



**KNOXVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT
KNOXVILLE, TENNESSEE**



General Order No. 4.26

Subject: Automatic License Plate Readers	Effective Date: June 27, 2013	Revised Date: January 17, 2025 July 28, 2026	Pages: 5
Cross Reference: CALEA Standard 41.3.9 IACP – Automated License Plate Recognition Systems: Policy and Operational Guidelines for Law Enforcement IACP License Plate Reader (LPR) Systems: Use Cases TCA 55-10-302 & 10-7-504 Code of Conduct, Section 1.49	Chief of Police Approval:		

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Purpose

1. The purpose of this policy is to provide Knoxville Police Department personnel with guidelines and principles for the collection, access, use, dissemination, retention, and purging of Automatic License Plate Reader (ALPR) information to ensure that the data is used for legitimate law enforcement purposes only and the privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties of individuals are not violated.

Definitions

2. Automatic License Plate Recognition System (ALPR) – Per TCA 55-10-302, it “means one (1) or more fixed high-speed cameras combined with computer algorithms to convert images of license plates into computer-readable data.” This is commonly referred to as License Plate Reader (LPR) as well.
3. Captured Plate Data – Per TCA 55-10-302, this “means the global positioning device coordinates, date and time, photograph, license plate number, and any other data captured by or derived from any automated license plate recognition system.”
4. Hit – An alert generated from the ALPR system to notify the officer that the license plate matches a license plate on a hot list.
5. Hot List – A database of manually entered license plates of interest to law enforcement.
6. ALPR administrator – The supervisor responsible for the oversight and management of the ALPR system.

ALPR Description

7. The Automated License Plate Recognition system (ALPR) is a system that records only the physical description of a vehicle, the license plate on the vehicle, the location, date, and time a vehicle is captured by the camera(s).
8. ALPR systems can be mobile, such as being affixed to a vehicle, or fixed to one location.
9. An ALPR system records the same information a police officer could plainly observe during the ordinary course of their duties. The system does so in a more efficient manner and is put into a searchable format.
10. Due to the variety of license plates throughout North America, the ALPR can misread the alphanumeric characters on a license plate. Therefore, the plate shall be visually verified by the officer to ensure the information provided by the ALPR is correct.

Uses of the ALPR

11. Only trained members of the Knoxville Police Department are authorized to operate the ALPR system.
12. The ethical and responsible use of ALPR technology is vital for strengthening the relationship with the community. Therefore, the use of this technology by the Knoxville Police Department is limited to the scope of community caretaking, investigation, and crime prevention.
13. The use of ALPR technology for community caretaking purposes can include, but is not limited to, the following:
 - a. Missing or endangered persons.
 - b. Threat of illness or injury to a person.
 - c. Delayed motorists.
 - d. Concerns for public safety and well-being.
14. With criminal investigations, ALPR aids in the discovery and collection of evidence. The technology can assist in a variety of ways, including but not limited to:
 - a. Apprehension of suspect(s).
 - b. Identifying an unknown suspect involved in a crime.
 - c. Recovering stolen vehicles and license plates.
 - d. Narrowing investigative searches to where an offender is known to frequent.
 - e. Locating travel patterns of a vehicle on a hot list.
15. Inquiries to the ALPR shall have an associated report number documented and a specific reason for the request. If a report number is not yet available, then the officer shall create a field interview. The identifying information can include the type of crime being investigated, address of occurrence, suspect name, etc.
 - a. If another agency requests an inquiry of KPD's ALPR system, a lieutenant or above must approve the search prior to any inquiry being conducted. Requests must comply with the requirements of this policy in order to be considered. The officer conducting the search must document any subsequent inquiries on behalf of an outside agency in a Field Interview that includes the name of the approving supervisor, the name of the requesting agency and officer, and the reason for the search.
 - b. Requests for outside agencies to conduct ALPR system inquiries by any member of the KPD must be approved by a lieutenant or a higher-ranking supervisor. Those requests must comply with the requirements of this policy and be documented in a Field Interview. Required Field Interviews must include the name of the authorizing supervisor, agency requested and reason for the request.

16. Receiving of an ALPR hit does not provide legal authority for enforcement action. The hit only serves to bring the operator's attention to a vehicle which might warrant further investigation.
17. Prior to taking any enforcement action, the officer shall visually verify that the hit from the ALPR is the same as the digital image and the authenticity of the hit.
18. If the hit is in relation to an NCIC entry, the officer shall verify through NCIC that the hit is still active. If so, then the officer can take enforcement action when appropriate.
19. If the hit is in relation to a manual-entry hot list, the officer shall verify its active status prior to enforcement action. If the status cannot be verified, the officer shall determine reasonable suspicion or probable cause by their own observation before taking enforcement action.
20. Members authorized to manually enter vehicle information into a hot list shall ensure that the information is removed from the system as soon as the alert is no longer needed. Categories of members so authorized are as follows:
 - a. Property Crimes Lieutenant or Captain,
 - b. Violent Crimes Lieutenant or Captain,
 - c. Special Crimes Lieutenant or Captain,
 - d. Organized Crime Lieutenant or Captain,
 - e. CERT Lieutenant or Captain.
 - f. ALPR administrator

System Management and Administration

21. The ALPR system shall be under the authority of one administrator designated by the Chief of Police or designee. This administrator shall be responsible for the oversight of the system uses as well as be the liaison with the vendor.
22. The ALPR administrator is responsible for compiling data about usage, evaluating the effectiveness of the ALPR system, and the deployment of the cameras.
23. The ALPR administrator shall remain current on technical, legal, and training issues related to the ALPR.
24. Training specifications for operators of the ALPR system will be the responsibility of the administrator. Any established training program must include operation instructions specific to the ALPR system deployed.
25. The ALPR administrator shall periodically reassess the fixed ALPR locations as the needs of the police department change. Information such as crime rates, common crime locations, and suggestions from members of the department shall be taken into account when determining locations.

26. The ALPR administrator shall determine certain rights of each user.
27. All queries in the ALPR system will be logged and available for auditing and review. The Office of the Police Compliance Specialist and the administrator shall conduct audits monthly. Any policy violation or other misuse of the system will result in further investigation and disciplinary action if warranted.
28. All members of the Knoxville Police Department are responsible for compliance with this General Order. The misuse of ALPR technology may be deemed violations of Code of Conduct, section 1.49 and subject members to administrative and potentially criminal penalties.

Data Storage, Retention, and Dissemination

29. Any captured plate data collected or retained through an ALPR system shall not be stored for more than thirty (30) days unless the data is retained or stored as part of an ongoing investigation, and in that case, the data shall be destroyed at the conclusion of either:
 - a. An investigation that does not result in any criminal charges being filed.
 - b. Any criminal action undertaken in the matter involving the captured plate data.
30. As stated in TCA 10-7-504, captured plate data from ALPR systems must be treated as confidential and shall not be open for inspection by members of the public. Therefore, this information shall not be disclosed to unauthorized individuals or entities.