

1.50 AUTOMATIC LICENSE PLATE RECOGNITION (ALPR)



AUTOMATIC LICENSE PLATE RECOGNITION SYSTEM (ALPR)

POLICY & PROCEDURE NO.	SECTION	PAGES:	6
1.50	OPERATIONS	ISSUE DATE:	January 6, 2026
MASSACHUSETTS POLICE ACCREDITATION STANDARDS REFERENCED:		EFFECTIVE DATE:	January 20, 2026
41.3.9		REVISION DATE:	
ISSUING AUTHORITY: 			
Chief Nathan C. Hagglund			

I. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS AND GUIDELINES

The use of Automated License Plate Recognition ("ALPR") technology has allowed police departments to increase efficiency in investigations and has advanced public safety. ALPR systems are able to capture images of a vehicle and the vehicle's license plate, convert the plate image into alphanumeric characters using optical character recognition ("OCR"), and then compare the plate number acquired to one or more databases (also known as "hot lists"). This information can then be accessed instantaneously, allowing for an immediate response from law enforcement when needed.

The West Brookfield Police Department will install ALPR technology at location(s) throughout Town. This policy establishes guidelines and procedures for when and how West Brookfield Police Department members may utilize this technology.

II. POLICY

ALPR technology and associated equipment and databases, whether owned or under the control of the West Brookfield Police Department, are authorized for official use only. Misuse of this equipment and associated databases or data shall be subject to sanctions

1.50 AUTOMATIC LICENSE PLATE RECOGNITION (ALPR)

and/or disciplinary actions, as determined by the rules, regulations, and policies of the West Brookfield Police Department.

It is the policy of the West Brookfield Police Department to:

- A. only utilize ALPR technology in the furtherance of official and legitimate law enforcement operations and public safety;
- B. require ALPR Operators and Administrators to abide by the guidelines set forth herein when using an ALPR system;
- C. establish passwords for assigned users who will protect and maintain their respective password and strictly prohibit the sharing of passwords; and
- D. authorize access to ALPR systems only by assigned users.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. *Alert*: A visual and/or auditory notice that is triggered when an ALPR system receives a potential hit on a license plate.
- B. *ALPR*: Automated License Plate Recognition technology. This technology uses high-speed cameras combined with sophisticated computer algorithms capable of converting images of license plates to electronically readable data. The ALPR system captures an image of a license plate and converts it to a text file using OCR technology. The technology also compares the digital images of license plates to the “hot list” database.
- C. *ALPR Operator*: Trained West Brookfield Police Department personnel authorized to utilize ALPR systems and equipment.
- D. *ALPR Administrator*: A supervisor of the West Brookfield police department will be responsible for
 - 1. compliance with all applicable laws and regulations pertaining to ALPRs and
 - 2. providing access and training to Department personnel in the operation of ALPR systems.
- E. *Alert Data*: Information captured by an ALPR related to a license plate on a “hot list”.
- F. *ALPR Data*: All information including scan files, alert data, and any other data generated, processed or obtained through utilization of an ALPR system.
- G. *ALPR Data Query Logs*: A record of a search or query of ALPR data.
- H. *ALPR System*: The ALPR camera and all associated equipment, databases and software operated by the West Brookfield Police Department. This includes fixed ALPR cameras that are attached to a structure, such as a pole, a traffic barrier, or a bridge.

1.50 AUTOMATIC LICENSE PLATE RECOGNITION (ALPR)

- I. *“Bulk” data*: The large volume of license plate scans collected over time regardless of whether they result in a “hit” or are connected to any investigation and/or license plate scan records. Bulk data is collected continuously by ALPR systems that do not immediately match any hot list or alert. These records include metadata such as: (1) Plate number (2) Timestamp (3) GPS coordinates (location of scan) (4) Camera ID or location (5) Vehicle image.
- J. *DCJIS*: Department of Criminal Justice Information Services.
- K. *GPS*: Global Positioning System.
- L. *“Hit”*: An alert that a license plate matches a record in an ALPR database of a vehicle of interest. For example, a hit may be related to a stolen vehicle, wanted vehicle, or an alert that has been manually registered by an ALPR Operator or Administrator for further investigation as authorized under the Procedures: Authorized Categories section IV(3)(a).
- M. *“Hot List”*: A comprehensive record of license plate numbers of stolen cars, vehicles owned/operated by persons of interest, and vehicles associated with AMBER Alerts that are regularly added to “hot lists” circulated among law enforcement agencies. “Hot list” information can come from a variety of sources, including the Commonwealth of Massachusetts DCJIS, the National Crime Information Center (NCIC), as well as national Amber Alerts and Department of Homeland Security watch lists. In addition to agency supported “hot lists” users may also manually add license plate numbers to “hot lists” to be alerted if and when a vehicle license plate of interest is “read” by the ALPR system in accordance with a legitimate law enforcement purpose.
- N. *“Hot List” Download*: The method by which the “hot list” data is transferred to a computer within a law enforcement vehicle or at a fixed terminal.
- O. *Optical Character Recognition (OCR)*: The technology that supports the automated reading and digitizing of images of license plates that are captured by an (ALPR) system.

IV. PROCEDURES

A) **General:**

- 1) ALPR systems and associated equipment and databases are the property of the vendor (for leased or vendor-provided systems) or the Department (for Department-owned camera systems, where data is stored in the cloud). All such systems are authorized for official Department use only. Misuse of this equipment and associated databases or data may be subject to sanctions and/or disciplinary actions, as determined by the rules, regulations, and policy of the Department.

