Johnson County Sheriff's Office

Automated License Plate Readers

Policy #: JC168
Effective: 10-7-2026
Approved By: Lynn Lyon, Sheriff
Related Policies:
References: NRS Sections 60-3201 to 60-3209.

I. Policy

This Agency uses Automatic License Plate Readers (ALPR) to convert data associated with vehicle license plates for official law enforcement purposes as allowed by state law, including identifying stolen or wanted vehicles, stolen license plates and missing persons. Captured plate data should be handled in a manner that respects individuals' privacy and civil liberties.

II. Definitions

A. Automatic license plate reader (ALPR) system: one or more mobile or fixed automated high-speed cameras used in combination with computer algorithms to convert images of license plates into computer-readable data.
B. Alert: data held by the Department of Motor Vehicles, each criminal justice information system maintained in this state, the Federal Bureau of Investigation National Crime Information Center, the Federal Bureau of Investigation Kidnappings and Missing Persons list, the Missing Persons Information Clearinghouse, and license plate numbers that have been manually entered into the ALPR system upon a law enforcement officer's determination that the vehicles or individuals associated with the license plate numbers are relevant and material to an ongoing criminal or missing persons investigation.
C. ALPR Administrator: the Sheriff or their designee, serves as the ALPR Administrator for the Agency.
D. ALPR Operator: trained Agency members who may utilize ALPR system/equipment. ALPR operators may be assigned to any position within the Agency, and the ALPR Administrator may order the deployment of the ALPR systems for use in various efforts.
E. Captured plate data: global positioning system coordinates, date and time information, photographs, license plate numbers, and any other data captured by or derived from any automatic license plate reader system.
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. Governmental entity: a department or agency of this state, the federal government, another state, or a political subdivision or an individual acting for or as an agent of any of such entities.
H. 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, domestic violation protective order or terrorist-related activity.

I. Hot List: a list of license plates associated with vehicles of interest compiled from one or more databases including, but not limited to, NCIC, Local BOLOs (Be On the Lookout), etc.

J. Secured area: a place, enclosed by clear boundaries, to which access is limited and not open to the public and into which entry is only obtainable through specific access-control points.

K. Vehicles of Interest: includes but is 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 Nebraska Department of Motor Vehicles or law enforcement agencies.

III. Allowed and Prohibited Uses

A. 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.

B. An ALPR system may only be used when such use is for the purpose of identifying:
   1. Outstanding parking or traffic violations.
   2. An unregistered or uninsured vehicle.
   3. A vehicle in violation of the vehicle equipment requirements set forth under the Nebraska Rules of the Road.
   4. A vehicle in violation of any other vehicle registration requirement.
   5. A vehicle registered to an individual for whom there is an outstanding warrant.
   6. A vehicle associated with a missing person.
   7. A vehicle that has been reported as stolen.
   8. A vehicle that is relevant and material to an ongoing criminal investigation.

C. The following uses of the ALPR system are specifically prohibited:
   1. Invasion of Privacy: Except when done pursuant to a court order such as a search warrant, it 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 ALPR 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 characteristic 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 ALPR system or associated scan files or Hot Lists for the purpose or known effect of infringing upon First Amendment rights.

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D. Anyone who engages in an impermissible or prohibited use of the ALPR system or associated scan files, or Hot Lists may be subject to disciplinary action.

IV. Procedures

A. General
   1. Only properly trained sworn officers and law enforcement communications personnel are allowed access to the ALPR system or to collect ALPR information.
   2. 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 can be fully audited.
   3. Agency members shall not use or allow others to use the equipment or database records for any unauthorized purpose.
   4. Partial license plates and unique vehicle descriptions reported during major crimes should be entered into the ALPR system to identify suspect vehicles.
   5. Hot Lists shall be obtained or compiled from sources consistent with the purposes of the ALPR system set forth in this policy.
   6. Hot Lists will be automatically downloaded into the ALPR system a minimum of once a day with the most current data overwriting the old data.
   7. This Agency will update the ALPR system at the beginning of each law enforcement agency shift if updates from the databases used are available.
   8. All entries and updates of specific Hot Lists within the ALPR system will be documented by the requesting Agency member within the appropriate general offense report. As such, specific Hot Lists shall be approved by the ALPR Administrator or their designee before initial entry within the ALPR system.
   9. All license plates and suspect information entered in the ALPR system will contain the following information at a minimum:
      a. Entering Agency member's name.
      b. Related case number.
      c. Short synopsis describing the nature of the originating call.

