

Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR) System

Effective Date:	April 7, 2026
Revised Date:	
Issuing Authority:	

601.1 PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the lawful, ethical, and effective use of Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR) systems by the Toppenish Police Department, in accordance with Washington State law, while safeguarding individual privacy and civil liberties.

601.2 POLICY

ALPR technology is recognized as a legitimate law enforcement investigative tool when used consistently with statutory authority, constitutional protections, and community trust. ALPR systems shall be used only for authorized purposes and are subject to strict controls governing access, data retention, sharing, auditing, and oversight.

601.3 DEFINITIONS

1. **ALPR System:** A system of cameras and associated software that automatically reads and processes license plate images and related vehicle information.
2. **ALPR Data:** All data collected by an ALPR system, including license plate numbers, images, location, date, and time.

601.4 AUTHORIZED USE

Members of the Toppenish Police Department may use the ALPR system only for legitimate law enforcement purposes, including the comparison of captured ALPR data with license plate numbers or vehicle characteristics when the member determines the data is relevant and material to an investigation involving a vehicle that is:

1. Related to or involved in a felony or gross misdemeanor;
2. Registered to an individual for whom there is an outstanding felony or gross misdemeanor warrant; or
3. Associated with a missing or endangered person.

The ALPR system shall not be used for immigration enforcement, to identify or monitor individuals seeking or providing protected health care services, or to track, collect information about, or otherwise monitor activity protected by the Washington State Constitution or the First Amendment to the United States Constitution.

A positive ALPR match alone does not constitute reasonable suspicion to stop a vehicle. An officer shall either independently develop reasonable suspicion or visually confirm that the license

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plate matches the ALPR image and verify the information through other authorized means prior to initiating enforcement action.

601.5 AUTHORIZED DATABASE COMPARISONS

The ALPR system may only compare captured license plate data against the following databases, when lawfully maintained and used for authorized purposes:

1. Washington State Department of Licensing (DOL) databases;
2. The Washington State Criminal Justice Information System;
3. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Kidnappings and Missing Persons List;
4. The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) List; and
5. State or local law enforcement agency hotlists.

601.6 PROHIBITED LOCATIONS

The Toppenish Police Department shall not operate or intentionally deploy an ALPR system on the premises of, or in the immediate vicinity of, facilities that provide or are associated with:

1. Food banks.
2. Protected health care services;
3. Immigration matters or services;
4. Schools;
5. Places of Worship;
6. Courts; or
7. Food banks.

601.7 DATA SHARING, SYSTEM ACCESS, AND PUBLIC DISCLOSURE

The Toppenish Police Department shall not disclose, share, or permit access to ALPR data except under the following circumstances:

1. When disclosure is required pursuant to a court order, subpoena, warrant, or other judicial proceeding;
2. When shared with a Washington State or local agency authorized by law to collect and access ALPR data, and solely for a lawful purpose.
3. A third-party vendor providing ALPR system services may access ALPR data only to the extent necessary to fulfill a specific, Department-authorized purpose.

601.7.1 PUBLIC DISCLOSURE

Automated license plate reader data is not subject to disclosure under the public records act, chapter 42.56 RCW.

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601.8 DATA RETENTION

ALPR data collected by or on behalf of the Toppenish Police Department shall not be retained for more than twenty-one (21) days, unless one of the following exceptions applies:

1. **Court Authorization:** ALPR data may be retained pursuant to a valid, court-issued felony or gross misdemeanor warrant, subpoena, or court order in a criminal or civil matter. Such data shall be deleted at the conclusion of the criminal or civil case in accordance with the applicable records retention schedule. ALPR data may be shared in discovery as required by applicable court rules.
2. **Evidence of Specific Unlawful Conduct:** ALPR data retained for investigations authorized under this policy may be retained for as long as the data is reasonably required as evidence of specific unlawful conduct related to a felony or gross misdemeanor investigation and shall be deleted when no longer needed for that purpose.