR): A device that uses cameras and computer technology to compare digital images to lists of known information of interest.
- (b) ALPR Operator: Trained Department members who may utilize ALPR system/equipment. ALPR operators may be assigned to any position within the Department, and the ALPR Administrator may order the deployment of the ALPR systems for use in various efforts.
- (c) ALPR Administrator: The Investigations Bureau Captain or the Chief's designee, serves as the ALPR Administrator for the Department.
- (d) Hot List: A list of license plates associated with vehicles of interest compiled from one or more databases including, but not limited to, NCIC, CA DMV, Local BOLO's, etc.
- (e) Vehicles of Interest: Including, but not limited to vehicles which are reported as stolen, display stolen license plates or tags; vehicles linked to missing and/or wanted persons and vehicles flagged by the Department of Motor Vehicle Administration or law enforcement agencies.
- (f) Detection: Data obtained by an ALPR of an image (such as a license plate) within public view that was read by the device, including potential images (such as the plate and description of vehicle on which it was displayed), and information regarding the location of the ALPR system at the time of the ALPR's read.
- (g) Hit Alert from the ALPR system that a scanned license plate number may be in the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) or other law enforcement database for a

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specific reason including, but not limited to, being related to a stolen car, wanted person, missing person, domestic violation protective order or terrorist-related activity.

1305.3 AUTHORIZED AND PROHIBITED USES

Use of an ALPR is restricted to the purposes outlined below. Department members shall not use, or allow others to use the equipment or database records for any unauthorized purpose (Civil Code § 1798.90.51; Civil Code § 1798.90.53).

- (a) An ALPR shall only be used for official law enforcement business.
- (b) An ALPR may be used in conjunction with any routine patrol operation or to support criminal investigations. Reasonable suspicion or probable cause is not required before using an ALPR database.
- (c) Partial license plates and unique vehicle descriptions reported during crimes may 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) If feasible, the officer should verify an ALPR response through the California Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (CLETS) before taking enforcement action that is based solely on an ALPR alert. Once an alert is received, the operator should confirm that the observed license plate from the system matches the license plate of the observed vehicle. Before any law enforcement action is taken because of an ALPR alert, the alert will be verified through a CLETS inquiry via MDT or through Dispatch.
- (f) Members will not take any police action that restricts the freedom of any individual based solely on an ALPR alert unless it has been validated. Because the ALPR alert may relate to a vehicle and may not relate to the person operating the vehicle, officers are reminded that they need to have reasonable suspicion and/or probable cause to make an enforcement stop of any vehicle. (For example, if a vehicle is entered into the system because of its association with a wanted individual, Officers should attempt to visually match the driver to the description of the wanted subject prior to making the stop or should have another legal basis for making the stop.)
- (g) Hot Lists. Designation of hot lists to be utilized by the ALPR system shall be made by the ALPR Administrator or his/her designee. Hot lists shall be obtained or compiled from sources as may be consistent with the purposes of the ALPR system set forth in this Policy. Hot lists utilized by the Department's LPR system may be updated by agency sources more frequently than the Department may be uploading them and thus the Department's LPR system will not have access to real time data. Occasionally, there may be errors in the LPR system's read of a license plate. Therefore, an alert alone shall not be a basis for police action (other than following the vehicle of interest).
- (h) Prior to initiation of a stop of a vehicle or other intervention based on an alert, Department members shall undertake the following:
 - 1. Verification of status on a Hot List. An officer must receive confirmation, from a Berkeley Police Department Communications Dispatcher or other department

