Policy and Procedure
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COLUMBIA POLICE DEPARTMENT

Policy and Procedure Manual

AUTOMOATED LICENSE PLATE READERS (ALPR) AND FIXED CAMERA SITES

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Accreditation Standard:

460 POLICY STATEMENT

The Columbia Police Department utilizes Automatic License Plate Recognition (ALPR) technology to digitally capture license plate data, video, and still images of vehicles while recognizing the established privacy rights of the public. The procedures associated with this policy govern all department members utilizing ALPR technology, including procedures to follow when using, accessing, and retaining data obtained from the system. All data and images gathered are for the official use of this department. As such data may contain closed information, it is not open to public review.

460.1 PROCEDURES

The ALPR technology, also known as Automatic License Plate Recognition (ALPR), allows for the automated detection of license plates. It is used by the Columbia 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 or endangered persons. It may also be used to gather information related to investigatory leads, active warrants, suspect interdiction, crime analysis, and stolen property recovery. All installation and maintenance of ALPR equipment, as well as ALPR data retention and access, shall be managed by the Criminal Investigations Division Commander. The Criminal Investigations Division Commander will assign members under his/her command to administer the day-to-day operation of the ALPR equipment and data.

The ALPR equipment is complimented by real time digital video and still images to enhance the data collected to increase the effectiveness of the leads created by the FLOCK System.

460.2 ALPR/FLOCK ADMINISTRATION

The Criminal Investigations Division Commander shall have overall responsibility for the administration of the FLOCK System. These responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

1. In coordination with TRU to ensure training requirements for all authorized users (See Training Policy).
2. In coordination with the Professional Standards Bureau to ensure quarterly auditing of the FLOCK System to ensure the security of the information and compliance with this policy and procedure. This audit will be submitted to the City Manager for review.
3. The ALPR vendor, Flock Safety, is responsible for storing data, ensuring its proper maintenance, and security. The vendor purges this data after thirty (30) days of storage. This does not preclude the Columbia Police Department from retrieving any relevant vehicle data obtained from the system on its own evidence server for criminal investigation and prosecution.
4. The Criminal Investigations Division Commander, in consultation with the Evidence Supervisor, is responsible for ensuring that all ALPR data is purged from the server once it is no longer needed as evidence in a criminal or civil case, or in response to discovery requests or other lawful requests.

460.3 OPERATIONS

The use of ALPR technology is restricted to the purposes outlined below. Department members are prohibited from using, or permitting others to use, the equipment or database records for any unauthorized purposes. (RSMo 576.050. Misuse of Official Information).

1. The FLOCK System and any ALPR shall only be used for official law enforcement purposes.
2. An ALPR may be utilized during any routine patrol operation or criminal investigation.
3. An ALPR may be used to canvass license plates around any crime scene. Special consideration should be given to using ALPR equipped vehicles to canvass areas surrounding homicides, shootings, and other major incidents. Partial license plates reported during major crimes should be entered into the ALPR system to help identify suspect vehicles.
4. No member of this department is permitted to operate ALPR equipment or access ALPR data without first completing department-approved training.
5. No ALPR operator may access department, state, or federal data unless otherwise authorized to do so.
6. Upon receiving an alarm, the ALPR operator should use readily available information to verify the accuracy of the "hit." The operator must visually confirm that the actual license plate number matches the one displayed on the ALPR screen. Additionally, the operator will confirm that the "hit" remains active by checking the information through NCIC/MULES. It's important to note that an ALPR alarm alone does not provide sufficient probable cause for a stop or arrest without further verification.
7. Whenever a member of the department accesses the FLOCK database, a corresponding case number or computer-aided dispatch (CAD) number must be associated with that access. The member's name and/or PIN shall also be included in the access record.

460.4 AUTHORIZED USE

The ALPR system and Fixed Camera Sites are utilized to record license plates, still images and video that are exposed to public view, or where there is no reasonable expectation of privacy in accordance with the law. Examples of public view include, but are not limited to:

1. License plates and vehicles traveling on a public roadway;
2. License plates and vehicles that are on private property, but visible from a public roadway; or
3. License plates and vehicles traveling in a public parking area or business establishment to which the public has access.

In order to ensure investigative leads are exhausted, officers and detectives should check the ALPR system for any previous leads where full or partial license plates are known. This information can be valuable in regard to locating a vehicle that is either stolen or utilized in a crime.

460.5 UNAUTHORIZED USE

The following uses of ALPR system and Fixed Camera Sites are specifically *prohibited:*

1. To harass or intimidate any individual or group;

2. To target or focus on individuals or groups solely because of their race, gender, religion, political affiliation, nationality, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, or any other classification protected by law; and
3. For any personal or non-official purpose.
4. Traffic enforcement.

460.6 HOTLIST

An officer, or detective, may request that vehicle information be added to the ALPR system's Custom Hotlist for routine patrol operations and criminal investigations, but this requires approval from a Lieutenant or higher-ranking officer. The approving Lieutenant or higher-ranking officer shall be documented in the entry narrative of the ALPR system.

Hotlist data shall be refreshed at least every 24 hours. Officers and detectives who locate a vehicle on the department's Custom Hotlist are responsible for removing it from the ALPR system after it is recovered.

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