



MYRTLE BEACH POLICE DEPARTMENT

ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS AND OPERATING PROCEDURES

Subject: *Automated License Plate Reader*

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Rescinds: *Automated License Plate Reader*

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Approved By:

PURPOSE

To establish guidelines for the implementation, installation, and use of mobile and stationary Automated License Plate Recognition (ALPR) technology and equipment at selected locations to scan, detect, and identify license plate numbers appearing on selected "Hot Lists".

RESPONSIBILITY

1. Each officer of the Myrtle Beach Police Department who is trained to utilize the Automated License Plate Recognition (ALPR) system is required to comply with the guidelines outlined in this SOP.
2. Only authorized persons are allowed to operate the ALPR system or access the ALPR database records. Authorized personnel are employees having successfully passed the SLED/ NCIC certification.
3. No employee shall use or authorize the use of ALPR systems for reasons that are not legitimate law enforcement purposes. Misuse of this equipment will result in disciplinary action.
4. ALPR systems equipment is the property of the City of Myrtle Beach.
5. ALPR database records as well as any associated media are the property of the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division, SLED.

DEFINITIONS

1. Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR) – A scanner system that reads license plates/registrations on vehicles, which are parked or moving, and compares this information to defined records, which are maintained within the system.
2. Hot List – A list of files containing records from NCIC, NLETS, SCDMV or in-house records.
3. Scan – The individual read of each license plate or license registration.
4. Hit – A positive match to a data file that is entered in the ALPR.
5. Digital Image – Each read will provide a digital image or photograph of the license plate and the vehicle.
6. Verification – Visual verification of each hit will be completed by the user and/or Communication Center using the digital image system.
7. Confirmation – Each hit will be confirmed through NCIC, NLETS or SCMDV or any in-house database prior to any officer initiating an investigation and/or traffic stop.

PROCEDURE

1. SYSTEM OPERATION
 - A. Stationary and mobile scanners will be installed at selected locations and on selected police vehicles. The ALPR scanners are expected to read license plates at 90-95% accuracy. The system should function in a variety of weather, light, and road conditions. The ALPR equipment passively reads the registration and/or license plates of moving or parked vehicles and compares them against “Hot Lists” containing records from NCIC and/or other files. The “Hot Lists” database will be updated with the most current wanted vehicle information from NCIC and/or other files. There is no direct connection between the ALPR and NCIC. Manual additions to “Hot Lists” can be made by the ALPR program administrator or by the individual officer. During operation, plate matches are indicated by an audible and visual alarm. In addition to verification of the plate number and state, an officer or dispatcher is responsible for verifying the status of the warrant or stolen vehicle NCIC entry before the suspect vehicle is stopped. A database of scanned license plates will be stored at the municipal level.

2. USER MANUAL

See Appendices for the manufacturer's user manuals or reference guides, which provide operational procedures.

- A. Mobile User Manual/Quick Reference is used for officer training and operation, this manual provides:
 - 1) System composition and configuration;
 - 2) Description of system functions;
 - 3) Operating procedures;
 - 4) Description of the orientation and visual field of the cameras;
 - 5) Description of the layout and use of the laptop computer screen display; and
 - 6) Alarm and data transfer procedures.
- B. Operations Center User Manual provides for training and operation by the Communications Center, this manual provides:
 - 1) System composition and configuration;
 - 2) Description of system functions;
 - 3) Operating procedures;
 - 4) Statistical analysis and "Hot Lists" management;
 - 5) User management.

3. OFFICER/OPERATOR

- A. The ALPR system will be checked to ensure proper operational status by an ALPR operator/officer at the beginning of each shift.
- B. The officer will verify that the Automatic License Plate Reader (ALPR) "Hit" on the plate matches the image and then follow established procedures to file check NCIC or other files.
- C. Ensure the equipment is functioning properly throughout shift. The system should indicate a number of plates that have been checked. If there are no plates indicated, the system is not functioning. If the system shows that plates are being scanned, the system is working. If there are any problems or issues with any of the equipment, they will be reported immediately to the Program Administrator.
- D. Each month, every officer/operator using the ALPR will complete an Operator's Summation Report (see attached). The Operator's Summation Report is due to the Program Administrator on the first of each month. This report will include specific details as far as the usage of the ALPR and any critiques of the system. This will also include any documentation of any specific areas within the City of Myrtle Beach that are a problem scanning.

4. INFORMATION SYSTEMS DEPARTMENT

- A. This Department is responsible for coordinating and implementing all computer programming.

5. PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR

- A. The Support Service Division Lieutenant or their designee will be the Program Administrator. This position and Information System Administrator will also have electronic retrieval capability to ALPR data for management reports and/or evaluation. The Program Administrator will complete a monthly report of the data to include the number of Scans, the number of Hits, as well as the cases made. This will also include the number of officers utilizing the equipment and those additionally training during each month. This report will be completed and submitted at the first of each month.

All media contacts will be coordinated through the Public Information Officer, who will be consulted prior to releasing any information to the news or other non-law enforcement entities.

6. FUNCTIONALITY

A. Reasonable Suspicion/Probable Cause

- 1) An ALPR “hit” is not to be used as reasonable suspicion or probable cause for a traffic stop or enforcement contact. Contact with the vehicle and its occupants is only to be made after the “hit” is confirmed through NCIC.

