Automated License Plate Readers

431.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR) technology, also known as License Plate Recognition, provides automated detection of license plates. ALPR is used by the Liberty Lake Police Department 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. ALPRs may also be used to gather information related to active warrants, homeland security, electronic surveillance, suspect interdiction and stolen property recovery.

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines governing the use, access, retention, dissemination, auditing, and protection of ALPR systems and ALPR data in compliance with Washington law, including Substitute Bill 6002 and applicable provisions of the Revised Code of Washington (RCW).

The Liberty Lake Police Department may utilize ALPR technology only for lawful purposes authorized by Washington law.

431.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include (Chapter 239, § 2, 2026 Laws):

Audit trail data - All forms of data collected or generated by an automated license plate reader system that identify how and when the system is accessed or used.

Automated license plate reader data (ALPR data) - Data collected by automated license plate reader systems including but not limited to global positioning system coordinates, location, date and time, speed of travel, photograph, license plate number, automobile characteristics, or other identifying information. "Automated license plate reader data" does not include audio or video recordings generated by an in-car or body-worn camera, unless such recordings are converted into computer-readable license plate characters or associated metadata, or are indexed, made searchable, or analyzed by license plate number, individual, vehicle, biometric identifier, or other unique identifier for the purpose of identifying, tracking, or reconstructing an individual's or vehicle's location.

Automated license plate reader system (ALPR) - A system, software, or computer algorithm, whether used independently or in combination with one or more mobile or fixed automated cameras, that is used to convert images of license plates into computer-readable data.

431.2 ADMINISTRATION

All installation and maintenance of ALPR equipment, as well as ALPR data retention and access, shall be managed by the Administrative Services Deputy Chief. The Administrative Services Deputy Chief will assign members under their command to administer the day-to-day operation of the ALPR.

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No member of this department shall operate ALPR equipment or access ALPR data without first completing department-approved training.

431.3 OPERATIONS

Reasonable suspicion or probable cause is not required before using an ALPR. Use of an ALPR is restricted to the following purposes (Chapter 239, § 3, 2026 Laws):

(a) A comparison of ALPR data with data from databases maintained by the Washington Department of Licensing, the state criminal justice information system, the Federal Bureau of Investigation kidnappings and missing persons list, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children list, and the Washington missing persons list.

(b) A comparison of ALPR data with data from a state or local government ALPR database if the officer performing the search documents that the license plate number or vehicle characteristics are relevant and material to an investigation of a vehicle that is stolen, associated with a missing or endangered person, registered to a person with an outstanding felony or gross misdemeanor warrant, or was involved in the commission of a felony or gross misdemeanor.

(c) Enforcing parking restrictions.

(d) Identifying vehicles in a database for impoundment or immobilization under a local ordinance, provided the database includes only license plates of vehicles subject to that ordinance.

A positive match from an ALPR alone does not constitute reasonable suspicion to stop a vehicle. Before conducting a traffic stop, officers shall either (Chapter 239, § 3, 2026 Laws):

- Develop reasonable suspicion for the stop independent from the ALPR match.
- Immediately confirm visually that the license plate on the vehicle matches the image of the license plate displayed on the ALPR and confirm by other means that the license plate number appears in one of the databases described in this section.

431.3.1 OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Only trained and authorized personnel may operate ALPR equipment or access ALPR data.

An ALPR alert alone shall not constitute sufficient grounds for a traffic stop, detention, or arrest without independent verification and lawful justification.

431.3.2 PROHIBITED USE OF THE ALPR SYSTEM

Members shall not use or allow others to use the ALPR equipment or data for any unauthorized purpose, including (Chapter 239, § 3, 2026 Laws):

(a) Investigating or enforcing federal immigration matters.

(b) Assisting with out-of-state investigations regarding protected health care services under chapter 7.115 RCW (e.g., abortion services).

(c) Tracking or otherwise monitoring activity protected by the state and federal constitutions (e.g., free speech, assembly, protest).

