# Automated License Plate Readers (ALPRs)

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| **Effective Date:** | October 24, 2025 |
| **Revised Date:** | May 14, 2026 |
| **Issuing Authority:**<br>Sheriff Kyle M. Moore | |

## 426.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance for the capture, storage, and use of digital data obtained through the use of Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR) technology (Va. Code § 2.2-5517).

## 426.2 POLICY

The policy of the Alleghany County Sheriff's Office is to 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 this office. Because such data may contain confidential information, it is not open to public review.

## 426.3 ADMINISTRATION

The ALPR technology, also known as License Plate Recognition (LPR), allows for the automated detection of license plates. It is used by the Alleghany County Sheriff's Office to convert data associated with vehicle license plates for official law enforcement purposes, including identifying stolen or wanted vehicles, stolen license plates and missing persons. It may also be used to gather information related to active warrants, homeland security, electronic surveillance, suspect interdiction and stolen property recovery.

All installation and maintenance of ALPR equipment, as well as ALPR data retention and access, shall be managed by the Administrative Commander. The Administrative Commander will assign members under his/her command to administer the day-to-day operation of the ALPR equipment and data.

## 426.4 OPERATIONS

Use of an ALPR is restricted to the purposes outlined below. Office members shall not use, or allow others to use, the equipment or database records for any unauthorized purpose.

(a) An ALPR shall only be used for official law enforcement business as follows (Va. Code § 2.2-5517):

1. As part of a criminal investigation into an alleged violation of law when reasonable suspicion exists that a crime was committed.

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2. As part of an active investigation into or to receive notifications related to a missing or endangered person.

3. To receive notifications related to fugitives, human trafficking, or stolen vehicles/ license plates.

(b) Before stopping a vehicle because of a notification from an ALPR, a deputy shall

1. Confirm that the license plate or vehicle matches the information contained in the database used to generate the notification (Va. Code § 2.2-5517); or

2. Develop independent reasonable suspicion for the stop.

(c) While an ALPR may be used to canvass license plates around any crime scene, particular consideration should be given to using ALPR-equipped vehicles to canvass areas around homicides, shootings and other major incidents. Partial license plates reported during major crimes should be entered into the ALPR system in an attempt to identify suspect vehicles.

(d) No ALPR operator may access confidential office, state, or federal data unless authorized to do so.

(e) If practicable, the deputy should verify an ALPR response through the appropriate official law enforcement database before taking enforcement action that is based solely on an ALPR alert.

## 426.5 DATA COLLECTION AND RETENTION

The Administrative Commander shall ensure that systems and processes are in place for the proper collection, retention, and destruction of ALPR data in compliance with law (Va. Code § 2.2-5517).

(a) System Data Retention; ALPR system data shall be retained for no longer than 21 days from the date of capture and shall be automatically purged in such a manner that the data is destroyed and not recoverable

(b) Exceptions to Retention Limits; System data that is part of an ongoing criminal investigation, prosecution, or civil action may be retained until the conclusion of the investigation or final disposition of the case, including appeals, in accordance with applicable records retention laws.

(c) Audit Trail Retention; Audit trail data shall be retained for a period of two (2) years from the date of creation and shall be purged thereafter in a manner that renders the data unrecoverable.

(d) Prohibition on Unauthorized Retention; No member shall retain ALPR system data or audit trail data outside of approved systems or beyond the authorized retention periods.

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### 426.6 ACCOUNTABILITY

All data will be closely safeguarded and protected by both procedural and technological means (Va. Code § 2.2-5517). The Alleghany County Sheriff's Office will observe the following safeguards regarding access to and use of stored data:

(a) All ALPR data downloaded to the mobile workstation and in storage shall be accessible only through a login/password-protected system capable of documenting all access of information by name, username, date and time, license plate number or other queries, the purpose for access, including any related offense type, and the case number (Va. Code § 2.2-5517).

(b) Members approved to access ALPR data under these guidelines are permitted to access the data for legitimate law enforcement purposes only, such as when the data relate to a specific criminal investigation or office-related civil or administrative action.

(c) ALPR system audits should be conducted on a regular basis (Va. Code § 2.2-5517):

1. ALPR data may only be downloaded to accomplish these audits or as otherwise allowed by this policy.
2. Internal auditing should occur at least once every 30 days.
3. Annual reports should be provided to the Department of State Police.

(d) ALPR system data shall not be downloaded unless such data is related to a purpose authorized under this policy. Audit trail data may be downloaded for the purpose of conducting audits or generating required reports.

(e) ALPR system data and audit trail data shall not be sold, traded, or otherwise exchanged for value. Such data shall not be shared with or transferred to any state, federal, private, or commercial database except as authorized by law.

(f) ALPR data may only be shared under the following circumstances:

1. With another law enforcement agancy for a lawful purpose consistent with this policy,
2. With the Commonwealth Attorney for prosecution or discovery purposes,
3. With a defendant or defense counsel pursuant to discovery obligations or court order,
4. Pursuant to a valid court order or subpoena,
5. With the system vendor for maintenance or quality assurance purposes, or
6. To alert the public to an emergency situation or missing/endangered person.

(g) The Alleghany County Sheriff's Office shall maintain administrative, technical, and physical safeguards to protect ALPR data from unauthorized access, use, modification, disclosure, or destruction.

(h) Any member who accesses or uses ALPR data for a purpose not authorized by this policy may be subject to disciplinary action and/or criminal penalties.

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### 426.7 PUBLIC NOTICE

The Administrative Commander should promote public awareness on the office's use of ALPR, including publicly posting this policy and all related procedures, along with the publicly available portions of the annual reports, to the Department of State Police on the office's website or another publicly accessible platform in accordance with law. (Va. Code § 2.2-5517).

Information shall not be posted if it contains personal identifying information, compromises an active investigation, or is otherwise exempt from disclosure by law.

### 426.8 TRAINING

Before accessing any ALPR data, office members should receive training on this policy, how to use all ALPR systems available to the Office, authorized uses of ALPR systems, data retention and access requirements, legal restrictions and civil liabilities, and all relevant laws (Va. Code § 2.2-5517).

### 426.9 DATABASE MANAGEMENT

The Administrative Commandershould ensure that all databases used by the ALPR system to generate notifications are updated at least every 24 hours, or as soon as practicable after updates become available.

### 426.10 PROHIBITED USE

ALPR systems shall not be used:

(a) To monitor or track individuals solely based on lawful activities or the exercise of constitutionally protected rights, including speech, assembly, or religion,

(b) For any purposes not explicitly authorized by this policy and law (Va. Code 2.2-5517)

(c) To conduct queries or collect data unrelated to legitimate law enforcement purposes.

### 426.11 ANNUAL REPORTING

The Administrative Commander shall ensure the submission of an annual report to the Virginia Department of State Police in accordance with law. (Va. Code 2.2-5517) A publicly releasable version of this report shall be made available in accordance with this policy.

The report shall include, at a minimum:

(a) Number of ALPR cameras in use

(b) Number and purpose of system queries

(c) Number of vehicle stops resulting from ALPR alerts

(d) Instances of unauthorized access or use

(e) Any other data required by law

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