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- computer device, that the license plate is still stolen, wanted, or otherwise of interest before proceeding (absent exigent circumstances).
2. Visual verification of license plate number. Officers shall visually verify that the license plate of interest matches identically with the image of the license plate number captured (read) by the LPR, including both the alphanumeric characters of the license plate, state of issue, and vehicle descriptors before proceeding. Department members alerted to the fact that an observed motor vehicle's license plate is entered as a Hot Plate (hit) in a specific BOLO (be on the lookout) list are required to make a reasonable effort to confirm that a wanted person is actually in the vehicle and/or that a reasonable basis exists before a Department member would have a lawful basis to stop the vehicle.
 3. Department members will clear all stops from hot list alerts by indicating the positive ALPR Hit, i.e., with an arrest or other enforcement action. If it is not obvious in the text of the call as to the correlation of the ALPR Hit and the arrest, then the Department member shall update with the Communications Dispatcher and original person and/or a crime analyst inputting the vehicle in the hot list (hit).
 4. General Hot Lists (SVS, SFR, and SLR) will be automatically downloaded into the ALPR system a minimum of once a day with the most current data overwriting the old data.
 5. All entries and updates of specific Hot Lists within the ALPR system will be documented by the requesting Department member within the appropriate general offense report. As such, specific Hot Lists shall be approved by the ALPR Administrator (or his/her designee) before initial entry within the ALPR system. The updating of such a list within the ALPR system shall thereafter be accomplished pursuant to the approval of the Department member's immediate supervisor. The hits from these data sources should be viewed as informational; created solely to bring the officers attention to specific vehicles that have been associated with criminal activity.
- (i) All Hot Plates and suspect information entered into the ALPR system will contain the following information as a minimum:
 1. Entering Department member's name
 2. Related case number
 3. Short synopsis describing the nature of the originating call
 - (j) Login/Log-Out Procedure. To ensure proper operation and facilitate oversight of the ALPR system, all users will be required to have individual credentials for access and use of the systems and/or data, which has the ability to be fully audited.
 - (k) Permitted/Impermissible Uses. The ALPR system, and all data collected, is the property of the Berkeley Police Department. Department personnel may only access and use the ALPR system for official and legitimate California law enforcement purposes consistent with this Policy. The following uses of the ALPR system are specifically prohibited:

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1. **Invasion of Privacy:** Except when done pursuant to a court order such as a search warrant, is a violation of this Policy to utilize the ALPR to record license plates except those of vehicles that are exposed to public view (e.g., vehicles on a public road or street, or that are on private property but whose license plate(s) are visible from a public road, street, or a place to which members of the public have access, such as the parking lot of a shop or other business establishment).
2. **Harassment or Intimidation:** It is a violation of this Policy to use the ALPR system to harass and/or intimidate any individual or group.
3. **Use Based on a Protected Characteristic.** It is a violation of this policy to use the LPR system or associated scan files or hot lists solely because of a person's, or group's race, gender, religion, political affiliation, nationality, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, or other classification protected by law.
4. **Personal Use:** It is a violation of this Policy to use the ALPR system or associated scan files or hot lists for any personal purpose.
5. **First Amendment Rights.** It is a violation of this policy to use the LPR system or associated scan files or hot lists for the purpose or known effect of infringing upon First Amendment rights.
 - (l) Anyone who intentionally, or negligently, engages in an impermissible use of the ALPR system or associated scan files or hot lists shall be subject to administrative sanctions, up to and including termination, pursuant to and consistent with the relevant collective bargaining agreements and departmental policies.
 - (m) No ALPR operator may access California Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (CLETS) data unless otherwise authorized to do so. If practicable, the officer should verify an ALPR response through the California Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (CLETS) before taking enforcement action that is based solely on an ALPR alert.

1305.4 DATA COLLECTION

The Investigations Division Captain is responsible for ensuring systems and processes are in place for the proper collection and retention of ALPR data. Data will be transferred from vehicles to the designated storage in accordance with department procedures. Evidentiary hit data shall be transferred into the Department's digital evidence repository through secure integration.

All ALPR data downloaded to the ALPR server should be stored for no longer than 30 days, and in accordance with the established records retention schedule. Thereafter, ALPR data should be purged unless it has become, or it is reasonable to believe it will become, evidence in a criminal or civil action or is subject to a discovery request or other lawful action to produce records. In those circumstances the applicable data should be downloaded from the server and uploaded into BPD's digital evidence repository.