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(d) Collecting ALPR data from facilities that provide health care or conduct immigration matters as defined by RCW 19.154.020, elementary and secondary schools, places of worship, courts, or food banks.

The Liberty Lake Police Department shall not sell, lease, rent, or purchase ALPR data or audit trail data (Chapter 239, § 5, 2026 Laws).

431.4 SENSITIVE LOCATION RESTRICTIONS

ALPR systems shall not be intentionally deployed or used to identify, track, or monitor individuals at sensitive locations, except pursuant to lawful criminal investigations or court orders.

431.5 DATA COLLECTION AND RETENTION

The Administrative Services Deputy Chief is responsible for ensuring systems and processes are in place for the proper collection and retention of ALPR data. Data will be transferred from vehicles to the designated storage in accordance with department procedures.

All stored ALPR data shall not be retained for more than 21 days unless it is (Chapter 239, § 4, 2026 Laws):

(a) Retained pursuant to a warrant issued by a court in a felony or gross misdemeanor case.

(b) Retained as permitted by court order in civil or criminal cases.

(c) Reasonable to believe it will become evidence in a criminal or civil action or is subject to a discovery request, subpoena, or other lawful action to produce records. In those circumstances, the applicable data should be downloaded onto portable media and booked into evidence.

(d) Retained for the purpose of parking enforcement, provided that the data is deleted within 12 hours of the final disposition of the enforcement case.

When no longer needed, ALPR data shall be deleted according to the established records retention schedule.

431.6 ACCOUNTABILITY

All data will be closely safeguarded and protected by both procedural and technological means. The Liberty Lake Police Department 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, date, and time.

(b) Members approved to access ALPR data under these guidelines are permitted to access the data only for lawful purposes.

(c) ALPR system audits shall be conducted annually at a minimum and include a review of all access to and use of the ALPR system and the department's compliance with

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the data retention, purging, and sharing requirements of this policy (Chapter 239, § 8, 2026 Laws).

1. Data elements used to query the ALPR and retained as audit trail data shall be used solely for auditing purposes and may not be searched, analyzed, compiled, or indexed for investigative purposes.
2. Audit trail data shall be retained for two years and shall contain the information required by Chapter 239, § 8, 2026 Laws.

431.7 AUDITING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The department shall maintain comprehensive audit records documenting user access, searches conducted, data dissemination, and the purpose of access.

431.8 TRAINING

Personnel shall complete department-approved training regarding applicable Washington law, privacy protections, authorized and prohibited uses, retention requirements, dissemination restrictions, and audit requirements.

Refresher training shall occur annually.

431.9 PUBLIC RECORDS REQUESTS

Requests for ALPR records shall be processed in accordance with the Washington Public Records Act and applicable exemptions under Washington law.

431.10 VENDOR COMPLIANCE

Any ALPR used by the department shall comply with Washington law, maintain required safeguards, support automated deletion requirements, and maintain access-logging capabilities.

431.11 POLICY REVIEW

This policy shall be reviewed periodically and updated as necessary to ensure compliance with Washington law and emerging best practices.

431.12 POLICY

The policy of the Liberty Lake Police Department 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 department. Because such data may contain confidential information, it is not open to public review.

431.13 RELEASING ALPR DATA

The ALPR data may be disclosed, shared, or accessed by other law enforcement or prosecutorial agencies only as required in a judicial proceeding or as otherwise permitted by law, using the following procedures (Chapter 239, § 5, 2026 Laws):

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(a) The agency makes a written request for the ALPR data that includes:

1. The name of the agency.
2. The name of the person requesting.
3. The intended purpose of obtaining the information.

(b) The request is reviewed by the Administrative Services Deputy Chief or the authorized designee and approved before the request is fulfilled.

(c) The approved request is retained on file.

Requests for ALPR data by non-law enforcement or non-prosecutorial agencies will be processed as provided in the Records Maintenance and Release Policy.

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