

Automated License Plate Readers (ALPRs)

Effective Date:	
Revised Date:	03/05/26
Issuing Authority:	D. Netemeyer, Chief

426.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance for the capture, storage and use of digital data obtained through the use of Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR) technology.

426.2 POLICY

The policy of the Gulf Shores Police Department is to utilize ALPR technology to capture and store digital license plate data and images while recognizing the established privacy rights of the public.

All data and images gathered by the ALPR are for the official use of this department. Because such data may contain confidential information, it is not open to public review.

426.3 ADMINISTRATION

The ALPR technology, also known as License Plate Recognition (LPR), allows for the automated detection of license plates. It is used by the Gulf Shores Police Department to convert data associated with vehicle license plates for official law enforcement purposes, including identifying stolen or wanted vehicles, stolen license plates and missing persons. It may also be used to gather information related to active warrants, homeland security, electronic surveillance, suspect interdiction and stolen property recovery.

All installation and maintenance of ALPR equipment, as well as ALPR data retention and access, shall be managed by the Police Captain and or Deputy Chief. The Police Captain and or Deputy Chief will assign members under his/her command to administer the day-to-day operation of the ALPR equipment and data.

426.4 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.

- (a) An ALPR shall only be used for official law enforcement business (Ala. Admin. Code r. 265-X-6-.04).
- (b) An ALPR may be used in conjunction with any routine patrol operation or criminal investigation. Probable cause or articulable reasonable suspicion must be developed prior to taking action on LPR data..

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- (c) While an ALPR may be used to canvass license plates around any crime scene, particular consideration should be given to using ALPR-equipped vehicles to canvass areas around homicides, shootings, and other major incidents. Partial license plates reported during major crimes should be entered into the ALPR system in an attempt to identify suspect vehicles.
- (d) No member of this department shall operate ALPR equipment or access ALPR data without first completing department-approved training (Ala. Admin. Code r. 265-X-6-.08).
- (e) No ALPR operator may access confidential department, state or federal data unless authorized to do so.
- (f) The officer shall verify an ALPR response through the appropriate official law enforcement database before taking enforcement action that is based solely on an ALPR alert.

426.5 DATA COLLECTION AND RETENTION

The Police Captain and or Deputy Chief is responsible for ensuring systems and processes are in place for the proper collection and retention of ALPR data (Ala. Admin. Code r. 265-X-6-.08). Data will be transferred from vehicles to the designated storage in accordance with department procedures (Ala. Admin. Code r. 265-X-6-.03).

All stored ALPR data should be retained for no more than five years. Thereafter, ALPR data should be purged unless it has become, or it is reasonable to believe it will become, evidence in a criminal or civil action or is subject to a discovery request or other lawful action to produce records. In those circumstances, the applicable data should be downloaded in accordance with departmental evidence policy.

Notice shall be sent to the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency (ALEA) when data is retained beyond the retention period (Ala. Admin. Code r. 265-X-6-.06).

426.5.1 STATE REGISTRY

The Police Captain and or Deputy Chief shall establish procedures to ensure that collected ALPR data is timely submitted to the State LPR Registry as required by Ala. Admin. Code r. 265-X-6-.05.

426.5.2 NON EVIDENTIARY ALPR DATA RETENTION

Definition - ALPR tag reads that are not associated with an active investigation.

This ALPR data shall not be retained longer than 90 days.

426.6 ACCOUNTABILITY

All data will be closely safeguarded and protected by both procedural and technological means. The Gulf Shores Police Department will observe the following safeguards regarding access to and use of stored data:

- (a) All ALPR data shall be accessible only through a login/password-protected system capable of documenting all access of information by name, date and time and shall only be accessed from department owned devices.

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- (b) 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.
- (c) ALPR system audits shall be conducted on a regular basis.
- (d) Any misuse of ALPR data will immediately be reported to ACJIS by the agency AISO and will be subject to prosecution under Code of Ala. 1975 41-9-601.

426.6.1 ACCESS LOGS

The Police Captain and or Deputy Chief is responsible for the creation of access logs to document access to ALPR data by department members and authorized criminal justice agencies as required by Ala. Admin. Code r. 265-X-6-.04.

426.7 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, using the following procedures (Ala. Admin. Code r. 265-X-6-.04; Ala. Admin. Code r. 265-X-6-.08):

- (a) The agency makes a request for the ALPR data through the approved software portal that includes :
 1. The name of the agency.
 2. The intended purpose of obtaining the information.
- (b) The request is reviewed by the Police Captain and or Deputy Chief or the authorized designee and approved before the request is fulfilled.
- (c) The approved request is retained in the approved software portal.

Requests for ALPR data by non-law enforcement or non-prosecutorial agencies shall be reviewed by the Police Captain and or Deputy Chief who should work with the Public Records Officer so that only records related to criminal justice or public safety purposes are released (see the Records Maintenance and Release Policy).

426.7.1 DISSEMINATION LOGS

The Police Captain and or Deputy Chief should create dissemination logs to track shared ALPR data as specified by Ala. Admin. Code r. 265-X-6-.04.

426.8 POLICY AVAILABILITY

This policy should be published on the department website (Ala. Admin. Code r. 265-X-6-.08).