



Coshocton County Sheriff's Office

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Policy Manual

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Chapter 4 - Patrol Operations

Section 424 - Automated License Plate Readers (ALPR)

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Automated License Plate Readers (ALPR)

424.1 DEFINITIONS

A) Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR): A device that uses cameras and computer technology to capture vehicle-related images and compare vehicle characteristics, including license plates, to lists of known vehicle information of interest.

B) ALPR Operator: Trained CCSO personnel authorized to utilize the ALPR system or equipment. ALPR Operators may be assigned to any position within CCSO.

C) ALPR Administrator: A trained operator assigned to oversee the ALPR system, including service and maintenance requests, system access, deployment, and day-to-day administration. The ALPR Administrator may designate trained ALPR Operators to assist with administration and operation of ALPR equipment.

D) ALPR Equipment: ALPR cameras, including cameras permanently affixed to a structure, pole, traffic barrier, bridge, or similar location, and vehicle-mounted cameras affixed permanently or temporarily to a vehicle for mobile deployment.

E) ALPR Systems: The technology system, including ALPR equipment and technology services hosted by the ALPR system vendor, that captures vehicle characteristics, including license plates, and compares those characteristics to one or more lists of vehicles of interest, which may result in an alert or hit.

F) ALPR Data: Vehicle-related images and associated information produced or obtained through the ALPR system. ALPR data related to an investigation may be downloaded and maintained in Zuercher Suite consistent with this policy and applicable retention requirements.

G) Hit / Alert: A notification from the ALPR system indicating that a scanned license plate or vehicle may be associated with information in NCIC, another law enforcement database, or a CCSO-authorized custom hotlist, including information related to a felony investigation, stolen or wanted vehicle, stolen license plate, wanted person, missing or endangered person, or threat to

persons or property.

H) Custom Hotlist: An Agency created list or entry within the ALPR system identifying a vehicle or license plate associated with a specific, legitimate law enforcement or public safety purpose.

424.2 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR) technology provides automated detection of license plates and other vehicle characteristics. CCSO uses ALPR technology for official law enforcement and public safety purposes, including identifying stolen or wanted vehicles and stolen license plates, locating missing or endangered persons, supporting criminal investigations, assisting with active warrants, suspect identification or interdiction, and stolen property recovery.

Employees may preserve ALPR information related to an investigation by downloading or otherwise associating the information with the applicable case file in Zuercher Suite, consistent with this policy and applicable records-retention requirements.

424.3 ADMINISTRATION OF ALPR DATA

The ALPR Administrator shall manage or coordinate ALPR system access, equipment administration, data retention practices, service and maintenance requests, and day-to-day operation of the ALPR system. The ALPR Administrator may assign trained personnel to assist with these responsibilities.

424.4 ALPR OPERATION

Use of the ALPR system is restricted to official and legitimate law enforcement or public safety purposes. CCSO personnel shall not use, or allow others to use, ALPR equipment, system access, or database records for an unauthorized or personal purpose.

Except when otherwise authorized by the Sheriff or designee, ALPR use shall be related to one or more of the following:

- 1) Any felony investigation
- 2) Stolen or wanted vehicles
- 3) Stolen license plates
- 4) Wanted persons
- 5) Missing or endangered persons
- 6) Threats to persons or property

(a) ALPR technology may be used in conjunction with patrol operations or an official CCSO

investigation. A search of ALPR data shall be supported by an official and legitimate law enforcement purpose.

(b) ALPR technology may be used to canvass vehicle information associated with a crime scene or major incident. Partial license plate information reported during a major crime may be entered into the ALPR system in an effort to identify a suspect vehicle.

(c) No CCSO member shall operate ALPR equipment or access the ALPR system or ALPR data without completing CCSO-approved training.

(d) No ALPR Operator may access LEADS data unless otherwise authorized to do so.

Any ALPR use beyond the scope of this section must be authorized by the Sheriff or designee.

424.4.1 PROCESSING ALPR HITS

A) An ALPR hit may be used in conjunction with a patrol operation or official CCSO investigation consistent with this policy. A hit may be considered as one element in developing reasonable suspicion or probable cause when supported by the totality of the circumstances.

B) Upon notification of a hit originating from NCIC or another non-CCSO law enforcement database, the ALPR Operator shall, when practicable, verify the hit through LEADS/NCIC, the appropriate law enforcement entity, or the CCSO Communications Center before taking enforcement action based solely upon the ALPR hit.

C) After verification, the ALPR Operator should confirm that the observed vehicle and license plate correspond with the ALPR alert, including, as applicable, the alphanumeric characters, state of issue, plate type, and available vehicle descriptors.

D) The verification steps above should be completed before enforcement action related to the hit when practical under the circumstances. CCSO personnel should not take enforcement action involving direct interaction with an individual based solely upon an unverified ALPR hit.

424.4.2 CUSTOM HOTLIST ENTRIES

A) CCSO personnel may create a custom hotlist entry only when the vehicle or license plate is associated with a specific and legitimate law enforcement or public safety purpose consistent with this policy.

B) A custom hotlist entry shall include sufficient information to document the law enforcement purpose for the entry. When applicable, the entry should be associated with a CCSO incident, case number, call for service, or other identifiable law enforcement activity.

