

RABUN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE  General Order Number: 13.05	Date of Issue 03/12/2026	Effective Date 03/12/2026	Revision Date
Subject: Automatic License Plate Recognition System	Amends:	Rescinds:	
Index as:			

PURPOSE

The purpose of this General Order is to establish the policies and procedures governing the use of Automatic License Plate Recognition (ALPR) systems by members of the Rabun County Sheriff's Office.

STATEMENT OF POLICY

It shall be the policy of the Rabun County Sheriff's Office to utilize Automatic License Plate Recognition (ALPR) technology as a lawful investigative and enforcement tool to assist in identifying vehicles associated with criminal activity, stolen vehicles, stolen license plates, and persons of interest.

ALPR systems shall only be used for legitimate law enforcement purposes and in accordance with applicable federal, state, and local laws as well as Rabun County Sheriff's Office policy.

Members authorized to operate ALPR systems shall receive appropriate training prior to use.

DISCUSSION

Automatic License Plate Recognition (ALPR) systems provide law enforcement with the ability to scan license plates and automatically compare them to law enforcement databases. This technology enhances the ability of deputies to identify stolen vehicles, wanted persons, and other vehicles of interest.

The system functions similarly to a deputy manually running a license plate through law enforcement databases but allows the process to occur automatically and more efficiently. The use of this technology improves situational awareness and investigative capabilities while assisting in crime prevention and recovery of stolen property.

ALPR technology must be used responsibly and in a manner that respects the rights and privacy of citizens.

DEFINITIONS

AUTOMATIC LICENSE PLATE RECOGNITION (ALPR) — A system consisting of cameras and software capable of capturing images of vehicle license plates and converting those images into computer-readable data. The system compares license plate information against law enforcement databases of vehicles or persons of interest.

ALPR systems may be mounted on patrol vehicles, trailers, or installed at stationary locations.

ALPR HIT — A notification generated when a scanned license plate matches information contained within a law enforcement database or “hot list.”

HOT LIST — A database containing license plates associated with law enforcement alerts. These lists may include:

- Stolen vehicles
- Stolen license plates
- Wanted persons
- Missing persons
- AMBER Alerts
- Endangered persons
- BOLO notifications
- Other law enforcement alerts entered into the National Crime Information Center (NCIC), Georgia Crime Information Center (GCIC), or other authorized law enforcement databases.

ALPR COORDINATOR — A person designated by the Sheriff to oversee the agency’s ALPR program. The coordinator is responsible for ensuring proper training, managing system access, maintaining compliance with policy, and addressing any misuse or complaints regarding ALPR operations.

I. AUTHORITY

A. Only ALPR devices approved by the Sheriff or his/her designee shall be authorized for use by the Rabun County Sheriff’s Office.

B. The Sheriff shall designate an ALPR Coordinator responsible for:

1. Overseeing the ALPR program;
2. Managing user access to the ALPR system;
3. Ensuring deputies receive required training;
4. Addressing misuse or complaints related to ALPR systems; and
5. Ensuring compliance with applicable state and federal regulations.

II. TRAINING

A. Deputies must complete approved training prior to operating ALPR equipment or accessing ALPR databases.

B. Training shall include:

1. Manufacturer recommendations including:
 - a. System setup
 - b. Maintenance procedures
 - c. Operational guidelines
2. NCIC and GCIC regulations and compliance requirements.
3. Legal considerations related to the use of ALPR systems.
4. Rabun County Sheriff's Office policies governing ALPR usage.

C. All training shall be documented and maintained by the agency.

III. USE OF ALPR SYSTEMS

A. ALPR systems shall be used only for legitimate law enforcement purposes, including but not limited to:

1. Identifying stolen vehicles or license plates;
2. Locating wanted or missing persons;
3. Identifying vehicles associated with criminal investigations;
4. AMBER Alerts or endangered person alerts;
5. BOLO notifications issued by law enforcement agencies; and
6. Investigative purposes related to criminal activity.

B. Members shall not operate ALPR systems in a manner intended to harass, intimidate, or unlawfully monitor members of the public.

IV. ALPR OPERATIONS

A. The ALPR system passively reads license plates of moving or parked vehicles using optical character recognition technology.

B. Hot lists are automatically updated to ensure deputies have the most current information available through NCIC, GCIC, and other authorized databases.

C. When an ALPR alert or "hit" occurs:

1. The system will generate an audible and visual notification.

2. The deputy shall visually verify that the license plate characters and state match the vehicle displayed.
3. If the plate information does not match, the alert shall be disregarded.
4. If the plate appears to match the alert, the deputy shall confirm the information through NCIC/GCIC or Rabun County Dispatch before taking enforcement action.

D. Deputies shall **not take enforcement action based solely on an ALPR alert**.

E. Due to database updates occurring throughout the day, confirmation through official databases is required before making arrests or initiating traffic enforcement actions.

F. While awaiting confirmation, deputies may conduct an investigative stop when supported by **reasonable articulable suspicion**, using appropriate officer safety precautions.

V. DATA COLLECTION AND RETENTION

A. ALPR systems automatically record license plate information along with associated data such as:

1. Date and time
2. GPS location
3. Vehicle image
4. License plate number

B. This information is stored within the ALPR system database.

C. Access to ALPR data shall be limited to authorized personnel for legitimate law enforcement purposes only.

D. All system access is logged and subject to audit.

E. ALPR data may be shared with other law enforcement agencies for legitimate law enforcement purposes upon approval from a supervisor or the ALPR Coordinator.

F. Data retention shall comply with applicable state law and Rabun County Sheriff's Office record retention schedules.

VI. CONFIDENTIALITY AND PUBLIC RECORDS

A. ALPR data is considered law enforcement sensitive information and shall not be disseminated outside the agency except for legitimate law enforcement purposes.

B. Requests for ALPR information through public records requests, subpoenas, or court orders shall be reviewed and processed in accordance with Georgia law and Rabun County Sheriff's Office procedures.

VII. MAINTENANCE AND INSPECTION

A. Deputies assigned to operate ALPR equipment are responsible for ensuring the system is functioning properly prior to their shift.

B. Operators shall:

1. Inspect the system for damage;
2. Ensure cameras are clean and unobstructed; and
3. Verify proper system operation.

C. Any malfunctions or damage shall be reported immediately to a supervisor.

D. Repairs, adjustments, or modifications to ALPR equipment shall only be performed by technicians approved by the Sheriff or his/her designee and in accordance with manufacturer recommendations.



By Order of the Sheriff: **Mark A. Gerrells**
Sheriff, Rabun County