ALPR vendor, will store the data (data hosting) and ensure proper maintenance and security of data stored in their data towers. The ALPR vendor will purge their data at the end of the 30 days of storage. However, this will not preclude Berkeley Police Department from maintaining any

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relevant vehicle data obtained from the system after that period pursuant to the established City of Berkeley retention schedule mentioned above or outlined elsewhere. Relevant vehicle data are scans corresponding to the vehicle of interest on a hot list. The ALPR vendor and Department shall ensure that the necessary data is captured and stored to accurately report the relevant data required in the Annual Surveillance Technology report. Once the City Council approves the Annual Surveillance Technology report all said data may be purged so long as it doesn't violate the Retention guidelines.

Restrictions on use of vendor Data: Information gathered or collected, and records retained by the vendor's cameras or any other Berkeley Police Department ALPR system will not be sold, accessed, or used for any purpose other than legitimate California law enforcement or public safety purposes.

1305.5 DATA ACCESS

- (a) No member of this department shall operate ALPR equipment or access ALPR data without first completing department-approved training.
- (b) No ALPR operator may access California Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (CLETS) data unless otherwise authorized to do so.
- (c) If practical, an operator should verify an ALPR response through the California Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (CLETS) before taking enforcement action that is based solely on an ALPR alert.

1305.6 DATA PROTECTION

All saved data will be safeguarded and protected by both procedural and technological means. The Berkeley Police Department will observe the following safeguards regarding access to and use of stored data (Civil Code § 1798.90.51; Civil Code § 1798.90.53):

- (a) Non-law enforcement requests for access to stored ALPR data shall be processed according to the Records Maintenance and Release Policy in accordance with applicable law.
- (b) All ALPR data downloaded to any workstation or server shall be accessible only through a login/password-protected system capable of documenting all access of information by name, date and time (Civil Code § 1798.90.52).
- (c) Berkeley Police Department members approved to access ALPR data under these guidelines are permitted to access the data for legitimate California law enforcement purposes only, such as when the data relate to a specific criminal investigation or department-related civil or administrative action.
- (d) Aggregated ALPR data not related to specific criminal investigations shall not be released to any local, state or federal agency or entity without the consent of the Chief of Police or City Manager (i.e. If transportation department requested volume of vehicular traffic associated with specific events, it could conceivably be provided with the count of vehicles, but not the specific license plates with appropriate permissions).

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- (e) Measures will be taken to ensure the accuracy of ALPR information. Errors discovered in ALPR data collected by ALPR units shall be marked, corrected or deleted in accordance with the type and severity of the error in question.
- (f) ALPR system audits will be conducted by the Office of Strategic Planning and Accountability on a regular basis, at least biennial.
- (g) Such ALPR data may be released to other authorized and verified law enforcement officials and agencies for legitimate California law enforcement purposes.
- (h) Every ALPR Detection Browsing Inquiry must be documented by either the associated Berkeley Police case number or incident number, and/or a reason for the inquiry

For security or data breaches, see the Records Release and Maintenance Policy.

1305.7 CIVIL LIBERTIES AND RIGHTS PROTECTION

The Berkeley Police Department is dedicated to the most efficient utilization of its resources and services in its public safety endeavors. The Berkeley Police Department recognizes the need to protect its ownership and control over shared information and to protect the privacy and civil liberties of the public, in accordance with federal and state law. The procedures described within this policy (Data Access, Data Protection, Data Retention, Public Access and Third-Party Data Sharing) protect against the unauthorized use of ALPR data. These policies ensure the data is not used in a way that would violate or infringe upon anyone's civil rights and/or liberties, including but not limited to potentially disparate or adverse impacts on any communities or groups.

1305.8 DATA RETENTION

All ALPR data belongs to the Department. All ALPR data downloaded to the ALPR server should be stored for no longer than 30 days, and in accordance with the established records retention schedule. Thereafter, ALPR data should be purged unless it has become, or it is reasonable to believe it will become, evidence in a criminal or civil action or is subject to a discovery request or other lawful action to produce records. In those circumstances the applicable data should be downloaded from the server and uploaded into BPD's digital evidence repository.

