



LICENSE PLATE READERS

A PRIMER

The adoption and use of license plate reader (or license plate recognition) systems (LPR systems) by state, local, tribal, and federal law enforcement agencies continues to increase. The integration of LPR systems can support and enhance enforcement and investigative capabilities through the collection of relevant data and expedite the time needed to compare vehicle license plates with lists of stolen, wanted, and other vehicles of interest. Examples of LPR system value include improving law enforcement's ability to recover stolen vehicles, more quickly identifying a vehicle associated with an AMBER or SILVER alert, or identifying a vehicle registered or associated with a wanted individual.

WHAT ARE LPR SYSTEMS USED FOR?



Capture Image

Automatically capture an image of a vehicle's license plate



Transform Image Into Characters

Transform that image into alphanumeric characters using optical character recognition or similar software



Run Number in Databases

Compare the plate number acquired to one or more databases of vehicles of interest to law enforcement and other agencies



Alert Law Enforcement

Alert the officer when a vehicle of interest has been observed

License Plate Readers

KEY POLICY ASPECTS TO CONSIDER WHEN INSTITUTING AN LPR SYSTEM

The integration of technology, such as an LPR system, should be done in a way that supports and enhances law enforcement's ability to fulfill its mission, while protecting the privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties of community members. To ensure that these protections are upheld, agencies should develop and implement an LPR system policy that articulates the when, what, why, and how of LPR use. Key policy questions to consider when acquiring and implementing an LPR system include:

- 1 When can the LPR system be used as a part of law enforcement operations?
- 2 What are the applicable laws, regulations, and other agency policies that relate to the use of the LPR system?
- 3 How is information gathered via the LPR system use, once collected?
- 4 What is the length of time for storage of information collected from an LPR system?
- 5 What are the dissemination protocols associated with the LPR system?

RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO LAW ENFORCEMENT

There are a variety of resources available to law enforcement regarding the integration and use of LPR systems as a part of law enforcement activities. The International Association of Chiefs of Police has established a Web page that provides a wealth of information on LPRs, including news, legislative proposals regarding LPR, policy and privacy resources, and frequently asked questions. The site is available at <http://www.iacp.org/ALPR>.



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SAMPLE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- The Northern California Regional Intelligence Center's Automated License Plate Reader Policy: <https://ncric.org/html/NCRIC%20ALPR%20POLICY.pdf>
- Automated Regional Justice Information System (ARJIS) Acceptable Use Policy for the Regional License Plate Reader System: <http://www.arjis.org/RegionalPolicies/ARJIS%20LPR%20AUP%20-%20Approved%20-%20Rev150213.pdf>
- Maryland Coordination and Analysis Center's License Plate Reader—Standard Operating Procedure: <http://www.mcac.maryland.gov/resources/LPR/LPR-SOP.html>
- Los Angeles Sheriff's Department's ALPR Privacy Policy: <http://shq.lasdnews.net/content/uoa/EPC/ALPRPrivacyPolicy.pdf>

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