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CHARLTON POLICE DEPARTMENT

AUTOMATIC LICENSE PLATE RECOGNITION SYSTEMS (ALPR SYSTEMS)

POLICY & PROCEDURE NO. 4.31	ISSUE DATE: _____
MASSACHUSETTS POLICE ACCREDITATION STANDARDS REFERENCED: 41.3.9	EFFECTIVE DATE: _____
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I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to establish guidelines and procedures for the proper use and application of Automated License Plate Recognition (ALPR) systems, the management of the data, and the maintenance of the equipment.

II. POLICY

The availability and use of (ALPR) systems have provided many opportunities for the enhancement of productivity and effectiveness, as well as increased safety to the public and law enforcement. It is the policy of the Charlton Police Department (CPD) to only utilize this technology in the furtherance of official and legitimate law enforcement operations and public safety. All trained members are expected to abide by the guidelines set forth herein when using an (ALPR) system.

III. ACRONYMS AND DEFINITIONS

Alert: A visual and/or auditory notice that is triggered when an (ALPR) system receives a potential hit on a license plate.

(ALPR): Automated License Plate Recognition: Automated License Plate Recognition (ALPR technology) uses high-speed cameras combined with sophisticated computer algorithms capable of converting the images of license plates to electronically readable data. The (ALPR) system captures an image of a license plate and converts it to a text file using

Optical Character Recognition (OCR) technology. This technology also has the capability to compare the digital images of license plates to the CJIS-NCIC Hot file database.

(ALPR) Operator: Trained Charlton Police Department personnel authorized to utilize (ALPR) systems and equipment.

(ALPR) Administrator: Designee of the Chief of Police responsible for compliance with all applicable laws and regulations pertaining to (ALPRs) as well as providing access and training to Charlton Police Department personnel in the operation of (ALPR) systems.

Alert Data: Information captured by an (ALPR) relating to a license plate that matches the license plate on a "hot list".

(ALPR) Data: Scan files, alert data, and any other documents or data generated by, or obtained through, utilization of an (ALPR) system.

(ALPR) Data Query Logs: A record of a search or query of (ALPR) data.

(ALPR) System: The (ALPR) camera and all associated equipment and databases operated by the Charlton Police Department. This includes fixed (ALPR) cameras that are attached to a structure, such as a pole, a traffic barrier, or a bridge, as well as mobile (ALPR) cameras that are deployed from a law enforcement vehicle or other equipment for mobile deployment.

(GPS): Global Positioning System.

"Hit": An alert that a license plate matches a record maintained in an (ALPR) database related to stolen vehicles, wanted vehicles, or other alert type files that support investigation or which have been manually registered by an approved user for further investigation.

"Hot List": License plate numbers of stolen cars, vehicles owned by persons of interest, and vehicles associated with AMBER Alerts that are regularly added to "hot lists" circulated among law enforcement agencies. "Hot List" information can come from a variety of sources, including the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Criminal Justice Information Services (DCJIS), the National Crime Information Center (NCIC), as well as national Amber Alerts and Department of Homeland Security watch lists. These lists serve an officer safety function as well as an investigatory purpose. In addition to agency supported "hot lists", users may also manually add license plate numbers to "hot lists" in order to be alerted if and when a vehicle license plate of interest is "read" by the ALPR system in accordance with a legitimate law enforcement purpose.

"Hot List" Download: The method by which the "hot list" data is transferred to a computer within a law enforcement vehicle or at a fixed terminal.

Optical Character Recognition (OCR): The technology that supports the automated reading and digitizing of images of license plates that are captured by an (ALPR) system.

IV. PROCEDURES

General: (ALPR) systems and associated equipment and databases, whether owned or under the control of the Charlton Police Department, are authorized for official use only. Misuse of this equipment and associated databases or data may be subject to sanctions and/or

disciplinary actions, as determined by the rules and regulations of the Charlton Police Department. Passwords will be protected, maintained and accessed only by that assigned user and sharing of passwords is strictly prohibited.

Administrative and Technical Support

Administrative Support: The (ALPR) Administrator or Administrators designated by the Chief of Police will oversee the Charlton Police Department's (ALPR) operations.

Assigned duties shall include:

- Establishing protocols for data entries, access, collection, storage & security, and retention of ALPR data and associated media files;
- Establishing protocols to preserve and document ALPR reads and "alerts" or "hits" that are acted on in the field or associated with investigations or prosecutions;
- Establishing protocols to establish and ensure the security and integrity of data captured, stored, and/or retained by the ALPR system;
- Ensuring that the (ALPR) system is used only for appropriate Charlton Police Department or partner law enforcement agency business and in accordance with this policy;
- Monitoring the use of the (ALPR) and schedule periodic audits;
- Recommending updates to the (ALPR) policy;
- Keeping informed of legal decisions, trends, and case law concerning (ALPRs);
- Coordinating with other Charlton Police Department personnel regarding the maintenance and retention of data;
- Maintaining records identifying approved (ALPR) deployments and documenting their results, including appropriate documentation of significant incidents and arrests that are related to (ALPR) usage;
- Authorizing any requests for (ALPR) systems use or data access according to the policies and guidelines of this agency.

