

Automated License Plate Readers (ALPR)(Patrol)

Seattle Police Department (SPD)

What is the technology?

ALPR is a combination of software and hardware used for capturing and monitoring images of license plates. High definition infrared digital cameras are currently mounted on eight SPD Patrol cars to capture images of license plates. Those numbers are then validated by Officers and relayed to dispatch.

Why do we use the technology?

SPD uses ALPR in pursuit of maintaining public safety and enforcing applicable laws related to stolen vehicles, parking enforcement, and other active investigations.

Collection

All data collected by the ALPR systems (images, computer-interpreted license plate numbers, date, time, and GPS location) are stored on a secure SPD server. After 90 days all data collected by the ALPR systems is automatically deleted unless the data becomes part of an active investigation.



The open comment period for this technology is currently underway. You can provide comments to [Seattle.gov/Surveillance](https://seattle.gov/surveillance).

All comments will be included in the Surveillance Impact Report on this technology and submitted to Council.

If you would like to provide feedback outside of the open comment period, please submit them directly to City Council.

Use

ALPR is used in active investigations or to recover lost or stolen vehicles. After collection, software deciphers the plate number and compares that number to a list of license plates associated with open, reported crimes. If a match is found the Patrol Officer must verify license plate accuracy and confirm with dispatch before any action may be taken. Each time a Patrol Officer logs into ALPR or contacts dispatch, an auditable record is created.

Protections

[SPD Policy 16.170](#) addresses how Officers may use ALPR. The policy limits the technology's use and restricts general users of ALPR from accessing the data except as it relates to a specific criminal investigation or parking enforcement action. Any activity by a user to access this information is auditable.