



# Operating Procedure – Wauwatosa Police Department

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**PROCEDURE:** Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR) Systems

**CHAPTER & SECTION:** 5.5.4

**DISTRIBUTION:** All Personnel

**AUTHORITY:** Captain Luke Vetter

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## I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this procedure is to provide guidance for the capture, storage, management, auditing and use of digital data obtained through the use of Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR) systems through Axon Evidence and Flock Safety technology. This procedure rescinds prior Operating Procedure #25-20.

It is the policy of this agency to use its ALPR system solely for law enforcement and public safety purposes, which are guided by departmental rules, regulations, policy, procedure and training. It is also the policy of this agency to protect the privacy rights of the public by ensuring ALPR systems and their data are appropriately protected.

## II. DEFINITIONS

- A. Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR):** A combination of physical equipment (cameras) and software that captures images of vehicles and their license plate numbers.
- B. Hot List:** A list of license plate numbers and vehicle information that is associated with a person or persons that are or may be involved in or associated with criminal activity.
- C. NCIC Hot List:** The database which is extracted for ALPR systems that include

NCIC entries (e.g., stolen vehicles, missing persons, stolen license plates, wanted persons).

- D. Axon Evidence - ALPR:** The in-squad ALPR hardware and searchable database that is used to manage and operate the mobile ALPR cameras. The Axon – ALPR system also compares license plate reads to active hotlists and is capable of notifying Axon – ALPR users when a license plate of interest on an active hotlist is read.
- E. Flock Safety:** A system that utilizes a network of cameras to capture and store digital images of license plates and vehicles along with date, time and location of when and where each image was captured. The information is entered into a searchable computerized database. The Flock Safety system also compares license plate reads to active hotlists and is capable of notifying Flock Safety users when a license plate of interest on an active hotlist is read.
- F. Mobile ALPR:** An ALPR camera that is affixed to a patrol squad car.
- G. Static ALPR:** An ALPR camera which is affixed to a stationary object.

### III. PROCEDURE

#### A. ALPR Operation

Use of ALPRs are 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.

1. ALPR data shall only be used for official and legitimate law enforcement business.
2. The ALPR equipment and software shall be operational during the patrol officer's shift. Patrol officers should remain logged into ALPR software throughout their shift.
3. ALPR data may be used in conjunction with patrol operations and any law enforcement investigation.
4. If practicable, the officer should verify an ALPR response through the Transaction Information for the Management of Enforcement (TIME) system or National Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (NLETS) before taking police action that is based solely upon the ALPR response.
5. The department shall maintain Wauwatosa Police Department hot lists in the ALPR databases. Officers may enter vehicles of interest into ALPR databases. These hot lists will include vehicles that are of interest related to

local investigations.

## **B. Axon Evidence – ALPR Hot Lists**

1. The department will maintain Wauwatosa Police Department hot lists based on the necessity of local investigations. The investigating officer who created a hot list will be responsible for maintaining and updating the information contained within the hot list. Each hot list entry shall include a detailed description as to why the license plate was entered into the hot list and what actions should be taken when another officer has contact with a vehicle with that license plate (e.g., patrol information, probable cause exists for a suspect). When the hot list entry is no longer needed for an investigation, the investigating officer shall deactivate the hot list as soon as practical.
2. The Axon Evidence - ALPR system maintains hot lists that are associated with NCIC & CIB entries (e.g., stolen vehicles, missing persons, stolen license plates, wanted persons). Axon Evidence ALPR hot lists are updated twice daily.

## **C. Response to Axon Evidence – ALPR Alerts**

1. When the Axon Evidence - ALPR system indicates that a license plate is on a hot list, an alert will sound from the officer's squad computer. Prior to taking any enforcement action, the officer shall make all reasonable efforts to:
  - (a) Verify that the captured plate image matches the plate number of the vehicle.
  - (b) Confirm that the hot list indicator is accurate by verifying it through dispatch or by the officer.
  - (c) Dispatch or the officer will then run the plate through DOT records to verify its hotlist status.

