

CALIFORNIA HIGHWAY PATROL

GENERAL ORDER 81.1

REVISED OCTOBER 2020

AUTOMATED LICENSE PLATE RECOGNITION PROGRAM

1. PURPOSE. The purpose of this order is to establish standardized policy and procedures regarding the use of Automated License Plate Recognition (ALPR) systems.

2. GENERAL.
 - a. The use of ALPR technology has been demonstrated to be a valuable tool for law enforcement officers in the detection of wanted vehicles.

 - b. The ALPR system consists of a dedicated computer and multiple cameras to automatically locate, read, and compare license plates against wanted vehicle databases.

 - c. The wanted vehicle database used within the ALPR program is considered an automated hot sheet and may contain license plate numbers of vehicles associated with all felonies being investigated including, but not limited to, auto theft, vehicles with lost or stolen license plates, homicides, kidnapping, burglaries, elder and juvenile abductions, Amber Alerts, and Blue Alerts.

 - d. If a wanted vehicle is detected, the ALPR system should be set to alert trained personnel with both an audible and visible signal. Images of the license plate and vehicle, as well as a brief explanation of the nature of the want will be displayed. The process is entirely automatic and allows hundreds of vehicles per hour to be scanned and compared against wanted vehicle databases.

 - e. Field Support Section (FSS) has been assigned as the Office of Primary Interest (OPI) for all matters related to the ALPR program.

3. POLICY. These policies and procedures apply to all departmental personnel who operate and/or support ALPR systems equipped in an enforcement vehicle.
 - a. Automated License Plate Recognition systems should only be operated by trained departmental personnel.

b. Disclosure regarding the Department's use of ALPR technology is permitted. However, departmental personnel should only disclose data obtained by the technology to law enforcement personnel for official use only (FOUO) with a legitimate investigatory need.

c. A wanted vehicle discovered through use of the ALPR system does not constitute probable cause to make an arrest. Departmental personnel shall verify all matches of wanted vehicles through the California Law Enforcement Telecommunications System prior to making an arrest.

d. All inquiries from allied agencies, or other entities, concerning the Department's ALPR program should be referred to the OPI during normal business hours and the Emergency Notification and Tactical Alert Center (ENTAC) outside of normal business hours. Sworn California Highway Patrol personnel from the State Threat Assessment Center (STAC) should have access to the Department's ALPR Law Enforcement Archive and Reporting Network Server.

e. A log shall be maintained by FSS, STAC, and ENTAC ALPR staff in order to track all internal and allied agency FOUO search requests of the ALPR database. Field Support Section and ENTAC will be the only points of contact for ALPR database searches and the only authorized provider of ALPR database information. At a minimum, the log will contain the following information for all ALPR-related searches:

- (1) Date of inquiry.
- (2) License plate to be searched or partial plate search.
- (3) Agency making the request.
- (4) Name of requestor.
- (5) Phone number of requestor.
- (6) Electronic mail (e-mail) address of requestor.
- (7) Case number of the investigation being conducted.
- (8) Date of crime.
- (9) Type of crime.
- (10) Information provided and in what format (e-mail, hard copy, etc.).

f. All departmental personnel shall use the primary activity codes within the Activity Tracking System when utilizing the ALPR system to collect accurate data on ALPR usage.

4. INSTALLATION OF AUTOMATED LICENSE PLATE RECOGNITION EQUIPMENT.

a. Automated License Plate Recognition equipment shall not be installed in departmental vehicles without prior approval/coordination with FSS.

b. Installation of ALPR equipment shall be accomplished by departmental personnel trained by the vendor. Installation of ALPR equipment on departmental vehicles must conform to standards outlined by Fleet Operations Section and FSS.

c. Information Technology Section (ITS) will maintain and upgrade, as necessary, the servers for mobile platforms. All requisitions for equipment will be submitted through FSS, with the assistance of ITS, when necessary.

(1) When ALPR equipment fails and is no longer serviceable, FSS will determine the appropriate actions for repair or disposal of the equipment in compliance with existing policy.

5. OPERATOR TRAINING.

a. Train the Trainer.

(1) The departmental ALPR coordinator is responsible for providing training to all Division/Area ALPR coordinators. The training will consist of an in-depth familiarization with the ALPR hardware and software including, but not limited to, login and operational procedures and troubleshooting of the ALPR system.

(2) The Division/Area ALPR coordinator is responsible for training Area uniformed personnel.

(3) All records regarding ALPR training shall be entered into the Employee Training Records System.

6. PROCEDURES.

a. Mobile Automated License Plate Recognition Systems.

(1) Departmental personnel shall follow proper operating procedures as outlined in the Operator's Guide assigned to each ALPR vehicle.

(2) Departmental personnel shall use their Local Area Network identification and password to log into NetMotion/Mobility Client.

(3) Departmental personnel shall log on to the ALPR system using the user identification number (badge number) and password provided by Telecommunications Section, Mobile Digital Communications Unit. A password reset can be obtained through FSS.

(4) Commanders should develop local standard operating procedures concerning the deployment of ALPR vehicles within their command (refer to Annex A). Primary consideration for deployment of ALPR vehicles should be given to beats that experience high levels of traffic volume and high rates of vehicle theft.

7. DATA TRANSFER, STORAGE, AND RETENTION.

a. Mobile Automated License Plate Recognition Systems.

(1) Information Technology Section shall maintain mobile ALPR system data storage servers and retain data records for a period of 60 days, after which the data shall be purged.

(2) Access to ALPR data is limited to law enforcement personnel with an official investigatory need.

8. ANNUAL REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.

b. Reporting. California Vehicle Code Section 2413 requires the following reporting requirements:

(1) The Department of the California Highway Patrol shall, as a part of the annual automobile theft report submitted to the Legislature pursuant to subdivision (b) of Section 10901, report the ALPR practices and usage, including the number of ALPR data disclosures, a record of the agencies to which data was disclosed and for what purpose, and any changes in policy that affect privacy concerns.

ANNEX A

AUTOMATED LICENSE PLATE RECOGNITION TECHNOLOGY STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

(EXAMPLE)

- Purpose and description of technology.
- Proper startup procedures for mobile Automated License Plate Recognition (ALPR) systems.
- Proper notification procedures when ALPR equipment is not running properly (i.e., contact Field Support Section, Vehicle Theft Unit, ALPR coordinator).
- Area-specific enforcement guidelines.
- Area-specific prosecutorial guidelines.

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