

Automated License Plate Readers (ALPR)

425.1 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 Cortland Police Department 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. The ALPR may also be used to gather information related to active warrants, homeland security, electronic surveillance, suspect interdiction and stolen property recovery.

425.2 DEFINITIONS

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

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 specific reason including, but not limited to, being related to a stolen car, wanted person, missing person, protection order, sexual offender and/or terrorist/gang related activity.

Hot List : A list containing vehicles of interest with an articulable criminal nexus or valid public safety concern, including but not limited to, vehicles which are reported as stolen, display of stolen license plates, vehicles linked to missing and/or wanted people, and vehicles flagged by law enforcement agencies.

Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR): A device that uses cameras and computer technology to compare digital images to database lists of known information of interest.

ALPR Data : Data captured by the ALPR cameras of an image (such as a license plate and description of vehicle on which it was displayed) within public view that was read by the device, including GPS coordinates and date and time information of the ALPR system at the time of the ALPRs read.

Vehicles of Interest : Including, but not limited to, vehicles which are reported as stolen; display of stolen license plates or tags; vehicles linked to missing and/or wanted persons and vehicles flagged by law enforcement agencies.

425.3 ADMINISTRATION OF ALPR DATA

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

It is department policy to use ALPR systems for legitimate law enforcement and public safety purposes. No ALPR shall be deployed or used to enforce the law in any discriminatory manner

Cortland Police Department

Policy Manual

Automated License Plate Readers (ALPR)

that is prohibited by the United States Constitution and laws, the State of Ohio Constitution and laws and/or the Cortland City Charter and codified ordinances.

425.4 ALPR OPERATION

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

- (a) An ALPR system shall only be used for official and legitimate law enforcement and public safety purposes.
- (b) An ALPR may be used in conjunction with any patrol operation or official Department investigation. Reasonable suspicion or probable cause is not necessary before using 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) The officer should verify an ALPR response through LEADS before taking enforcement action that is based solely upon an ALPR alert.

425.5 ALPR DATA COLLECTION AND RETENTION

All data and images gathered by an ALPR are for the official use of the Cortland Police Department. Because such data may contain confidential information LEADS data is not open to public review. ALPR information gathered and retained by this department may be used and shared with prosecutors or others only as permitted by law.

All ALPR data is stored by our contracted third party vendor and should be stored for the minimum period established in the Department Records Retention Schedule. Thereafter, ALPR data may 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 lawful action to produce records. In those circumstances the applicable data should be downloaded onto portable media and kept in the case file and/or entered into evidence.

425.6 ACCOUNTABILITY AND SAFEGUARDS

All ALPR data will be closely safeguarded and protected by both procedural and technological means. The Cortland Police Department will observe the following safeguards regarding access to and use of stored data:

- (a) All non-law enforcement requests for access to stored ALPR data shall be referred to the Administrative Assistant and processed in accordance with applicable law.

Cortland Police Department

Policy Manual

Automated License Plate Readers (ALPR)

- (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 and public safety purposes only, such as when the data relate to a specific 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.

425.7 FLOCK SYSTEM - LOCAL PROTOCOL

The Cortland Police Department utilizes the Flock Safety ALPR system which consists of stationary cameras strategically placed throughout the community. Officers on duty shall comply with the following guidelines for utilizing the Flock system.

- (a) Officers shall be actively logged in to the Flock alert website and/or app on both their MDT and cell phone at all times while on duty so they can receive alerts. Officers shall have their alert settings to notify them via SMS and electronic mail so as to avoid missing alerts.
- (b) Officers shall have their settings to receive alerts for any Cortland City and Lakeview Schools owned cameras when logged in.
- (c) When an alert is received for an entry that will require officers to take action, such as a stolen car or wanted or missing person, the officer shall immediately advise dispatch of the alert, vehicle plate and description and location of Flock alert so a CAD can be generated. Officers are to immediately respond to the area and attempt to locate the vehicle and take appropriate, legal enforcement action. Officers may utilize an emergency response to the area if the offense is serious. Officers should only respond with traffic for alerts for minor traffic warrants, etc.
- (d) When an alert is received notifying officers of a sex offender, officers are only required to respond to the area if the sex offender is entering a school zone or park area of the city and should be a visible presence. There is no need to create a CAD for such notifications or routine patrols as a result of those notifications.
- (e) Non-enforcement alerts, such as protective orders or supervised release persons, do not require a response to the area, however, officers may run the plate via LEADS to see the details of the alert and may respond to the area to be a visible presence if so desired.