B. Manual Entry by User into “Hit List” database

- 1) At any time, an officer or program administrator dispatcher may manually enter a vehicle registration into the database for storage. Manual entries by officers will have a default deletion at the end of shift. Examples of possible reasons for manual insertion of a plate number include, but not limited to:
- a) Be On Look Out (BOLO)
 - b) Attempt To Locate (ATL)
 - c) Warrants
 - d) AMBER Alert
 - e) Suspicious Vehicle
 - f) Child Abduction
 - g) Wanted Person
 - h) Missing Person

C. 'O' vs. Zero

- 1) Because of standardized NCIC formats, a letter 'O' and a zero in a license plate number are synonymous in NCIC records. Therefore, the "Hot List", NCIC, and the Automatic License Plate Reader (ALPR) read letters 'O' as a zero. Any plate entry, including any manually entered by an officer or a dispatcher with an 'O', is automatically converted to a zero.

D. Update of Police Car "Hot List" Database

- 1) Each mobile unit must be driven to the specified data transfer area so the "Hot List" update and the vehicle's data compiled on the ALPR can be transferred by memory stick or automatically transferred through the wireless download system.

E. Stationary Operation 9 (if cameras are available/in operation)

- 1) Stationary monitoring will be conducted of selected lanes of traffic entering the City of Myrtle Beach and other selected sites. When a license plate entered in the "Hot List" is detected, a notification is automatically sent by the ALPR system to the Communication Center, which is equipped to receive the notification.
 - a) Hit. The notification consists of the plate number from the "Hot List" and a digital image of the license plate read.
 - b) Visual Verification. The dispatcher receiving the notification will first visually verify that the resignation from the "Hot List" (plate number and state) is the same as the registration shown in the digital image.
 - c) No Match. If for any reason they do not match, the "Hit" will be rejected.
 - d) Match. If they do match, the "Hit" will be accepted and verified through NCIC.
 - e) Notification. After receiving a valid "Hit" through NCIC, the dispatcher will dispatch the closest available officer to intercept the vehicle. The officer will be notified of the reason for the "Hit", that the dispatch is the result of the ALPR (e.g., radio signal such as "Possible ALP" or "Confirmed ALPR") and that the "Hit" has been verified through NCIC.
 - f) Traffic Stop. The officer intercepts and stops the vehicle.
 - g) Verification of Hit. If for any reason, the ALPR "Hit" cannot be verified through NCIC, the vehicle is not to be stopped based solely on the ALPR. If the dispatcher cannot read the digital image sufficiently to

verify the license plate number or state, an officer may be dispatched to intercept the vehicle, however, the intercepting officer must first verify the "Hit" through NCIC prior to stopping the vehicle based solely on the ALPR.

- h) If an officer is unavailable to immediately intercept a valid "Hit", the dispatcher may notify additional law enforcement personnel (BOLO) of the suspect vehicle information (Sheriff's Office, Highway Patrol, etc.). Ability to identify the vehicle, reason for the "Hit", and known direction of travel are circumstances that should be used to determine whether additional personnel should be notified. If the vehicle is observed, they should be instructed to notify the Communications Center of the route and direction of travel.

F. Mobile Unit Operation

- 1) Hit Contact. When the mobile ALPR equipment detects a "Hit" Contact, the notification consists of the plate number from the "Hot List" and a digital image of the license plate reader.
- 2) Visual Verification. The officer receiving the notification will first visually verify that the registration from the "Hot List" (plate number and state) is the same as the registration shown in the digital image.
- 3) No Match. If for any reason they do not match, the "Hit" will be rejected.
- 4) Match. If they do match, the "Hit" will be accepted and the officer will verify the "Hit" through NCIC or through the Communications Center.
- 5) Notification. When verifying the "Hit" the officer will notify the dispatcher and verify through NCIC.
- 6) Traffic Stop. After verifying the "Hit" through NCIC, the officer will then intercept the vehicle.
- 7) No NCIC Response. If for any reason, the ALPR "Hit" cannot be verified through NCIC, the vehicle is not to be stopped based solely on the ALPR.

G. Empty Vehicle "Hit"

- 1) In the event an officer locates a suspect vehicle and it is unoccupied, the officer will advise dispatch of the exact location and notify the Shift Supervisor. Officers should maintain visual contact of the suspect vehicle from a safe vantage point.

H. Occupied Vehicle “Hit”

- 1) After the warrant/“Hit” is confirmed through NCIC and the officer locates the vehicles and it is occupied, the officer will contact dispatch and advise the exact location and request additional units to respond. The type of warrant will determine the type of contact officers will make with the vehicle and/or occupants. If the warrant is a felony violation, the officer will conduct a felony car stop, following current departmental regulations. If feasible, all vehicle and foot traffic will be cut off to the affected area until the scene has been secured.

7. CASE DOCUMENTATION

- A. An incident report will be completed per Myrtle Beach Police Department Standard Operating Procedures. The incident report should not reflect primary reliance on the ALPR system, e.g., “After confirmation by the Communication Center through NCIC of the license plate on the subject’s vehicle as being positive hit, a traffic stop was conducted”.

8. TRAINING

- A. Dispatchers, officers, information technology personnel and network administrators will receive appropriate training from qualified Myrtle Beach Police Department, City of Myrtle Beach Information Technology staff or vendor representatives prior to using or maintaining the ALPR equipment.

9. LPR DATA SHARING AND DISSEMINATION

- A. LPR data may be shared for legitimate law enforcement purposes only. ALPR records/data are the property of SLED.

The appendix contains the ELSAG Quick Reference Guide, to be used by officer in accordance with Automated License Plate Reader Regulation and Operating Procedure.