Technical Support: Various officers within the department may be designated as Program Technicians by the Chief of Police. In their absence, the Chief of Police may assign these officers to assist as needed. The duties of these designated officers shall include:

- Training designated officers in the proper operation of (ALPR) systems;
- Documenting those trained as Operators and maintaining a roster of those trained in the use of this technology;

- Providing periodic equipment checks to ensure functionality and camera alignment. Any equipment that falls outside expected functionality shall be placed out of service until the identified issue can be corrected/repared;
- Assist other department personnel as needed.
- Ensuring that designated and trained personnel examine equipment on a regular basis to ensure functionality and camera alignment and removing from service any equipment that falls outside expected functionality until deficiencies have been corrected;
- Ensuring the proper selection of the personnel approved to operate the (ALPR) system and maintaining an adequate number of trained and authorized users.

V. Maintenance and Retention of Data

The Record Department OIC shall be responsible for the maintenance and retention of data stored by Charlton Police Department (ALPR) systems in accordance with MA Public Records Laws.

VI. (ALPR) System Usage

- (ALPR) systems and information shall be accessed and used only for official and legitimate law enforcement operations and public safety related purposes and may only be used based on specific and articulable facts of a concern for safety, wrongdoing, criminal investigations, Department-related civil investigations, or pursuant to a court order.
- Only users who have been properly trained in the use and operational protocols of the (ALPR) system shall be permitted to use a system. Only those users with an approved login and password will be allowed access to an (ALPR) system.
- Authorized User Alert Profile: Personnel who have been designated as an authorized user with an approved login and password for access to the Flock Safety ALPR System must establish an alert profile at the time of initial login. In order to minimize disruption from excessive alerts, and to avoid alerts based on categories that are not actionable without a simple CJIS query, all personnel must comply with the following schedule for alert notifications:

Authorized Categories: The following categories for an alert profile are authorized:

- Stolen Vehicle
- Stolen Plate

- Warrants
- Missing Person
- Protective Order
- NCMEC Amber Alert
- Missing Child
- Custom Charlton Police Hot List
- Articulated Investigatory Purposes

Prohibited Categories: The following categories for an alert profile are prohibited:

- Sex Offender
- Gang Member or Suspected Terrorist (without other investigatory purpose)
- CPIC Data Records
- Immigration Violator
- Violent Person
- Protective Interest
- Supervised Release

Exceptions to these requirements for specific users may be authorized by the Chief of Police or their designee. These exceptions shall only be made to further a specific investigation or other defined and articulatable public safety purpose.

- Searches of historical (ALPR) data shall be done in accordance with established departmental policies and procedures.
- Requests to use an (ALPR) system during nontraditional deployments, i.e. special operations or criminal investigations, must be approved by the Chief of Police or their designee.

VII. Manual Entry of Data

- Personnel may become aware of license plate numbers or vehicles of interest from a specific incident or investigation and may seek to have this information entered into Charlton Police Department (ALPR) systems. The entry of this information will trigger alerts to be forwarded to Charlton Police Department personnel and other designated agencies. This information may be entered only by an authorized Charlton Police Department supervisor or investigator and only for official and legitimate law enforcement or public safety operations.
- For all manual license plate entries, a verification of the license plates shall be queried via CJIS to verify the plate to be entered is accurate.
- Manual entries may include, but should not be limited to, an AMBER Alert, Missing Child Alert, Be on the Look Out (BOLO), Attempt To Locate (ATL), or Wanted or Missing Person

broadcast or bulletin, in which a license plate number is included. Such manual entries must be manually updated when the information changes or is no longer current; or have a defined expiration date for the specific entry.

- Manual entries may also include specific descriptions of vehicles which are being sought for specific crimes or in accordance with investigations.

VIII. (ALPR) "Hits" and Alerts:

Prior to initiation of a stop based on a "hit" or alert:

- Users shall visually verify that the vehicle plate number matches the plate number queried by an (ALPR) system, including both alphanumeric characters of the license plate and the state of issuance.
- Users shall verify the current status of the plate through the Commonwealth's Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS), National Crime Information Center (NCIC) Department's Records Management System (RMS), or other appropriate source of data prior to a stop when circumstances allow or as soon as practicable. (Confirm the vehicle is stolen, etc.).

IX. Mobile (ALPR) Procedures:

- The Charlton Police Department currently does not utilize mobile ALPR units or technology. Should this change be implemented, the policy will be updated to reflect the use of such technology.

X. (ALPR) Data Query Records

- In accordance with agreements between the Charlton Police Department and contracted vendors, Department vendors will maintain a record for each transaction conducted on Department (ALPR) systems that will include the name of the individual accessing the data, along with the date and time of access, and the reason for the access.
- Audits shall be conducted at the discretion of the Chief of Police.

XI. (ALPR) Sharing and Dissemination

- (ALPR) data can be accessed, retrieved, or shared, for official and legitimate law enforcement operations or public safety purposes only (to include training on the software or demonstration of the technology).
- Information sharing among law enforcement agencies, other than the DCJIS, should be governed by departmental policies or memorandums of understanding.

XII. Retention

- Bulk data from (ALPRs) will not be stored on the Department's server and will only be stored by Charlton Police Department (ALPR) vendors. Either by their own protocols or at the direction of the Charlton Police Department, Charlton Police Department (ALPR) vendors shall not store bulk Charlton Police Department (ALPR) data for a period greater than (30) days.
- Charlton Police Department (ALPR) data may be downloaded and retained by Charlton Police Department personnel in accordance with legitimate law enforcement purposes, including specific investigations. This data shall be retained in accordance with MA Public Records laws and maintained until a final disposition has been reached in the particular case.

XIII. Policy Review

There will be a periodic review of this Policy, and the policies and procedures contained herein and for making recommendations to the Chief of Police for any necessary amendments. This is a new technology and it may raise both legal and technological issues. As use of the technology progresses, the Charlton Police Department will continue to monitor and assess the appropriateness of this Policy.