B) **Administration**

1.50 AUTOMATIC LICNESE PLATE RECOGNITION (ALPR)

1) Administration

- a) The ALPR Administrator will oversee the department's ALPR operations. A supervisor shall serve in this capacity. Assigned duties of the Administrator include:
 - (1) Supervising the access, collection, storage, and retention of ALPR data and associated media files. The data is stored by the ALPR system owner for 30 days unless downloaded for investigative purposes
 - (2) Utilize protocols to preserve and document ALPR reads and "alerts" or "hits" that are acted on in the field or associated with investigations or prosecutions.
 - (3) Utilizing protocols to establish and ensure the security and integrity of data captured, stored, and/or retained by the ALPR system
 - (4) Authorizing any requests for ALPR systems use or data access according to the policies and guidelines of this agency
 - (5) Ensuring that the ALPR system owner abides by its contractual obligations to conduct system repairs and to ensure functionality and camera alignment and remove from service any equipment that falls outside expected functionality until deficiencies have been corrected.
 - (6) Ensuring users are not using ALPR for personal reasons, to harass, intimidate, or for immigration enforcement.
 - (7) Ensuring plates are only read while in the public view.
 - (8) Ensuring the system or associated scan files are not used solely because of a person or group's class, race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, political affiliation, nationality, ethnicity, disability, or other classification protected by law.

C) AUTOMATIC LICENSE PLATE RECOGNITION SYSTEM USAGE: [41.3.9-A]

- 1) ALPR systems and information shall be accessed and used only for official and legitimate law enforcement operations and public safety related purposes, and may only be used based on specific and articulable facts of a concern for safety, wrongdoing, criminal investigation, or pursuant to a court order.
- 2) Searches of historical ALPR data shall be done in accordance with established departmental policies and procedures.
- 3) Only users who have been designated by the ALPR Administrator and properly trained in the use and operational protocols of the ALPR system shall be permitted to use the system. Only those users with an approved login and password will be allowed access to the ALPR system.

1.50 AUTOMATIC LICNESE PLATE RECOGNITION (ALPR)

- 4) The agency's ALPR Administrator shall ensure that any changes in hardware, software, policy that would impact the end user will be communicated to the department.
- 5) The installation of ALPR technology must be approved by the agency head or designee.
- 6) ALPR hot lists and data gathered by departmental ALPRs will be maintained securely in the ALPR system.
- 7) Requests for searches of ALPR data to the ALPR Administrator may be made by members of this Department or by other law enforcement agencies subject to the provisions of this Policy. [41.3.9-A]

D) Operational Procedures and Responsibilities

- 1) Any observed damage or misalignment or malfunction of the ALPR camera systems should be reported immediately to a supervisor. Damage in the field to a camera system should be documented and referred to the department administrator.
- 2) Department users should update hotlist as necessary. [41.3.9-B]

E) Manual Entry of Data

- 1) Officers may request license plate numbers be entered into the Department hot list. Users may enter license plates only for official and legitimate law enforcement or public safety operations.
- 2) Manual entries may include, but should not be limited to, an Amber Alert, Missing Person, Be On the Look Out (BOLO), Attempt to Locate (ATL), or Wanted or Missing Person broadcast or bulletin in which a license plate number is included. Such manual entries must be manually updated when the information changes or is no longer current.
- 3) Whenever a plate is manually entered into the ALPR system, the officer shall document the reason. [41.3.9-D]

F) ALPR Alerts/Hits

- 1) Prior to initiation of a stop based on a hit or alert:
 - a) Users shall visually verify that the vehicle plate number matches the plate number run by the ALPR system, including both alphanumeric characters of the license plate and the state of issuance.
 - b) Users shall verify the status of the plate through the Commonwealth's Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS), National Crime Information Center (NCIC), Department's Records Management System (RMS), or other appropriate source of data prior to a stop when circumstances allow or as soon as practicable.

G) Information Management

- 1) **ALPR Data Query Logs**

1.50 AUTOMATIC LICNESE PLATE RECOGNITION (ALPR)

- a) An automated log will be maintained for each transaction that will include the name of the individual accessing the data, along with the date and time of access.
 - b) Requests to review stored ALPR data and search results will be recorded and maintained.
 - c) ALPR data query logs shall be maintained and secured.
 - d) Audits of the ALPR system access, hit, and retained data shall be conducted by the Chief of Police.
- 2) ALPR Data Sharing and Dissemination
- a) ALPR data can be accessed, retrieved, or shared for official and legitimate law enforcement operations or public safety purposes only
 - b) Information sharing among law enforcement agencies, other than the DCJIS, is subject to approval by the ALPR Administrator and is governed by departmental policies.
 - c) Information gathered or collected, and records retained by ALPR cameras or any other West Brookfield Police Department ALPR system will not be sold, accessed, shared, or used for any purpose other than legitimate law enforcement or public safety purposes. **[41.3.9-E, F]**
- 3) Retention
- a) The ALPR administrator is responsible for ensuring systems and processes are in place for the proper collection and retention of ALPR data.
 - b) ALPR system owners will purge their data at the end of the 30 days of storage. However, this will not preclude the West Brookfield Police Department from maintaining any relevant data obtained from the system after that period pursuant to the established state retention schedule or outlined elsewhere. **[41.3.9-G]**
- 4) Training
- (1) The Department administrator of the ALPR system will receive initial administrative training through an ALPR system representative **[41.3.9-C]**. Any Officer who is authorized to become an ALPR user must complete ALPR training through the owner's online tutorials or other appropriate means. ALPR training system certificates should be filed in the officers personnel file and uploaded to the police department PMAM system.