



# AUTOMATED LICENSE PLATE RECOGNITION SYSTEM

**9429-5**

## OVERVIEW

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Automated License Plate Recognition (ALPR) provides automated detection of license plates. ALPR's are used by CAL FIRE Law Enforcement to convert data associated with vehicle license plates for official law enforcement purposes, including identification of persons associated with wildland arson fires. ALPR's may also be used to gather information related to active warrants, homeland security, electronic surveillance, and suspect interdiction.

All installations and maintenance of ALPR equipment, as well as ALPR data retention and access, shall be managed by the Special Equipment Unit (SEU) Battalion Chief or designee. The SEU Battalion Chief will assign personnel to administer day-to-day operation of the ALPR equipment data.

**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 routine criminal investigation. Reasonable suspicion or probable cause is not required before using an ALPR.
- c) No member of this department shall operate ALPR equipment or access ALPR data without first completing department approved training administered by the SEU.
- d) No ALPR operator may access California Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (CLETS) data unless otherwise authorized to do so.
- e) Personnel shall visually verify the vehicle's license plate to ensure the LPR read the plate correctly.

**ALPR Data Collection and Retention** – All data images gathered by an ALPR are for the official use of CAL FIRE and because such data may contain confidential CLETS 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 as permitted by law. Unit Fire Prevention personnel are responsible for ensuring proper collection and retention of ALPR data; data will be placed into evidence or purged quarterly. The ALPR server will be set to retain the data for 3 years, unless it is being used in an ongoing criminal investigation, criminal prosecution, or is the subject of a civil litigation hold or subpoena. When this occurs, the data will be retained until the disposition of the case, even if it exceeds the normal purging schedule. In those circumstances the applicable data should be downloaded from the server onto portable media and booked into evidence.



**Accountability and Safeguards** – All saved data will be closely safeguarded and protected by both procedural and technological means. CAL FIRE will observe the following safeguards regarding access to and use of the stored data:

- a) All non-law enforcement requests for access to stored ALPR data shall be referred to CAL FIRE legal 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 relates to a specific criminal investigation or department related civil or administrative action, or official training.
- 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.
- e) ALPR system audits should be conducted on a regular basis.

**DEFINITION(S)**

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**PERSON / PROGRAM / FUNCTION AND ACTIONS**

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Person / Program / Function	Actions
<b>Deputy Chief of Investigations Unit</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supervise SEU Battalion Chief or designee in managing ALPR equipment and data.</li> </ul>
<b>SEU Battalion Chief</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage ALPR equipment and data.</li> <li>• Custodian of ALPR equipment and data.</li> <li>• Assign personnel access to the ALPR system.</li> <li>• Complete regular ALPR system audits with at least one annual audit.</li> </ul>
<b>Unit/Program Peace Officers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete required ALPR system training prior to accessing the ALPR system.</li> <li>• Administer day-to-day operation of ALPR equipment and data per the SEU Battalion Chief or designee.</li> </ul>

**RELATED FORM(S) / LINK(S)**

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[Policy 9429, Special Equipment Unit](#)



**SUBJECT MATTER EXPERT(S)**

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Fire Protection, Investigations Unit

**REVISION DATE**

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Revision Date: October 2019  
Last Reviewed: October 2019