C) Custom hotlist entries shall be limited to a maximum initial period of thirty (30) days. An entry may be renewed for an additional period when a continuing legitimate law enforcement or public safety purpose exists. Personnel renewing an entry shall ensure the basis for continued inclusion remains valid and is documented.

- D)** Custom hotlist entries are subject to supervisory review by the ALPR Administrator or designee. Entries that are no longer supported by a legitimate law enforcement or public safety purpose shall be removed or allowed to expire.
- E)** An alert generated from a custom hotlist entry is an investigative lead. CCSO personnel shall independently verify the alert and determine that lawful grounds exist before taking enforcement action based upon the alert.
- F)** CCSO personnel shall not create or maintain a custom hotlist entry for personal use, harassment, intimidation, general monitoring of an individual without a legitimate law enforcement purpose, or any purpose prohibited by law or CCSO policy.
- G)** Custom hotlist activity is subject to regular ALPR system audits. Audit review may include comparison of hotlist entries and associated system activity with incident reports, case numbers, calls for service, or other agency records to verify compliance with this policy.

424.5 ALPR DATA COLLECTION AND RETENTION

ALPR data and images gathered or obtained by CCSO are for official law enforcement use. Information obtained through LEADS/NCIC or another protected law enforcement database shall be handled in accordance with applicable law and access restrictions. ALPR information may be used or shared with prosecutors or other authorized persons only as permitted by law and this policy.

- A)** CCSO ALPR Data Storage and Retention: ALPR data downloaded or preserved by CCSO shall be maintained for the minimum period established by the applicable CCSO records-retention schedule and thereafter may be purged consistent with that schedule unless the data has become evidence, is reasonably expected to become evidence, is subject to a lawful preservation or production requirement, or otherwise must be retained by law. Investigative ALPR data may be preserved in Zuercher Suite as part of the applicable case record.
- B)** Flock Safety ALPR Data Storage and Retention: Except for ALPR data separately downloaded or preserved by CCSO, Flock Safety will store ALPR data in accordance with CCSO configuration and contractual requirements. Under the current CCSO configuration, Flock Safety ALPR detection data is retained for thirty (30) days and then purged. Purging vendor-hosted data does not preclude CCSO from retaining properly preserved ALPR information in Zuercher Suite or another authorized CCSO system when required for an investigation, case, evidence, records retention, or other lawful purpose.
- C)** ALPR information collected for CCSO shall not be sold or accessed or used by CCSO for a purpose other than legitimate law enforcement or public safety purposes, or as otherwise required by law. Sharing of CCSO ALPR data by the vendor or other entities shall be governed by CCSO policy, applicable agreements, and law.

424.6 ACCOUNTABILITY AND SAFEGUARDS

ALPR information shall be safeguarded by appropriate procedural and technological controls. CCSO shall observe the following safeguards regarding access to and use of ALPR information:

- A)** Non-law-enforcement requests for access to stored ALPR information shall be referred to the appropriate CCSO records custodian and processed in accordance with applicable law.
- B)** ALPR system access shall be limited to authorized users through individual login credentials or other access controls capable of documenting system activity, including user identity and date/time information when supported by the system.
- C)** Persons authorized to access ALPR information shall do so only for legitimate law enforcement purposes, including a specific criminal investigation or CCSO-related civil or administrative action authorized by policy.
- D)** ALPR information may be shared with authorized and verified law enforcement officials or agencies for legitimate law enforcement purposes consistent with this policy and applicable law.
- E)** ALPR system audits shall be conducted on a regular basis by the ALPR Administrator or designee. Audit review may include comparison of system searches and custom hotlist activity with case reports, incident numbers, calls for service, or other agency records to verify a legitimate law enforcement purpose and compliance with CCSO requirements.

424.7 ACCESS PROCEDURES

ALPR information gathered or maintained by CCSO is for official law enforcement use. Requests for public access shall be processed by the appropriate CCSO records custodian in accordance with applicable law.

- A)** Requests for access to ALPR information by non-law-enforcement personnel shall be referred to the CCSO records custodian and processed in accordance with applicable law.
- B)** ALPR system access shall be restricted to authorized personnel using individual credentials and applicable system security controls.
- C)** Authorized users may access ALPR information only for legitimate law enforcement purposes consistent with this policy.
- D)** CCSO may share ALPR information with verified law enforcement officials or agencies when the information pertains to a legitimate law enforcement purpose within the scope of this policy. Sharing beyond the purposes identified in this policy must be approved by the Sheriff or designee and otherwise permitted by law.
- E)** CCSO will not release ALPR information for the purpose of federal immigration enforcement except to the extent required by law.
- F)** The ALPR Administrator or designee shall conduct regular ALPR system audits and may document the date, scope, number of searches reviewed, users reviewed, and findings of each audit.

G) CCSO may make information about the ALPR system available for public access, including this policy, general system information, usage statistics, and other transparency information approved for public release.

424.8 Training

The ALPR Administrator shall ensure that ALPR Operators receive CCSO-approved training appropriate to their assigned access and responsibilities. Training should address authorized uses, access requirements, alert verification, custom hotlist procedures, data handling, and accountability requirements established by this policy.