

Automated License Plate Readers (ALPR)

427.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the use of Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR) technology by members of the Rossford Police Department. ALPR technology, also known as License Plate Recognition, provides automated detection of license plates. ALPRs are used by the Rossford 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. The ALPR may also be used to gather information related to active warrants, homeland security, electronic surveillance, suspect interdiction and stolen property recovery.

427.2 POLICY

Members of the Rossford Police Department shall only use ALPRs for official and legitimate law enforcement purposes, and in accordance with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations as they pertain to the collection, use, and dissemination of data obtained through the ALPR system. The Chief of Police may revoke the ALPR system access of any member found to have acted in violation of any provision of this policy, or to have engaged in any other improper use of the system. Unauthorized use of the ALPR system, in violation of this policy or applicable law, may result in discipline, up to and including termination.

427.3 ADMINISTRATION OF ALPR DATA

All installation and maintenance of ALPR equipment, as well as ALPR data retention and access, shall be managed by the Chief of Police. The Chief of Police will assign personnel under his/her command to administer the day-to-day operation of the ALPR equipment and data, training, and maintaining records of significant incidents and arrests that are related to ALPR usage.

427.4 ALPR OPERATION

Use of an ALPR is restricted to the purposes outlined below. Department personnel 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 and legitimate law enforcement business.
- (b) An ALPR may be used in conjunction with any patrol operation or official Department investigation. Reasonable suspicion or probable cause is not necessary before using ALPR.
- (c) While an ALPR may be used to canvass license plates around any crime scene, particular consideration should be given to using ALPR-equipped cars 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.

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- (e) If practicable, the officer should verify an ALPR response through LEADS before taking enforcement action that is based solely upon an ALPR alert.
- (f) No ALPR operator may access Ohio Law Enforcement Automated Data System (LEADS) data unless otherwise authorized to do so.
- (g) Members should login to Flock Safety via their vehicle's MDT at the beginning of their shift and log out of the system at the end of their shift.

427.5 ALPR DATA COLLECTION AND RETENTION

All data and images gathered by an ALPR are for the official use of the Rossford Police Department. Because such data may contain confidential information from LEADS, the data is not open to public review. ALPR information gathered and retained by this department may be used and shared with prosecutors or others only as permitted by law.

All ALPR data will be maintained by a third party vendor, Flock Safety, for a period of thirty days. Thereafter, ALPR data may be purged unless it has become, or is reasonable to believe it will become, evidence in a criminal or civil action or is subject to a lawful action to produce records. In those circumstances the applicable data should be downloaded from the server onto portable media and booked into evidence. Data can also be integrated into Axon's Evidence.com portal. Any downloaded data will then be maintained in conjunction with the associated case file as directed by the Records Maintenance and Release policy.

427.6 ACCOUNTABILITY AND SAFEGUARDS

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

- (a) All non-law enforcement requests for access to stored ALPR data shall be referred to the Chief of Police and processed in accordance with applicable law.
- (b) 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.
- (c) 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.
- (d) When conducting a search of ALPR data, members are required to enter a case or incident number in the reason field.

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- (e) When information is obtained through the use of an ALPR results in official action being taken, it shall be documented in the incident report and added to the Flock Safety "outcomes" as apprehended or not apprehended.
- (f) Such ALPR data may be released to other authorized and verified law enforcement officials and agencies at any time for legitimate law enforcement purposes.
- (g) Members shall not share login information with others and shall only use their own login credentials to access the system.
- (h) ALPR system audits should be conducted by the Patrol Lieutenant on a regular basis.