B. Communications Personnel
   1. Where applicable, 911 communications center personnel shall be responsible for monitoring the ALPR system. All Hits received will sound an Alert in the Communications Center. Upon receiving an Alert, on-duty communication center personnel will immediately verify the captured plate (photo) with the wanted/suspect plate number displayed as the wanted plate from either NCIC, or the Hot List. Upon visual verification of the plate/tag the dispatcher will manually verify the wanted plate with NCIC to determine if it is still outstanding as wanted.
   2. Verified NCIC Hits will result in an immediate dispatch of an officer.
   3. On all stolen license plate Hits, communication center personnel will check the stolen plate through DMV records. Should the stolen plate come back to a vehicle with the same make, model, and color of the vehicle that the stolen plate is currently being displayed on, the dispatched units shall be immediately advised of that fact.
   4. Hot List Alerts may include specific instructions to field personnel. Those instructions will also be relayed to on-duty personnel at the time of dispatch. i.e., "stop only with probable cause and ID occupants."
   5. When a stolen vehicle is recovered through use of the ALPR system, communications personnel shall notify the governmental entity that entered

the stolen vehicle plate into NCIC, along with the status of any associated arrests. Notification shall be as per NCIC protocols.

C. Investigative Personnel who are ALPR operators
   1. Investigative personnel may utilize ALPR data to assist in the identification of suspects involved in criminal activity.
   2. Investigative personnel may have search access enabling them to search the database for vehicles and/or persons of interest.
   3. When Investigative personnel utilize ALPR data to assist in identification of a suspect or vehicle linked to criminal activity, the ALPR data shall be downloaded from the system and attached to the investigative report as evidence.

D. Patrol Officer Response to Alerts
   1. Patrol Officers shall be responsible for monitoring ALPR cameras in their assigned area. Upon receipt of an ALPR notification, on duty personnel will respond to the area of the capture and look for the suspect vehicle. If the vehicle is located, proper traffic stop procedures should be followed based upon the type of Hit, deputy observations, and other factors present. The first deputy identifying the wanted vehicle should wait for appropriate back-up before initiating a traffic stop or engaging the vehicle when practicable.
   2. An Alert alone should not be a basis for law enforcement action (other than following the vehicle of interest). If practicable, the deputy should verify an ALPR Alert before taking enforcement action that is based solely on an ALPR Alert. Verification will occur through an inquiry via MDT (mobile data terminal) or through the communications center that the observed license plate from the system matches the license plate of the observed vehicle.
   3. Because the ALPR Alert may relate to a vehicle and may not relate to the person operating the vehicle, deputies 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, deputies 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).
   4. Prior to initiation of a stop of a vehicle or other intervention based on an Alert, officers shall undertake the following:
      a. A deputy must receive confirmation, from the communications center or other Agency computer device, that the license plate is still stolen, wanted, or otherwise of interest before proceeding (absent exigent circumstances).
      b. Deputies shall visually verify that the license plate of interest matches identically with the image of the license plate number captured (read) by the ALPR, including both the alphanumeric characters of the license plate, state of issue, and vehicle descriptors before proceeding.
      c. Deputies alerted to the fact that an observed motor vehicle's license plate is entered as a Hit in a specific BOLO list are required to make a reasonable effort to confirm that a wanted person is in the vehicle and/or that a reasonable basis exists for the stop.
   5. ALPR Operators will clear all stops from Hot List Alerts by indicating the positive ALPR Hit, i.e., with an arrest or other enforcement action.

