

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

TITLE: FLOCK CAMERAS (ALPR)

NO. III - 20

EFFECTIVE DATE: November 7, 2025

I. PURPOSE

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.

II. POLICY

This policy 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.

III. PROCEDURE

A. Administration

The ALPR technology, also known as License Plate Recognition (LPR), allows for the automated detection of license plates. It is used by the Wapello County Sheriff's Office 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 Sheriff or designee will assign

members under his/her command to administer the day-to-day operation of the ALPR equipment and data.

B. 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.

1. An ALPR shall only be used for official law enforcement business.
2. An ALPR may be used in conjunction with any routine patrol operation or criminal investigation. Reasonable suspicion or probable cause is not required before using an ALPR.
3. 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.
4. No member of this department shall operate ALPR equipment or access ALPR data without using their own login credentials.
5. No ALPR operator may access confidential department, state or federal data unless authorized to do so.
6. If practicable, the deputy should verify an ALPR response through the appropriate official law enforcement database before taking enforcement action that is based solely on an ALPR alert.
7. All searches should include a valid case number, or a detailed reason in the Reason field when a case number is not issued.
8. Any searches made on behalf of an outside agency should include the name of the agency that made the request, a valid case number, or a detailed reason in the Reason field when a case number is not issued.

9. It is recommended that all deputies & dispatchers log into ALRP equipment at the beginning of their shift to become aware of any notifications or information available.

C. Data Collection and Retention

The Sheriff or designee is responsible for ensuring systems and processes are in place for the proper collection and retention of ALPR data. Data will be transferred from vehicles to the designated storage in accordance with department procedures (Iowa Code § 692.8; Iowa Code § 321.11).

All stored ALPR data should be retained in accordance with the established records retention schedule. 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 onto portable media and retained by the investigating deputy. (Iowa Code § 321P.4; 661 IAC 81.4(692)).

D. Accountability

All data will be closely safeguarded and protected by both procedural and technological means. The Wapello County Sheriff's Office will observe the following safeguards regarding access to and use of stored data:

1. All ALPR data downloaded to the mobile workstation and in storage shall be accessible only through a login/password-protected system capable of documenting all access of information by name, date and time.
2. 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 relates to a specific criminal investigation or department-related civil or administrative action.
3. ALPR system audits should be conducted on a regular basis.

E. 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.

1. The agency makes a request for the ALPR data that includes:
 - a. The name of the agency.
 - b. The name of the person requesting.
 - c. The case number if applicable, and intended purpose of obtaining the information.

Requests for ALPR data by non-law enforcement or non-prosecutorial agencies will be processed after requests by subpoena.

IV. HOT LIST PROCEDURE

A. Verification

1. Prior to any enforcement action on an ALPR alert, the deputy SHALL VERIFY any ALPR alert by visually verifying the following:
 - a) All letters and numbers in the license plate detection are correct and consistent with the associated vehicle.
 - b) The State in the license plate detection is correct and consistent with the associated vehicle.
 - c) Independently run the correct license plate information through NCIC to view current information and confirm the status of any hits associated with the registration.

B. Response

Hot List Alerts typically are not an emergency and should not take priority over calls for service.

C. Contact with Driver and Reports

1. DO NOT MENTION ALPR USAGE TO THE OCCUPANTS OF THE VEHICLE. Simply reference that you ran the plate and observed an NCIC hit.
 - a) If the Hot List alert is based on a warrant associated with the Registered Owner (RO), address the situation as you would anytime you stop a vehicle for a wanted RO.
2. DO NOT MENTION ALPR USAGE IN YOUR REPORT OR COMPLAINT UNLESS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY. If asked a direct question about ALPR usage by someone such as an attorney, tell the truth.
 - a) If it is necessary to explain in a report, it is advised to use language such as "Using County resources, I discovered the suspect vehicle was bearing Iowa plate..."
 - b) Treat the ALPR information like you would intelligence. It is simply a lead that you verified and acted on.