

Odessa Police Department General Order Policy

LICENSE PLATE RECOGNITION (LPR/ALPR) SYSTEMS

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the authorized use, operation, administration, access, retention, auditing, and dissemination of information obtained through License Plate Recognition (LPR), also referred to as Automated License Plate Recognition (ALPR), systems utilized by the Odessa Police Department.

The Odessa Police Department utilizes LPR technology for legitimate law enforcement and public safety purposes, including locating stolen or wanted vehicles, locating missing or endangered persons, assisting with AMBER, SILVER, and BLUE Alerts, supporting criminal investigations, enhancing officer safety, assisting with crime analysis, supporting homeland security functions, protecting critical infrastructure, and improving emergency response capabilities.

The Odessa Police Department recognizes the importance of protecting individual privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties while utilizing LPR technology. The Department shall not use LPR systems to target, monitor, or collect information regarding individuals or groups solely based upon their race, ethnicity, citizenship, national origin, religion, political affiliation, social views, participation in lawful events or organizations, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, age, or any other classification protected by law.

LPR systems shall only capture information visible to the public where there is no reasonable expectation of privacy under applicable law, including license plates and vehicles operating on public roadways, public parking areas, or locations visible from public spaces. All use of LPR technology shall comply with applicable federal law, Missouri law, CJIS requirements, Department policy, and constitutional protections.

DEFINITIONS

Alert: A visual and/or audible notification generated when a license plate read matches a license plate contained within a hot list.

Hit: A confirmed match between a license plate read and a hot list entry.

Hot List: A database of license plates associated with stolen vehicles, wanted vehicles, AMBER/SILVER/BLUE Alerts, missing persons investigations, criminal investigations, officer safety notifications, or other legitimate law enforcement purposes.

LPR/ALPR: Technology utilizing cameras and optical character recognition software to capture and analyze license plate information and associated metadata.

Read: Digital images of license plates, vehicles, and associated metadata, including date, time, and location information captured by the LPR system.

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Historical Search: A search of previously collected LPR data conducted after the original plate read occurred.

Fixed LPR System: An LPR camera permanently installed at a fixed location.

Mobile LPR System: An LPR camera mounted to a law enforcement vehicle.

Portable LPR System: A transportable LPR camera capable of temporary deployment at various locations.

ADMINISTRATION

The Chief of Police shall designate one or more employees responsible for the administration and oversight of the LPR program.

The designated administrator shall be responsible for system deployment, training, access control, data retention, auditing, security, maintenance, and compliance with this policy.

The administrator shall ensure that all users receive department-approved training before being granted access to the system. Training shall include operational procedures, legal considerations, privacy protections, constitutional considerations, data retention requirements, and system security.

The Department shall conduct periodic audits of system access, searches, hot list entries, data dissemination, and user activity to ensure compliance with this policy. Audit findings shall be documented and retained according to Department procedures.

Any unauthorized access, misuse, theft of data, sabotage, system intrusion, or security breach shall be immediately investigated and reported through appropriate channels.

AUTHORIZED USE

LPR systems and associated data shall only be used for official law enforcement and public safety purposes.

Authorized uses include criminal investigations, locating stolen vehicles, locating wanted persons, locating missing or endangered persons, officer safety functions, investigative lead development, homeland security functions, critical infrastructure protection, mutual aid operations, emergency response, and other legitimate law enforcement activities.

LPR technology shall not be used as an automated traffic citation or speed enforcement system. Nothing in this policy prohibits officers from utilizing lawful LPR alerts or information encountered during traffic enforcement activities that are related to legitimate law enforcement or public safety purposes.

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Historical searches should be associated with a case report number, CAD event number, intelligence file, investigative purpose, or other documented law enforcement activity whenever practical.

Only personnel authorized by the Department and trained in the use of the system shall access LPR data.

ALERT VERIFICATION

Prior to initiating enforcement action based upon an LPR alert, officers shall visually verify that the license plate displayed by the LPR system matches the actual vehicle plate, including state of issuance and alphanumeric characters.

When practical, officers shall verify the status of the alert through NCIC, MULES, dispatch, MDT inquiry, or other authorized criminal justice information systems.

An LPR alert alone does not establish reasonable suspicion or probable cause for a stop, detention, search, arrest, or other enforcement action without additional verification.

The disposition of alerts that result in investigative action should be documented within the LPR system whenever possible.

HOT LIST MANAGEMENT

Officers may request that vehicle information be entered into a custom hot list for legitimate law enforcement purposes.

Whenever practical, custom hot list entries shall be associated with a case number, CAD event number, investigative purpose, or supervisory approval.

The reason for the entry shall be documented within the system.

Custom hot list entries shall be reviewed periodically and removed when no longer necessary.

DATA RETENTION, SECURITY, AND SHARING

LPR data shall be considered sensitive law enforcement information and handled in accordance with CJIS requirements, applicable law, and Department policy.

The Odessa Police Department maintains control over access to and authorized use of LPR data collected through the Department's LPR system. Flock Group, Inc. provides the software platform, cloud-based storage services, and associated technological infrastructure utilized by the Department. Access to LPR data is controlled by the Odessa Police Department and governed by Department policy, applicable law, and CJIS requirements.

The Odessa Police Department may authorize limited access to LPR data for partnering law enforcement agencies for legitimate law enforcement and public safety purposes consistent with

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applicable law, CJIS requirements, and established information-sharing agreements.

All access to LPR data shall be logged and subject to audit.

Non-evidentiary LPR data shall be automatically purged from the system after thirty (30) days unless the information is determined to have evidentiary or investigative value related to a criminal investigation, prosecution, civil proceeding, lawful preservation request, or court order.

Any retained evidentiary data shall be preserved in accordance with Department evidence retention procedures and applicable law.

UNAUTHORIZED USE

Department personnel shall not use the LPR system for personal purposes or permit others to do so. The following uses are specifically prohibited:

- Harassment or intimidation of any individual or group;
- Monitoring or targeting individuals or groups solely based upon protected characteristics;
- Use for personal, political, commercial, or non-official purposes;
- Unauthorized dissemination of LPR information;
- Accessing information without a legitimate law enforcement purpose;
- Any use inconsistent with Department policy, CJIS requirements, or applicable law.

Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action, criminal prosecution, civil liability, or any combination thereof.

PUBLIC TRANSPARENCY

The Odessa Police Department may maintain public-facing information regarding the Department's use of LPR technology, including information regarding the purpose of the program, privacy protections, accountability measures, retention periods, and authorized uses.

The Odessa Police Department uses LPR technology to assist with legitimate law enforcement and public safety purposes while recognizing the importance of protecting individual privacy and civil liberties. The system is used to help locate stolen or wanted vehicles, locate missing or endangered persons, support criminal investigations, and provide real-time alerts associated with criminal activity and public safety threats. The Department utilizes both real-time alerting and historical searches to assist investigators in solving crimes after incidents occur. The Department has established policies, training requirements, audit procedures, access controls, and data retention limits to help ensure the technology is used appropriately and responsibly. The Odessa Police Department has authorized limited access to LPR data for partnering law enforcement agencies for legitimate law enforcement and public safety purposes consistent with applicable law, CJIS requirements, and established information-sharing agreements.

Requests for records or data shall be processed in accordance with Missouri Sunshine Law, applicable exemptions, CJIS requirements, court orders, and other governing laws and regulations.