

GENERAL ORDER

SUBJECT: AUTOMATED LICENSE PLATE READER

NUMBER: 3-64

EFFECTIVE DATE: 10/25/24

APPROVED:

CHIEF OF POLICE

AMENDS/ SUPERSEDES:

POLICY:

This policy establishes guidance concerning the installation, operation, maintenance and security of Automated License Plate Readers (ALPR) in support of the Staunton Police Department's mission, goals and objectives.

PURPOSE:

The Staunton Police Department ALPR system provides information for use by Department personnel to assist in the detection and apprehension of certain vehicles traveling through the City of Staunton. The ALPR system can also be utilized to assist in the development of information that could identify suspects who have committed crimes within the City of Staunton.

PROCEDURES:

This policy establishes procedures for the lawful and proper use of ALPR technology. It provides the best use of this technology, while protecting the rights of residents and motorists traveling on public roadways in the City of Staunton.

Automated License Plate Reader

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1. General:

The ALPR Program will be managed by the LES Division Commander, in coordination with the Technology Operations Unit, to ensure that the equipment is being effectively utilized and maintained. Locations of fixed ALPR cameras will be determined based upon points of ingress and egress into and out of the City, natural choke points where vehicle traffic must pass, and locations based on criminal activity or ongoing investigations.

2. Operations- Fixed ALPR:

a. Fixed ALPR cameras will monitor traffic within their field of view throughout the City of Staunton, 24 hours a day.

b. The system will passively monitor traffic and retain license plate and related data for a specific period of time. Information of investigative value entered into the ALPR system from NCIC or a "custom hotlist" will produce alerts for investigative purposes.

c. The LES Division Commander or his designee will serve as the administrator of the Department's ALPR system. He will manage all data entered into the ALPR database and facilitate user profiles.

d. User profiles will be provided to all sworn personnel. Sworn personnel can select the types and method of alert notification (text message, email, or both.) The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) Amber Alert is required to be activated for all personnel and will be evaluated by the on duty supervisor to determine appropriate response.

e. Field users who receive notifications must verify subject/vehicle identification and confirm the NCIC status before taking action. Personnel responding to ALPR alerts in the field will notify the on-duty supervisor, and dispatch, who will record the event as a self-initiated activity for CAD record purposes.

f. Field users may search the ALPR database pursuant to investigative needs (i.e. identification of suspect vehicle.)

1. Hotlist data may contain:

- i. Information of investigative interest such as specific license plate information

ii. AMBER/SILVER Alerts

iii. Information relating to Missing/Endangered
Individuals or Runaways

g. All personnel will receive training prior to accessing the
ALPR system.

h. Retained ALPR data may be accessed by an
officer/investigator for criminal justice purposes only.

3. Operations- Mobile ALPR

a. The Staunton Police Department is a participating agency
in the Virginia State Police (VSP) ALPR Program. Access to and use
of the VSP ALPR program data is governed by a Memorandum of
Understanding between the Staunton Police Department and VSP.

b. The LES Division Captain will designate a Point of Contact
for the program, who will be responsible for managing sworn employee
accounts and ensuring training is completed prior to using the
system. Training shall include but not be limited to the use of and
dissemination of information obtained from the VSP ALPR program.

c. VSP ALPR data is considered Criminal Justice Information,
and access to such data shall specifically pertain to active
investigations and intelligence gathering related to criminal
activity. ALPR data may only be downloaded when it specifically
pertains to active investigations and intelligence gathering related
to criminal activity. Additionally, the ALPR data may only be shared
when the request specifically pertains to active investigations and
intelligence gathering related to criminal activity. All users must
comply with NCIC/VCIN rules and regulations. Violations may result
in disciplinary action and/or criminal prosecution.

d. Users will log in to the program at the beginning of their
shift, at which time a new hotlist will automatically download to
the unit. The hotlist is updated every four hours, but will only
update on the MDT if the user logs out and back in.

e. A supervisor must be notified of any alerts/hits from the
system. In the event of verified hits on an unoccupied vehicle,
officers will maintain visual observation while supervisory contact
is initiated to determine if immediate recovery action will be taken
or whether surveillance will be continued.

f. Mobile ALPR cameras are hard mounted to the patrol vehicle. Because of this, no vehicle equipped with an ALPR camera system should be taken through a friction type car wash. Instead, officers operating a vehicle with this equipment should only utilize a touchless car wash.

4. Administration

a. The Department's ALPR system database and related information are to be used for official law enforcement/criminal justice purposes only. Personnel shall only access the database for investigative purposes and treat all data as confidential. The utilization of the ALPR system for any other reason will require the approval of the Chief of Police.

b. SPD personnel will not enter any license plates into the Staunton Police custom hotlist unless the vehicle is currently wanted/suspected in criminal activity. All custom hotlist vehicles shall include a case number, CAD event number, or other identifier relating to an ongoing investigation, and the reason for the vehicle being added into the system. All custom hotlist entries shall have an expiration date. All custom hotlist entries will be regularly audited by the LES Division Commander or his designee. If an apprehension occurs through the use of Flock, investigators will utilize the Flock Apprehension tool to properly track the outcomes of officer interactions.

c. ALPR capture data will not remain on Staunton Police servers after 30 days unless it is of evidentiary value. ALPR data needed to be held for evidentiary value will be uploaded to evidence.com and categorized per the current retention policy.

d. When personnel become aware of invalid data being contained within the state NCIC database, SPD personnel shall notify the contributing agency and document who was notified by name and title in the CAD incident notes.

e. The Staunton Police Department may enter into data-sharing agreements with other law enforcement agencies or non-law enforcement agencies who collect ALPR data only under the authority of the Chief of Police (or his designee). In response to a court order or Freedom of Information Act request, only that information stored on Staunton Police Department servers would be authorized for release.

f. Any ALPR related data stored on Staunton Police Department servers or any contracted vendor's servers will remain property of

the Staunton Police Department and will not be shared or released without the approval of the Chief of Police.

5. PRIVATELY OWNED/FUNDED ALPR SYSTEMS

a. The Staunton Police Department recognizes that residents may want to purchase privately owned ALPR systems and link them to the Staunton Police network of systems. All private systems linked to the Staunton Police system must be approved by the Chief of Police. All data received by the Staunton Police Department shall become Staunton Police Department data and subject to all provisions of this policy. The Staunton Police Department must be provided search capabilities to any linked ALPR system. The Staunton Police will not be responsible for any costs associated with a privately funded ALPR system.

b. Privately owned ALPR systems must meet City of Staunton ordinances and regulatory standards.

c. The Staunton Police will not actively monitor any privately owned ALPR or video system.