E. Manual Queries
   1. ALPR Operators may manually query captured plate data only when a law enforcement officer determines that the vehicle or individuals associated with

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the license plate number are relevant and material to an ongoing criminal or missing persons investigation subject to the following limitations:

a. Any manual query must document the reason for the entry.
b. Manual queries must be automatically purged at the end of each law enforcement agency shift unless the criminal investigation or missing persons investigation remains ongoing.

F. Retention of Captured Plate Data
1. The ALPR system, and all data collected, is the property of the Agency.
2. This Agency shall not retain captured plate data for more than one hundred eighty (180) days unless the captured plate data is:
   a. Evidence related to allowed purpose(s) identified in this policy.
   b. Subject to a preservation request consisting of a sworn written statement of a governmental entity or a defendant in a criminal case that 1) specifies the particular camera or cameras for which captured plate data must be preserved or the particular license plate for which captured plate data must be preserved, and 2) The date or dates and timeframes for which captured plate data must be preserved, in which instance an operator shall take all necessary steps to preserve captured plate data in its possession pending the issuance of a warrant, subpoena, or order of a court.
   c. The subject of a warrant, subpoena, or court order.

G. Releasing ALPR Data
1. Captured plate data is not considered a public record under state law.
2. Captured plate data may be disclosed to:
   a. the person to whom the vehicle is registered or with the prior written consent of the person to whom the vehicle is registered, except that:
      i. If the person to whom the vehicle is jointly or solely registered has a valid outstanding protection order against them, and the Agency has been presented with a copy of that protection order, this Agency will not disclose the captured plate data of the vehicle except consistent with carrying out the allowable ALPR purposes identified in this policy or to comply with a court order for disclosure.
3. Captured plate data may be disclosed to other law enforcement or prosecutorial agencies for official law enforcement purposes only, as follows:
   a. The requesting agency shall make a written request for the ALPR data including:
      i. The name of the agency;
      ii. The name of the person requesting it;
      iii. The intended purpose of obtaining the information.
   b. The request is reviewed by the Sheriff or his/her designee and approved before the request is fulfilled.
   c. The approved request is retained and filed.
4. This Agency may also disclose captured plate data:
   a. Pursuant to a court order.
   b. To the parties to a criminal or civil action.
   c. For administrative purposes.
   d. To alert the public to an emergency situation.

e. Relating to a missing person.

5. Except as specified above, requests for ALPR data by non-law enforcement or non-prosecutorial agencies will be processed in accordance with records release policies.

H. ALPR Data Detection Browsing Audits

1. It is the responsibility of the ALPR Administrator to ensure that an audit is conducted of ALPR detection browsing inquiries at least once per month. The Agency will audit a sampling of the ALPR system utilization from the prior period to verify proper use in accordance with the above authorized uses. The audit shall randomly select at least 10 detection browsing inquiries conducted by Agency employees during the preceding period and determine if each inquiry meets the requirements established in policy this policy.
2. The audit shall be documented in the form of an internal Agency memorandum directed to the Sheriff. The memorandum shall include any data errors found so that such errors can be corrected. After review by the Sheriff or designee, the memorandum and any associated documentation shall be filed and retained in Agency records.

I. Posting and Reporting Duties

1. This policy, which contains privacy provisions consistent with state law, shall be conspicuously posted on this Agency's website and in the Sheriff's Office main office.
2. This Agency will report annually to the Nebraska Commission on Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice on its ALPR practices and usage. This report shall also be conspicuously posted on the Sheriff's Office website and in the Sheriff's Office main office. The report shall include the following information, if captured by the ALPR system:
   a. The names of each list against which captured plate data was checked, the number of confirmed matches, and the number of matches that upon further investigation did not correlate to an Alert.
   b. The number of manually-entered license plate numbers, the number of confirmed matches, and the number of matches that upon further investigation did not correlate to an Alert.

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