


Automatic License Plate Reader (ALPR)

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I. PURPOSE / POLICY

The purpose of this Standard Operating Procedure is to establish policy and procedural guidelines for the capture, storage and use of digital data obtained through the use of Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR) technology.

The availability and use of the ALPR System provides opportunities for the enhancement of law enforcement agencies' productivity, effectiveness, and protection of public and officer safety. The Wilton Police Department shall only utilize this technology in furtherance of official and legitimate law enforcement operations and public safety. All ALPR systems, ALPR data and associated media are the property of the Wilton Police Department, and are intended for use in conducting official police business or training. Misuse of this equipment, associated databases or data, may be subject to disciplinary action and or criminal prosecution consistent with those associated with the COLLECT system.

II. RESPONSIBILITY

It is the responsibility of all department personnel to adhere to this Standard Operating Procedure. It is the additional responsibility of all supervisory and command staff to insure its compliance.

III. DEFINITIONS

Automatic License Plate Recognition (ALPR) – Automatic license plate recognition technology uses high-speed cameras combined with sophisticated computer algorithms capable of converting the images of license plates and vehicles to electronically readable data. The ALPR System captures an image of a license plate and converts it to a text file using Optical Character Recognition (OCR) technology. The technology also compares the digital images of license plates to the CJIS-NCIC Hot file database. The ALPR System is configured as either fixed, mobile or portable.

Alert – A visual and/or auditory notice that is triggered when the ALPR System receives a potential hit on a license plate.

Alert Data – Information captured by an ALPR relating to a license plate

that matches the license plate on a hot list.

ALPR Data – Scan files, alert data, and any other documents or data generated by, or obtained through, utilization of the ALPR System.

ALPR Data Query Logs – A record of a search or query of ALPR data

Hit – An alert that a license plate matches a record maintained in the ALPR database related to stolen vehicles, wanted vehicles, or other alert type files that support investigation or which have been manually registered by a user for further investigation.

Hot List – License plate numbers of vehicles of interest, such as stolen vehicles, unregistered vehicles, vehicles owned by persons of interest, and vehicles associated with AMBER Alerts, Missing Child Alerts, Silver Alerts, Be On Look Out (BOLO), Attempt To Locate (ATL), and Wanted or Missing Person broadcasts or bulletins in which a license plate number is included, or other license plate numbers of interest entered by the Department or an authorized officer.

Optical Character Recognition (OCR) – The technology that supports the automated reading and digitizing of images of license plates that are captured by the ALPR System.

IV. PROCEDURES

The ALPR technology, also known as License Plate Recognition (LPR), allows for the automated detection of license plates. It is used by the Wilton Police Department to convert data associated with vehicle license plates for official law enforcement purposes, including identifying stolen or wanted vehicles, and missing persons. It may also be used to gather information related to active Warrants, homeland security, and past criminal activity associated with reasonable suspicion or probable cause. Emergency uses, such as active crimes also permit the use.

The use of ALPR technology shall be approved by the Chief of Police or designee. ALPR System and information shall be:

1. Accessed and used only for official and legitimate law enforcement purposes;
2. Used for searches of historical ALPR data, in accordance with this policy and other Department policies or regulations where applicable; and
3. Used for searches of ALPR data by members of this Department

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4. Queries made through the ALPR System shall be conducted by authorized Wilton Police Department users only.
5. The list of authorized users shall be maintained and updated, as required, by the ALPR Administrator.

All installation and maintenance of ALPR equipment, as well as ALPR data retention and access, shall be managed by the Wilton Police Department. The Chief of Police or their designee will assign members under their command to administer the day-to-day operation of the ALPR equipment and data.

A. Administration and Oversight

The Chief of Police shall designate an ALPR Administrator. The Chief of Police shall ensure the ALPR Administrator has oversight for the ALPR System deployment, operations, and maintenance.

