Automated License Plate Readers (ALPRs)

424.1 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.

424.2 POLICY

The policy of the Brazos 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.

424.3 ADMINISTRATION

The ALPR technology, also known as License Plate Recognition (LPR), allows for the automated detection of license plates. It is used by the Brazos 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 Patrol Division Commander. The Patrol Division Commanderwill assign members under his/her command to administer the day-to-day operation of the ALPR equipment and data.

424.4 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.

(b) An ALPR may be used in conjunction with any routine patrol operation or criminal 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-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 member may access confidential office, state or federal data unless authorized to do so.

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(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.

424.5 DATA COLLECTION AND RETENTION

All stored ALPR data should be retained for a period of 180 days. Thereafter, ALPR data should 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 discovery request or other lawful action to produce records. In those circumstances, the applicable data should be downloaded into evidence.

ALPR data will be autonomously uploaded to the Texas Department of Public Safety every 24 hours.

424.6 ACCOUNTABILITY

All data will be closely safeguarded and protected by both procedural and technological means.

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.

424.7 RELEASING ALPR DATA

The ALPR data may be shared only with other law enforcement or prosecutorial agencies for official law enforcement purposes or as otherwise permitted by law.

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