

SECTION: 405.19**SUBJECT: Use of Automated License Plate Readers (ALPR) Policy - Flock****POLICY**

This policy provides standards and guidelines when using Automated License Plate Readers (ALPR) to scan, detect, and identify vehicles or persons-of-interest, and while accessing and utilizing data captured from ALPRs, thereby increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of its public safety efforts in a manner that safeguards the privacy concerns of law-abiding citizens.

DEFINITIONS:

Automated License Plate Recognition (ALPR) system-- a computer-based system that utilizes special cameras in a stationary location to capture license plate information. The ALPR system passively captures an infrared image of the license plates of moving vehicles and converts them to a text file using Optical Character Recognition (OCR) technology. The text is compared to various hot lists generated by various law enforcement agencies, including the National Crime Information Center (NCIC), Crime Information Bureau (CIB), Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDot), and the local agency. The ALPR system generates an alert when there is a hit. The ALPR system also transmits and stores the digital images of license plates and vehicles and associated metadata (e.g., date, time, and geographic coordinates associated with the vehicle image capture) on a server. The stored ALPR data can be queried by license plate number, time frame, and location and will return the reads (images of license plates and vehicles, date, time, and geographic coordinates) matching the search criteria. Stored ALPR data is not associated with and will not identify any person who is operating a vehicle. It only identifies a license plate number.

Alarm/Hit -- a positive indication by visual and/or audio signal of a potential match between data on the "Hot List" and the license plate scanned by the LPR. (A "hit" is not conclusive confirmation that a license plate is wanted. Additional investigation is always warranted when a "hit" is indicated.)

Hot List -- a list of license plates of specific concern to the investigative and/or enforcement interests of law enforcement that is transmitted to an ALPR to a fixed system, or a portable system.

ALPR Administrator -- Employee charged with coordinating all aspects of the ALPR system for the DCSO.

ALPR Operator -- a DCSO employee who has been officially trained in the lawful use of the Sheriff's Office ALPR(s).

ALPR Alert -- a visible and or audible notification to an ALPR Operator that a license plate scanned by an ALPR is on a prepared hot list.

Fixed ALPR System -- ALPR cameras that are permanently affixed to a structure, a pole, a traffic barrier, or a bridge.

Plate Reads -- the associated image and data of a license that is scanned by an ALPR camera.

PROCEDURE

Authorized Use

The ALPR system shall be restricted to legitimate law enforcement uses for the purpose of furthering legitimate law enforcement goals and enhancing public safety. Such uses and goals include:

- Providing information to officers that will assist in on-going criminal investigations.
- Crime Prevention.
- Crime detection.
- The apprehension of wanted persons.
- The identification of individuals who pose a potential safety risk to the community.
- Ensuring the safety of vulnerable individuals through the recovery of missing and endangered persons.
- Improving the quality of life in our community through the identification and removal of stolen vehicles.

User Access

The use of the Flock ALPR system, equipment, or data is restricted to authorized employees for official and legitimate law enforcement purposes. Unofficial,

improper, or otherwise unauthorized use of the ALPR system or equipment, or the unauthorized access, use, release and/or dissemination of ALPR data is prohibited.

- A background investigation, including CIB and FBI record checks by fingerprint identification, must be conducted before an employee is authorized to use or access the ALPR system, equipment, or data.
- Only employees who have been trained in its use may operate the ALPR system or access stored ALPR data.
- Authorized employees shall use their unique user identification and password when using the system.
- Sharing of usernames and passwords is prohibited.
- Unauthorized use of usernames and passwords is also prohibited.
- Any employee becoming aware of a possible violation of this policy, including but not limited to the unauthorized access, use, release and/or dissemination of Flock ALPR data, shall refer the matter to his or her supervisor.

Use and Documentation of Stored ALPR Data

It is imperative that whenever the Flock ALPR system is accessed and data is queried, it is consistent with the rules for authorized use and is properly documented both within the Flock system and, when applicable, through the DCSO Records Management System.

- Access to stored ALPR data shall be limited to employees designated by the administrator and issued a unique individual log-in ID and password.
- Employees needing to query stored ALPR data, but who are not authorized, may request that an authorized employee make the query.
- Authorized employees may access stored ALPR data upon a reasonable belief that the data is related to or useful as part of a specific official action or investigation.
- When querying stored ALPR Data, the employee shall include a case number whenever available and, under all circumstances, add the purpose of the query in the appropriate data field on the query screen.

- If an outside law enforcement agency requests that ALPR records be searched, the search must be documented with the Officer's name, agency, and case number in the proper field. The deputy will complete an Assist Agency report in Spillman and document the search of Flock ALPR data.
- Secondary dissemination of stored ALPR data shall be documented in an official report. ALPR data is for official law enforcement use only. If data or images from the ALPR system are disseminated to another law enforcement agency, the deputy shall draw a case number and complete a report documenting the transfer of any record/evidence.
- ALPR data in the FLOCK system is stored for 30 days; after that time, it is automatically removed. The investigating deputy/detective must download any images or records needed for evidentiary purposes within 30 days.

Steps Preliminary to Law Enforcement Action

- Verify that the vehicle plate number matches the plate number run by the ALPR System.
- Verify the current status of the plate through dispatch or query.
- If the alert is valid, the deputy should take appropriate action based on the type of alert.
 - Deputies are reminded that in some cases, the driver or occupant of the vehicle may not be the person with whom the license plate is associated.
 - When the alert is specific for an operator or occupant of the vehicle, deputies should develop a reasonable belief that the operator or occupant is the person of interest (compare observed physical appearance with the physical description provided).
 - If the deputy remains unaware of any facts that would suggest that the owner is not driving, there is a reasonable assumption that the owner of a vehicle is the driver ([State v. Newer](#)).
- Law enforcement actions or stops precipitated by a Flock alert will be documented using a case number.
- In any case, the deputy may stop a vehicle when he/she has an independent reason for doing so, such as an unrelated traffic violation.

- Nothing in this policy shall restrict or prohibit a deputy from taking appropriate law enforcement action based on facts or reasons obtained independently from Flock ALPR operation.

Hot Lists

The Sheriff's Office shall utilize hot lists only when there is a legitimate and specific law enforcement reason for locating a vehicle or a person.

- The Sheriff's Office will utilize the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WiDOT)-supplied hotlists, as well as those provided by the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) and the Crime Information Bureau (CIB).
- Sheriff's Office-created hot lists and license plate numbers manually entered into the Flock ALPR system shall, consistent with this policy, be for a legitimate and specific law enforcement purpose.
- Personnel who create and manually enter hotlists within the Flock ALPR system are responsible for removing the entry when it is no longer valid.

FLOCK ALPR Browsing Audits

The Captain of Field Services shall ensure an audit of the Flock ALPR browsing inquiries is conducted at least once during each calendar year.

The audit will include a sampling of the Flock ALPR system utilization from the prior (12) month period to verify proper use in accordance with the above authorized users.

The audit shall randomly select at least (10) browsing inquiries conducted by members during the preceding (6) month period and determine if each inquiry meets the requirements established in this policy.

SUPERVISION

Supervisors shall routinely observe the Flock ALPR entries to verify use and documentation are conducted in accordance with Sheriff's Office Policy & Procedure.

HISTORY

Date	By	Note
8/26/24	Field Admin	Format & Spelling updates only
9/10/25	Field Captain	Update and Revision