ALPR vendor, will store the data (data hosting) and ensure proper maintenance and security of data stored in their data towers. The ALPR vendor will purge their data at the end of the 30 days of storage. However, this will not preclude Berkeley Police Department from maintaining any relevant vehicle data obtained from the system after that period pursuant to the established City of Berkeley retention schedule mentioned above or outlined elsewhere. Relevant vehicle data are scans corresponding to the vehicle of interest on a hot list. The ALPR vendor and Department shall ensure that the necessary data is captured and stored to accurately report the relevant data required in the Annual Surveillance Technology report. Once the City Council approves the Annual Surveillance Technology report all said data may be purged so long as it doesn't violate the Retention guidelines.

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1305.9 PUBLIC ACCESS

All data and images gathered by the ALPR are for the official use of this department. Because such data may contain confidential information, it is not open to public review.

The Department shall to the extent feasible aim to offer a transparency portal wherein the number of scans, hits, and queries is available to the public in real-time, or as near as real-time as feasible. All data shall be reported in the Annual Surveillance Technology Report.

1305.10 THIRD PARTY DATA-SHARING

The ALPR data may be shared only with other law enforcement or prosecutorial agencies for official law enforcement purposes or as otherwise permitted by law.

- (a) A supervisor at the requesting agency will sign an acknowledgment letter stating that the shared data will only be used for the purposes that are aligned with the Berkeley Police Department's policy. The Berkeley Police Department does not permit the sharing of ALPR data gathered by the City or its contractors/subcontractors for purpose of federal immigration enforcement, these federal immigration agencies include Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border Patrol (CBP).
- (b) The signed letter is retained on file. Requests for ALPR data by non-law enforcement or non-prosecutorial agencies will be processed as provided in the Records Maintenance and Release Policy (Civil Code § 1798.90.55).
- (c) All signed letters shall be routed to the Office of Strategic Planning and Accountability for compliance and reporting.

ALPR data is subject to the provisions of the Berkeley Police Department's Immigration Law Policy, and hence may not be shared with federal immigration enforcement officials.

1305.11 TRAINING

Training for the operation of ALPR Technology shall be provided by BPD personnel. All BPD employees who utilize ALPR Technology shall be provided a copy of this Surveillance Use Policy.

1305.12 AUDITING AND OVERSIGHT

ALPR system audits will be conducted by the Office of Strategic Planning and Accountability on a regular basis, at least biannually. The data from the fixed ALPRs shall be reported annually in the Surveillance Technology Report.

Any ALPR data or images that are utilized for an investigation that becomes evidence in a case will be made available to the Office of the Director of Police Accountability (ODPA) as it relates to a specific complaint of misconduct. Additionally, the results of any audits will be shared with the ODPA upon their completion.

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1305.13 MAINTENANCE

Any installation and maintenance of ALPR equipment, as well as ALPR data retention and access, shall be managed by the Investigations Division Captain or his or her designee. The Investigations Division Captain will assign members under his/her command to administer the day-to-day operation of the ALPR equipment and data. Equipment maintenance shall be provided by the vendor.

1305.14 ATTACHMENTS

[See attachment: ALPR Acknowledgment Letter.pdf](#)

Attachments

ALPR Acknowledgment Letter.pdf



AUTOMATED LICENSE PLATE READERS DATA SHARING ACKNOWLEDGMENT LETTER

This letter is to certify that the (AGENCY NAME) has requested to receive data from the Berkeley Police Department's Automated License Plate Readers Program.

Data shared by the Berkeley Police Department will only be used for legitimate California law enforcement purposes ONLY, and not for other purposes such as immigration, personal use, harassment, and any other usages that are against the Berkeley Police Department's Policy.

By signing this letter, the representatives of (AGENCY NAME) agree to abide by this policy.

(Signature/Print name)

(Title/Rank)

(Date)