



Lowell Police Department

John F. Kennedy Civic Center

50 Arcand Drive

Lowell, MA 01852

GENERAL ORDER 330.08

TITLE	EFFECTIVE DATE	PAGES
AUTOMATIC LICENSE PLATE RECOGNITION SYSTEMS (ALPR)	January 7, 2021	5
MPAC STANDARDS	REEVALUATION DATE	
41.3.9	ANNUALLY	
SECTION	BY ORDER OF	
TRAFFIC	Superintendent Gregory C Hudon	

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to establish guidelines and procedures for the proper use and application of automatic license plate recognition (ALPR) systems, the management of the data, and the maintenance of the equipment.

II. POLICY

The availability and use of ALPR systems have provided many opportunities for the enhancement of law enforcement agencies' productivity, effectiveness, and protection of public and officer safety. It is the policy of the Lowell Police Department to only utilize the technology in furtherance of official and legitimate law enforcement operations and public safety. All members of this Department are expected to abide by the guidelines set forth herein when using ALPR systems.

III. DEFINITIONS

Automated License Plate Reader (ALPRs)- Equipment that combines high-speed cameras with image-processing technology to identify vehicles by their license plates. Currently, the Lowell Police Department utilizes stationary Flock Safety license plate reader cameras.

ALPR Administrator- A Department member designated by the Superintendent of Police with administrative oversight of the ALPR system operation and compliance.

Hit- Alert from the ALPR system that a scanned license plate number may be in the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) or other law enforcement database for a specific reason including, but not limited to, being related to a stolen car, wanted person, missing person, domestic violation protective order or terrorist-related activity. A hit or alert from an ALPR is an investigative lead, not a determination of wrongdoing. Users must independently verify the plate characters match the plate characters identified by the ALPR system.

Hot List- A list of plates associated with a criminal activity, public safety concern, or investigative interest pertaining to a pending criminal investigation, or any information that is entered manually by an approved operator.

IV. PROCEDURES

A. General

ALPR systems and associated equipment and databases are the property of the Lowell Police Department and authorized for official 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 and regulations of the Lowell Police Department and Massachusetts criminal statutes.

B. Administration

The ALPR technology, also known as License Plate Recognition (LPR), allows for the automated detection of license plates. It is used by the Lowell Police Department to convert data associated with vehicle license plates for official law enforcement purposes, including, but not limited to identifying stolen or wanted vehicles, stolen license plates, missing persons, active warrants, stolen property recovery, and other legitimate law enforcement purposes.

C. Operational Procedures

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 or unlawful purpose.

- a. An ALPR shall only be used for official law enforcement business.
- b. 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.

- c. No member of this department shall operate ALPR equipment or access ALPR data without first completing department-approved instruction. All approved users will also be required to complete an annual refresher training.
- d. No ALPR operator may access confidential department, commonwealth, or federal data unless authorized to do so.
- e. License plates and unique vehicle descriptions reported during major crimes may be entered into the ALPR system to identify suspect vehicles.
- f. The officer should verify an ALPR response through the CJIS-NCIC or through dispatch before taking enforcement action that is based solely on an ALPR alert unless exigent circumstances exist. Once an alert is received, the operator shall confirm that the observed license plate from the system matches the license plate of the observed vehicle before any law enforcement action is taken because of an ALPR alert, the alert will be verified through CJIS-NCIC inquiry via MDT or through Dispatch. Officers will not take any police action that restricts the freedom of any individual based solely on an ALPR alert unless it has been validated. Because the ALPR alert may relate to a vehicle and may not relate to the person operating the vehicle, officers are reminded that they need to have reasonable suspicion and/or probable cause to make an enforcement stop of any vehicle.
- g. Manual additions can be added to the Hot List by department approved operators. All manual entries remain active on the ALPR system until it is deemed necessary to remove the entry or an expiration date is set. Examples of manual entries of a license plate number are but are not limited to:
 - BOLO (Be On Look Out)
 - Stolen Vehicle
 - Missing Persons
 - Amber/Silver/Blue Alerts
 - Child Abductions
 - Wanted Person(s)
 - Sex Offenders
 - Terrorist Watch Lists
 - Investigative Purposes
- h. Once a Custom Hot List "hit" has been received and acted upon, the entry should be removed, or information updated immediately by the ALPR operator to avoid repeated unnecessary stops and/or interactions.

D. Authorized Users

Access to the ALPR system and associated database(s) will be granted by the ALPR Administrator. Access is limited to sworn law enforcement officers, crime analysts,

and dispatchers of the Lowell Police Department. Access may also be granted to any vendors who provide maintenance and service for the ALPR at the discernment of the Superintendent of Police.

Only personnel designated by the ALPR Administrator who are properly trained in the use and operational protocols of the ALPR system shall be permitted to access the system.

To ensure proper operation and facilitate oversight of the ALPR system, all users shall only be allowed access through a logon/password-protected system capable of documenting all access by username, date, and time. ALPR data may be released to other authorized and verified law enforcement officials and agencies for legitimate law enforcement purposes.

E. ALPR Browsing Audits

It is the responsibility of the department Administrator to ensure that regular audits are conducted of ALPR browsing inquiries. The Department may use vendor approved technology such as Flock Audit Assist to audit system access logs.

The Lieutenant assigned to Professional Standards shall conduct a monthly review of audit access log searches to identify usage anomalies and detect potential system misuse. This review shall also include any Audit Assist flagged searches. The audit shall be documented in the form of an internal department memorandum to the Superintendent of Police or their designee.

V. DATA COLLECTION & RETENTION

All data is stored and encrypted for 30 days. Thereafter, ALPR data is 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.

As a customer and Law Enforcement Agency partner of Flock Safety, members of the Lowell Police Department have complete access to the data and are the gatekeepers for who views it.

Data entries are logged in an event log and an outcomes log within the insights portal on the navigation bar. The program administrator can access a report of all inputs into the system by Lowell Police Department users (custom hotlist entries, BOLO's, etc) as well as access a search audit log.

The ALPR Administrator is responsible for the annual review of this policy and the policies and procedures contained herein and for making recommendations to the Department head for any necessary amendments.

VI. TRAINING

Prior to accessing any portion of the ALPR system all employees authorized to access the ALPR system and database(s) shall receive instruction on proper use of the database and authorized use of the system, and review and sign off on this policy on PMAM.

By order of



Superintendent Gregory C Hudon

Updated/Reviewed March 2026

Updated/Reviewed September 2026