


447.1 Fort Collins Police Services Policy Manual

 FORT COLLINS POLICE	POLICY	447
	TITLE	Automatic License Plate Reader (ALPR) System

447.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy will provide guidelines for the use, care, and maintenance of Automatic License Plate Reader (ALPR) systems, both mobile and stationary, owned by the Agency or loaned, leased, or contracted to the Agency from other entities. Additionally, this policy will provide guidelines for the collection, use, dissemination, and retention of information collected using the ALPR system.

447.2 DEFINITIONS

Alert – A message from the ALPR system to the operator when the system matches a scanned license plate to a license plate number or associated person in the hotlist.

Automatic License Plate Reader – A device that uses infrared and/or high-resolution digital cameras and optical character recognition technology to scan the license plate of moving and/or stationary motor vehicles and compare the scanned information to one or more databases to identify license plates and subsequent vehicles or registered owners that may be associated with unlawful activity.

AMBER – The America's Missing Broadcast Emergency Response system.

Hotlist – Data that is downloaded daily to the ALPR system that contains information on stolen vehicles, stolen license plates, suspended or revoked driver licenses, invalid vehicle registrations, and other significant law enforcement interest such as AMBER alerts or missing persons alerts, terrorist watch lists, Be On the Look Out (BOLO) alerts, or other wanted individuals or vehicles. The information is provided and entered by the Colorado Bureau of Investigation (CBI), the National Crime Information Center (NCIC), The Colorado Crime Information Center (CCIC), Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) and the Department of Revenue (DOR).

447.3 POLICY

- (a) Fort Collins Police Services may utilize Automatic License Plate Readers as an aid for the detection, investigation, and enforcement duties of police officers and criminal investigators. The ALPR system uses CCIC permissions and is for official use only; any misuse is subject to corrective or disciplinary actions.
- (b) Alerts from the ALPR system DO NOT constitute reasonable suspicion or probable cause.
- (c) Only Agency members that have been officially trained in the proper operational procedures, interpretation of information, and maintenance of an ALPR system are permitted to utilize it. In addition to the training, any officer utilizing the mobile ALPR must have approval from their supervisor prior to the installation or use of the ALPR equipment.
- (d) No Agency member may alter any data collected by the ALPR system.

- (e) Any use of the mobile ALPR system on Agency vehicles for other than traffic enforcement and normal mobile patrolling for stolen vehicles or other criminal activity shall be approved by the watch commander or lieutenant within the division utilizing the equipment. Use of the ALPR on an Agency vehicle for use in a multi-jurisdictional operation e.g. BATTLE (Beat Auto Theft Through Law Enforcement) requires the completion of an operations plan, either from Colorado State Patrol for an outside jurisdiction operation or a FCPS operations plan for a local operation. Participation in regional auto theft operations can be completed using BATTLE grant money during a normal workday with the Detective/Officer using a paid day off with supervisor approval.

447.4 OPERATING PROCEDURES

- (a) Operator Responsibilities: If an officer is assigned a mobile ALPR system, they are expected to use it during the normal course of their duties each day.
 - 1. The operator will function check the system prior to using it for any field enforcement activity.
 - 2. The operator will ensure that the latest hotlist is uploaded to the system daily.
 - 3. The operator will ensure the proper functionality of the automatic download, upload, or other electronic data transfer device.
- (b) Employees who have been trained in the use and operation of stationary ALPR devices may use those systems during their shift. Stationary systems may be used by non-sworn employees in the agency who have been trained and are CJIS compliant.
- (c) Response to ALPR Alerts: Matches between the scanned information and the hotlist displayed as alerts on the ALPR system DO NOT constitute reasonable suspicion or probable cause for enforcement action and will not be acted upon without additional confirmation or development of reasonable suspicion/probable cause.
 - 1. The operator will visually verify that any information from an alert matches the vehicle in question.
 - 2. All alerts from the system will be confirmed through dispatch or by use of the Mobile Data Computer in the operator's car.
 - 3. Officers will establish reasonable suspicion or probable cause prior to initiating a contact or taking any enforcement action.
 - 4. The operator will document any enforcement action taken as the result of an alert received. This will be done in their CAD unit history as "ALPR alert" and include the disposition of any action.
- (d) Data Collection, Retention, Analysis and Dissemination: Information and/or images collected by the ALPR system is for official use only and shall not be used in any other capacity. The ALPR system is intended to enhance normal criminal patrol activities by collecting and comparing license plate information to known violator information provided by CCIC, NCIC, DOR, and OMV for Colorado only.
 - 1. With prior approval of the supervisor in charge of a specific incident, the ALPR may be used for additional investigative functions (e.g. documenting license plates in the vicinity of an active, significant crime scene such as a missing person or homicide.)
 - (a) In these situations, the information will be downloaded and documented as per the current Evidence SOP. The data collected will adhere to all relevant policies and procedures regarding evidence, including retention and disposal.

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2. Information collected by the ALPR during normal patrol operations will be retained for no more than one year after collection. If the information is used to take enforcement action, may be used for furtherance of an investigation or could be considered evidence, it will be collected and retained per Policy 804: Property and Evidence as evidence.
3. The Property Unit Auto Theft Detective will access, when necessary, numerical information concerning the number of license plates scanned, number of alerts from the ALPR system, number of alerts resulting in eventual enforcement action, and other statistics that would be beneficial for analysis pertaining to the use and effectiveness of the ALPR system.
4. The analysis of specific license plate information shall only be conducted pursuant to a criminal investigation when the data has been collected as evidence as described in Section 447.4(c)(1)(a) of this policy.
5. The dissemination of any specific license plate information collected shall be only to those Agency members that have a need to know.
6. The operator's supervisor will periodically check the system to ensure that all function checks and retention settings for collected information is in compliance with this policy.