## **D. Flock Safety Hotlists**

1. The department will maintain Wauwatosa Police Department hotlists based on the necessity of local investigations. The investigating officer who created a hot list will be responsible for maintaining and updating the information contained within the hot list. Each hot list entry shall include a detailed description as to why the license plate was entered into the hotlist and what actions should be taken when another officer has contact with a vehicle with that license plate (e.g., patrol information, probable cause exists for "suspect's name"). When the hot list entry is no longer needed for an investigation, the investigating officer shall deactivate the hot list as soon as practical.

2. The Flock Safety system maintains hotlists that are associated with NCIC & CIB entries (e.g., stolen vehicles, missing persons, stolen license plates, wanted persons). The Flock Safety hotlists are updated every day at 0000 hours and every four hours thereafter.

#### **E. Response to Flock Alerts**

1. Patrol officers shall verify that their squad's Flock system settings are set to receive alerts from Wauwatosa Flock cameras for the following, at a minimum:
  - (a) Custom Hotlist
  - (b) National Crime Information Center (NCIC)
    - i. Missing Person
    - ii. Stolen Vehicle
  - (c) National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC)
    - i. Missing Child
  - (d) Wisconsin DOJ
    - i. Amber Alert
    - ii. Silver Alert
2. Officers should verify a Flock alert by a record check through NCIC.
3. If dispatch receives a Flock alert, they should, as soon as practicable, provide the vehicle info and alert location to Patrol Officers via the radio as "Flock patrol information."
  - (a) Dispatch will create a call for service with the CFS code of "Flock." If there is an officer near the capture of the Flock alert, they will be dispatched to locate the vehicle. If there are no officers near the capture of the Flock alert, dispatch will clear the call for service as Call Taker Handled (CTH).
4. When dispatch is preoccupied by other responsibilities (i.e. EMD and handling other priority calls for service) they may not immediately provide the patrol information or create the Flock call for service. If available and when practicable, officers shall investigate Flock alerts that are captured in their sector. If the Flock alert vehicle is located, officers should initiate a Flock call for service.

## F. Auditing & Administration of ALPR Systems

1. The Chief of Police will designate specific personnel to serve as the ALPR system administrators and/or auditors. The system administrators and auditors are granted specific permissions which enable them to serve as the custodians and provide oversight of the systems and their use.
  - (a) The Patrol and Investigative Lieutenants will be designated the **primary auditors**. They shall conduct regular audits to ensure that sworn staff are utilizing the systems for legitimate law enforcement purposes. If violations are discovered, corrective action and/or an internal investigation shall immediately occur in compliance with Discipline and Internal Investigation Policy 2.1.3.
  - (b) The Deputy Chief, Support Services Captain and Administrative Lieutenant will be designated as ALPR systems administrators and **secondary auditors**. Secondary auditors shall conduct regular reviews of the primary audits/auditors.
2. The Administrative Lieutenant is responsible for training department personnel in the use of the ALPR systems.
  - (a) No personnel may use the Axon Evidence - ALPR or Flock Safety software unless they have completed department-approved training.
  - (b) Primary and Secondary Auditors will be provided specific training for each ALPR system.
3. Dispatch will provide information regarding Flock alerts in accordance with their operating procedures and guidelines.
4. Equipment or software issues shall, as soon as practical, be reported to a system administrator.
5. Data collected by the mobile Axon Evidence - ALPR will be retained for a period of one year. Data collected by Flock Safety ALPR will be retained for a period of 30 days.
  - (a) Data that has been used as evidence for a municipal or state offense shall be archived for the statute of limitations for that particular offense.
  - (b) Data that is required due to any lawsuit will be permanently secured or archived.
6. Public records requests for ALPR data shall be forwarded to the Administrative Lieutenant.

- (a) Public records requests for ALPR data that was not collected with Wauwatosa PD ALPR equipment will not be fulfilled by this agency. The requester will be directed to the agency that owns the image/data.

#### **IV. ADDENDUMS - none**

#### **V. REFERENCES**

- A.** Discipline & Internal Investigation Policy 2.1.3
- B.** Police Digital Records Policy 8.1.3
- C.** TIME System Policy 10.1.2
- D.** Wauwatosa Police Department Rules and Regulations

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Luke Vetter", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Captain Luke Vetter  
Administrative Bureau

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REASONS]