



Illinois Association of CHIEFS OF POLICE

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Automatic License Plate Readers Save Lives, Solve Crimes, and Protect Illinois Communities

Illinois Association of Chiefs of Police (ILACP) Supports Responsible and Accountable Use of ALPR Technology

SPRINGFIELD - Automatic License Plate Reader (ALPR) technology is one of the most effective investigative tools available to Illinois law enforcement agencies. It helps officers locate violent offenders, recover stolen vehicles, use safe vehicle pursuit options, find missing and endangered persons, and provide critical investigative leads that help solve crimes, protect victims, and keep communities safe.

As discussions continue regarding law enforcement and ALPR technology, ILACP believes it is important that everyone understands what these systems do and what they do not do.

ALPR technology is **not a surveillance system**. It is an **investigative tool** that captures rear license plates and basic vehicle attributes (color/make/model) already visible to anyone traveling on public roadways. The information is compared against authorized law enforcement databases involving stolen vehicles, wanted subjects, missing persons, AMBER Alerts, Silver Alerts, and criminal investigations.

ALPR systems **do not** identify drivers or passengers, use facial recognition, record conversations, monitor private property, or collect personal information about motorists.

A Proven Tool That Helps Solve Crimes

Across Illinois, ALPR technology has helped law enforcement in investigations involving:

- Homicides, drive-by shootings, and other violent crimes.
- Child abductions and missing persons.
- Endangered individuals, including vulnerable adults and seniors impaired by medical issues.
- Stolen vehicles and property crimes.
- Organized criminal activity (human trafficking, organized retail theft rings, narcotic trafficking, etc.)
- Burglaries, robberies, and other serious offenses.
- Fatal accident investigations.

In many cases, investigators begin with only a partial license plate, location, vague vehicle description, or a surveillance image. ALPR technology allows officers to quickly develop leads that may otherwise require extensive hours of manual review or may never be identified.

For victims and families, these investigative leads can be the difference between life and death, an unsolved crime, and offenders being held accountable for their actions.

A Force Multiplier During Staffing Challenges

ALPR technology does not replace police officers, it makes them more effective.

By quickly identifying vehicles connected to criminal investigations or public safety alerts, officers can spend more time responding to emergencies, investigating crimes, engaging with communities, and protecting victims.

ALPRs Do Not Create a “Pattern of Life”

Claims that ALPR systems create a government surveillance network to track individuals by creating a pattern of life are inaccurate.

License plates are issued by the State of Illinois and are legally required to be displayed on vehicles. They are already visible to the public and law enforcement while vehicles are traveling on public roadways.

ALPR technology does not create new information, it helps law enforcement more efficiently identify information that is already visible in public view.

ALPR systems **do not**:

- Track individuals.
- Identify drivers or passengers.
- Use facial recognition.
- Record conversations.
- Monitor private spaces.
- Collect personal information about motorists.

Privacy and Accountability Protections

Illinois law enforcement agencies recognize the importance of protecting both public safety and individual privacy. **ALPR systems operate under strict safeguards**, including state law, agency policies, restricted access, audit trails, retention requirements, and accountability procedures.

The vast majority of license plate reads never result in police action. Data is used only for legitimate law enforcement and public safety purposes and is not shared outside authorized uses consistent with applicable law and agency policies. It should be noted that **state law prohibits the use of ALPR data in immigration enforcement or investigations that interfere with women’s reproductive rights**.

ILACP has actively engaged various ALPR companies over the past year regarding enhancing their product’s audit tools and data safety guardrails to ensure it is used in strict accordance with state law. These discussions have already led to product enhancements now and plans for even more in the future.

Protecting Communities Through Responsible Technology

Criminals increasingly use vehicles to commit crimes, transport illegal weapons and narcotics, move stolen property, and evade detection across jurisdictional boundaries.

Law enforcement must be able to responsibly use modern investigative tools to address modern criminal activity.

Automatic License Plate Readers do not create a surveillance state, they create safer communities. ALPR helps locate missing children, identify violent offenders, recover stolen vehicles, and provide officers with the information needed to protect victims and solve crimes.

The **Illinois Association of Chiefs of Police** supports the responsible, transparent, and accountable use of ALPR technology because it saves lives, solves crimes, and helps make Illinois communities safer.