



# Surveillance Use Policy

Automated License Plate Recognition (ALPR)

San Diego Police Department

---

## PURPOSE

Automatic License Plate Recognition Technology (ALPR) is a component of the San Diego Police Department's crime-fighting strategy that involves the identification of vehicles associated with suspects, witnesses, or victims. ALPR enhances the Department's ability to focus its investigative resources, deter the occurrence of crime, and enhance public safety of the community.

## USE

ALPR systems have proven to be very effective tools in combating crime. The operation and access to ALPR data shall be for official law enforcement purposes only. The legitimate law enforcement purposes of ALPR systems include:

- Locating stolen, wanted, or subject of investigation vehicles.
- Locating vehicles belonging to witnesses and victims of a violent crime.
- Locating vehicles associated with missing or abducted children and at-risk individuals.
- Department Procedure 1.51 for additional information regarding use guidelines for ALPR.

## DATA COLLECTION

The San Diego Police Department will 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 the department.

Except when done pursuant to a court order such as a search warrant, it is a violation of this Policy to utilize the ALPR to record license plates except those of vehicles that are exposed to public view (e.g., vehicles on a public road or street, or that are on private property but whose license plate(s) are visible from a public road, street, or a place to which members of the public have access, such as the parking lot of a shop or other business establishment).

The National Crime Information Center (NCIC) is the primary database for the entry and management of wanted vehicles/persons that ALPR technology utilizes, along with Department hot plate/hot lists related to criminal investigations.

Proactive manual entry of ALPR hot plates/hot lists is permitted with license plate information (i.e., BOLO or AMBER alerts) when it meets an authorized purpose. It is the responsibility of the department member who creates the hot plate notification to manage, edit, and delete the plate as necessary.

## DATA ACCESS

Personnel authorized to use ALPR equipment or access information collected through the use of such equipment shall be specifically trained in such technology and authorized by the Chief of Police or designee. Such personnel shall be limited to designated captains, lieutenants, sergeants, officers, detectives, and police department personnel unless otherwise authorized.



# Surveillance Use Policy

Automated License Plate Recognition (ALPR)

San Diego Police Department

---

Refer to DP 1.51 for additional information.

## DATA PROTECTION

Data collected by ALPR Technology shall be stored in a secured law enforcement facility with multiple layers of physical security and security protection. Encryption, firewalls, authentication, and other reasonable security measures shall be utilized to protect ALPR Technology data.

All ALPR data downloaded to the mobile workstation or in storage shall be accessible only through a login/password-protected system capable of documenting all access of information by name, date, and time. Only those employees of the San Diego Police Department working in an investigative or enforcement function shall access ALPR data.

SDPD works with the City's Department of Information Technology, which oversees the IT governance process. For additional details related to IT governance processes, which involves risk assessment, along with data and cyber security, refer to the information at the following link:

- <https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/fy23-fy27-it-strategic-plan-sd.pdf>

## DATA RETENTION

All ALPR Technology data stored in the system shall be purged no later than 30 days from the date it was collected. Short retention period ensures that all data not associated with a crime is automatically deleted and unrecoverable.

## PUBLIC ACCESS

ALPR data shall be made public or deemed exempt from public disclosure pursuant to state or federal law, refer to DP 1.51 for additional details related to the release of ALPR data.

## THIRD PARTY DATA SHARING

ALPR data may be released to other authorized and verified law enforcement officials and agencies for legitimate law enforcement purposes, refer to DP 1.51 for additional details.

## TRAINING

Training for the operation of ALPR technology utilized by the San Diego Police Department shall be provided by Police personnel or subject matter experts approved by the Department. All employees who utilize ALPR technology shall be provided a copy of this Surveillance Use Policy, along with instruction of the constitutional protections and case law requirements associated with its lawful use.

## AUDITING AND OVERSIGHT

Personnel who are authorized to have access to the system shall be designated in writing and the designation shall ensure that their access to and use of the data complies with the Ordinance. A log shall be maintained that records when access to ALPR data is requested. This shall include the date, time, data record accessed, and staff member involved.



# Surveillance Use Policy

Automated License Plate Recognition (ALPR)

San Diego Police Department

---

The log shall be available for presentation for all required internal and external audits, and oversight will be maintained by the system Program Manager or their designee.

Any misuse of this technology shall result in disciplinary actions as outlined in DP 1.51

## MAINTENANCE

The San Diego Police Department shall maintain robust security procedures and practices, including operational, administrative, technical, and physical safeguards, to protect ALPR information from unauthorized access, destruction, use, modification, or disclosure.