The ALPR Administrator shall be responsible for the following:

1. Ensuring the proper selection of the personnel approved to operate the ALPR System and maintaining an adequate number of trained and authorized users.
2. Authorizing any requests for ALPR System use or data access according to Department policy.
3. Ensuring that designated, trained personnel check equipment on a regular basis to ensure functionality, camera alignment, and removing from service any equipment that falls outside expected functionality until deficiencies are corrected.
4. Designating users who have been properly trained in the use and operational protocols of the ALPR system.
5. Allowing access to the ALPR System for those users with an approved login and password.
6. Ensuring that any changes in hardware, software, policy, or law are the subject of continuing in-service training or bulletins.

B. Operations

Use of an ALPR is restricted to the purposes outlined below. Department members shall not use, or allow others to use the equipment or database records for any unauthorized purpose.

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1. An ALPR shall only be used for official law enforcement business.
2. An ALPR may be used in conjunction with criminal investigation. Reasonable suspicion or probable cause is required before using an ALPR, and must have a case number and/or investigation-type assigned.
3. Emergency use such as missing person, silver alert, amber alert are permitted and still must be documented.
4. No ALPR operator may access department, state or federal data unless otherwise authorized to do so.
5. Officer shall verify an ALPR response through COLLECT/NCIC before taking enforcement action that is based solely on an ALPR alert.

C. ALPR Alerts/Hits & Hot Lists

The ALPR technology, also known as License Plate Recognition (LPR), allows for the automated detection of license plates. It is used by the Wilton Police Department to convert data associated with vehicle license plates for official law enforcement purposes.

Custom Hot Lists may be created when a member has a specific plate they would like to be notified of cameras capturing, such as stolen plate, stolen vehicle, known suspect vehicle in a crime pattern i.e. organized retail theft. A case number and reason are required to create a custom hot list.

Members assigned to Dispatch shall log-in to the ALPR search portal at the start of their shift and remain logged in for the duration. Alerts for cameras maintained by the Wilton Police Department shall be activated. Members assigned to Dispatch are responsible for identifying accurate and timely alerts and the rapid deployment of officers.

ALPR will create alerts/hits which include:

1. Identifying stolen or wanted vehicles
2. Missing persons
3. Amber Alerts
4. Silver Alerts

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5. Warrants
6. Hot Lists

Prior to initiation of a stop, based on an ALPR Hit or Alert, the initiating Officer(s) shall:

1. Visually verify that the vehicle plate number matches the plate number run by the ALPR System, including both:
 - a. Alphanumeric characters of the license plate; and
 - b. The state of issue.
2. Verify the current status of the plate through:
 - a. COLLECT, or
 - b. National Crime Information Center (NCIC), or
 - c. Department's Records Management System (RMS), or
 - d. Other appropriate source of data, when circumstances allow, or as soon as practicable.

D. Data Collection & Retention

The Chief of Police or designee is responsible for ensuring systems and processes are in place for the proper collection and retention of ALPR data.

All ALPR data downloaded from devices will be entered into as part of the case record and those cases will be stored in accordance with the established records retention schedule.

ALPR photo or data, captured by Wilton Police Department's LPR's, will be purged 30 days after capture, unless downloaded and attached to an investigation.

E. Accountability

All data will be closely safeguarded and protected by both procedural and technological means.

1. Access to ALPR data shall be accessible only through a login/password-protected system capable of documenting all

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access of information by name, date and time.

2. Members approved to access ALPR data under these guidelines are permitted to access the data for legitimate law enforcement purposes only, such as when the data relate to a specific criminal investigation or department-related civil or administrative action and must have a case number assigned and/or investigation-type.
3. ALPR system audits should be conducted on a regular basis.
4. Misuse of LPR technology and violations of its prohibited uses may result in user investigations and discipline up to and including termination.

F. Releasing ALPR Data

The ALPR data may be shared only with other law enforcement or prosecutorial agencies for official law enforcement purposes or as otherwise permitted by law. Officers who assist other agencies, must follow mutual aid agreements, and document any access to the system with a case number and/or investigation-type along with the name of the requesting agency.

G. Training

The Chief of Police or designee should ensure that members receive department-approved training for those authorized to use or access the ALPR system.

Approved by:

Chief Thomas Conlan  Digitally signed by Chief Thomas Conlan
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