

LONGMONT POLICE DEPARTMENT
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE
200 - PATROL

240 - Automated License Plate Reader

Effective 8/2011

Updated 08/2011

A. General

In the interest of being more efficient and effective in locating and recovering stolen vehicles, the department will utilize automated license plate readers. These automated devices will be used for official law enforcement purposes only, by officers trained in their use.

B. Definitions

Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR) – A digital electronic device which utilizes cameras, computer software, and computer interfaces to read vehicle license plates. Its primary purpose is to determine whether a license plate, or a vehicle associated with a license plate is stolen. An ALPR can be permanently installed in a police vehicle or temporarily mounted on a police vehicle and can capture and read license plates at a highly accelerated rate.

Hotlist – An ALPR database which contains information on stolen plates, stolen vehicles, and ATLs associated with vehicles or plates. The “hotlist” is downloaded and updated on a regular basis to contain the most current information. The hotlist database will only contain information that is related to a criminal investigation or other official law enforcement action. The “local” hotlist contains ATL information that is pertinent to Longmont Police investigations and is entered, edited, and removed only by those authorized to do so.

Read – Whenever an ALPR system captures a photograph of a license plate and compares it to the hotlist database. The ALPR system will record the location, date, and time for all read vehicle plates.

Hit – This occurs when an ALPR read plate is compared and determined to be on the hotlist. The operator of the ALPR will be alerted to the hit by an audible or visual signal from the ALPR unit.

C. Operations

1. ALPR systems will only be utilized by officers who have been trained in their use during routine patrol duties or special operations as assigned.
2. Officers utilizing the ALPR should notify the on-duty Watch Commander or appropriate supervisor before deploying the ALPR.
3. Officers operating the ALPR will log on to the system using their assigned user name and password and sign off the system whenever the ALPR is not in use.
4. The ALPR will generally be used to read motor vehicle plates that are either in motion or parked. These plates can be read while the vehicle in which the ALPR is installed is in motion or in a parked position.
5. To achieve the highest number of plate readings the officer may drive down a street or through a parking lot where higher number of vehicles are parked. The distance and positioning of vehicle plates that can be read by the ALPR will be determined by the number of ALPR cameras and their positioning.
6. ALPR camera positioning and alignment should only be done by a qualified user or technician.
7. When an ALPR hit occurs, the officer may use this information as justification to stop a motor vehicle, to further investigate whether the vehicle or plate is stolen, or to determine whether there is a wanted person within the vehicle that is associated with the hit on the vehicle. **However, caution should be exercised on all out of state plate hits since the ALPR does not distinguish between Colorado plates and plates from other states. And, still other hits may be considered informational only. In these cases, officers will have to develop other justification for stopping the vehicle.**
8. The officer will then have to determine through their on scene investigation whether there is sufficient cause to take enforcement action or to make an arrest. Since an ALPR hit only relates to the vehicle or plate, the ALPR hit in itself does not provide a sole basis for arrest or enforcement action. Therefore, officers must verify information through other law enforcement or investigative means and act accordingly.
9. Whenever a vehicle is confirmed to have been stolen, officers will follow the normal stolen motor vehicle recovery procedures. Confirmations of stolen vehicles will be made through the LPD Records Section.
10. All hits through the ALPR system require a system disposition to record what action the officer took in regard to the hit.

D. Data Management

1. All reads that are captured in the ALPR database are retained for a minimum of 1 year, but not to exceed 2 years.
2. Any ALPR read that results in a hit will be retained in the ALPR system for any subsequent criminal action or prosecution as determined by the appropriate prosecutor.
3. Data retained in the ALPR system shall only be searched by ALPR users who are authorized to do so, and all searches must be related to official law enforcement investigations only.
4. All ATLs that have been entered into the hot list will be removed promptly once the ATL is no longer in affect.
5. Hot list entries and deletions on the ALPR system will only be made by those authorized to do so.