

# PORT OF SEATTLE POLICE DEPARTMENT

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Departmental Directive: **03-2026**

Effective Date: **March 30, 2026**

Subject: **Automated License Plate Readers (ALPRs)**

Issuing Authority: **Michael Villa**  
Chief of Police



*\*Cancelled upon inclusion in the Lexipol-based policy manual.*

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This **Department Directive (DD) 03-2026 – Automated License Plate Readers (ALPRs)** revises Section **§402.1 – Automated License Plate Readers – Purpose and Scope**, **§402.4 – Automated License Plate Readers – ALPR Data Collection and Retention**, and **§402.5 – Automated License Plate Readers – Accountability and Safeguards**. The DD also adds Subsection **§402.1.1 – Automated License Plate Readers – Purpose and Scope - Definitions**, all to the **§402 – Automated License Plate Readers** Policy within the **Patrol Operations** Chapter of the Manual. This directive has been generated in response to **SB 6002** and will be codified via a new chapter added within **Title 10 RCW**. Policy changes have been identified by **yellow highlight**, language additions have been identified by blue font color with blue underlined text to designate additions, and ~~language deletions have been identified by red font color with red strike-through text~~.

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Policy  
**402**

Port of Seattle Police Department  
Port of Seattle PD Policy Manual

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## Automated License Plate Readers

### 402.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR) technology, also known as License Plate Recognition (LPR), provides law enforcement agencies with a comparison of an automated detection of license plates against state and/or federal databases including: the Washington State Department of Licensing (DOL), the Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS) - Washington State Patrol (WSP), the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) Kidnappings & Missing Persons, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC), and/or the Missing Persons - WSP. ALPR is used by the Port of Seattle Police Department to convert data associated with vehicle license plates for official law enforcement purposes,

including identifying investigation of a stolen or wanted vehicles, stolen license plates and a vehicle associated with a missing or endangered persons, a vehicle registered to an individual with an outstanding felony or gross misdemeanor warrant, or a vehicle related to or involved in a felony or gross misdemeanor (SB 6002). ~~ALPRs may also be used to gather information related to active warrants, homeland security, electronic surveillance, suspect interdiction and stolen property recovery.~~ ALPRs may also be used for parking enforcement (SB 6002).

#### **402.1.1 DEFINITIONS**

**Audit trail data** - All forms of data collected or generated by an automated license plate reader system that identify how the system is accessed or used. "Audit trail data" includes information about who accesses or uses the system, and how and when the system is accessed or used. "Audit trail data" does not include automated license plate reader data (SB 6002).

**Automated license plate reader data** - All 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 a dashboard 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 (SB 6002).

**Automated license plate reader system** - 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. An automated license plate reader system excludes automated school bus safety cameras, speed safety camera systems, and automated traffic safety camera systems, as defined in RCW 46.63.210, that do not interface or interact with an automated license plate reader system for purposes other than those authorized under RCW 46.63.180, RCW 46.63.200, or RCW 46.63.220 through 46.63.260. An automated license plate reader system excludes photo toll system cameras authorized under RCW 47.56.795 or RCW 47.46.105 (SB 6002).

#### **402.2 ADMINISTRATION OF THE ALPR SYSTEM AND ALPR DATA**

The Chief of Police shall designate a Patrol Commander to oversee all installation and maintenance of ALPR equipment, as well as access to the ALPR system. The Records Manager will oversee ALPR data retention and non-law enforcement requests for data. The designated Patrol Commander will assign personnel under their command to manage the day-to-day operation of the ALPR equipment and data.

#### **402.3 ALPR OPERATION**

Use of an ALPR is restricted to the purposes outlined below. Department personnel 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 and legitimate law enforcement business.
- (b) An ALPR may be used in conjunction with any patrol operation or official department investigation. Reasonable suspicion or probable cause is not required before using an ALPR.
- (c) While an ALPR may be used to canvass license plates around any crime scene, particular consideration should be given to using ALPR-equipment 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 member of this department shall operate ALPR equipment, or access ALPR data, without first completing department-approved training.
- (e) Officers should verify an ALPR response through the Central Computerized Enforcement Service System (ACCESS) via the Communications Center before taking enforcement action that is based solely upon an ALPR alert.
- (f) No ALPR operator may retrieve ACCESS data unless otherwise authorized to do so.
- (g) All attempts for action as a result of an ALPR response should follow procedures outlined in the **Vehicle Pursuit Factors** subsection of the **Officer Responsibilities (CALEA 41.2.2C)** section of the **Vehicle Pursuit** Policy (RCW 10.116.060).

#### **402.4 ALPR DATA COLLECTION AND RETENTION**

All data and images gathered by an ALPR are for the official use of the Port of Seattle Police Department, and because such data may contain confidential ACCESS information, it is not open to public review. ALPR information gathered and retained by this department may be used and shared with prosecutors or others only as permitted by law.

All ALPR data downloaded to the server shall be stored according to [Washington State Law](#) and the [Washington State Law Enforcement Records Retention Schedule](#) and thereafter may be 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 lawful action to produce records. In such circumstances the applicable data should be downloaded from the server onto portable media and booked into evidence, or a digital copy of the evidence will be uploaded and saved to Evidence.com.

#### **402.5 ACCOUNTABILITY AND SAFEGUARDS**

All saved data will be closely safeguarded and protected by both procedural and technological means. The Port of Seattle Police Department will observe the following safeguards regarding access to and use of stored data:

- (a) All non-law enforcement requests for access to stored ALPR data shall be referred to the Records Manager and processed in accordance with applicable law.
- (b) All ALPR data downloaded to the mobile workstation and server shall be accessible only through a login/password-protected system capable of documenting all access of information by name, date and time.

- (c) Persons 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 department-related civil or administrative action.
- (d) ~~Such ALPR data may be released to other authorized and verified law enforcement officials and agencies at any time for legitimate law enforcement purposes.~~ Other state or local agencies authorized to collect automated license plate reader data under Washington State Law may be given direct access to the automated license plate reader system (SB 6002).
- (e) ALPR system audits should be conducted on a regular basis.
- (f) The ALPR system shall not be used for immigration investigation and/or immigration enforcement (SB 6002).
- (g) The ALPR system shall not be used to track or monitor any protected health care services, any activity protected by the Washington State Constitution, and/or any activity protected by the First Amendment of the United States Constitution (SB 6002).
- (h) The ALPR system shall not collect automated license plate reader data on the premises or immediate surroundings or access to or from facilities that provide protected health care or conduct immigration matters (SB 6002).
- (i) The ALPR system shall not collect automated license plate reader data on the premises or immediate surrounds or access to or from elementary and secondary schools, places of worship, courts, or food banks (SB 6002).