



# Top Five Things You Should Know About Privacy and ALPR Systems

**Automated License Plate Recognition (ALPR) systems are becoming an indispensable tool for law enforcement, offering capabilities to track vehicles, aid in investigations, and enhance public safety.** However, the expanded use of ALPR technology brings significant privacy considerations and legal obligations that agencies must carefully navigate. Here are the top five things you should know about privacy and ALPR systems:

## 1 DATA SECURITY IS A CRITICAL CONCERN

ALPR systems generate and store vast amounts of data, including sensitive information such as vehicle locations, timestamps, and sometimes personal data. Ensuring this data is securely stored and protected from unauthorized access is paramount. House Bill 1081 allows ALPR data to be stored in the cloud with enhanced privacy measures, including end-to-end encryption provided by AWS GovCloud, a highly secure cloud platform designed for government use. Encryption ensures data is safeguarded both during transmission and at rest, mitigating risks of data breaches and unauthorized access.

## 2 CHAIN OF CUSTODY SHOULD BE TRANSPARENT

Since ALPR data may be used in legal proceedings, maintaining a clear chain of custody is essential. Every action taken with the data—from capture to analysis—must be logged and traceable to ensure the data's integrity and admissibility in court. HB 1081 includes strict auditing requirements, ensuring that all queries and access to ALPR data, including those by vendors, are logged. This transparency not only protects the integrity of the data but also fosters public trust and minimizes legal risks.

## 3 YOU CAN CUSTOMIZE DATA RETENTION POLICIES

A major privacy concern with ALPR systems is the duration for which data is retained. House Bill 1081 does not mandate specific retention times but allows agencies to customize their data retention policies based on local laws and operational needs. By tailoring retention periods, agencies can avoid retaining data longer than necessary, thus reducing the risks associated with prolonged data storage and ensuring compliance with legal requirements. Proper management of retention policies also helps in balancing privacy with public safety.

## 4 TRAINING ON PRIVACY IS A MUST

Adopting ALPR technology requires more than just setting up the system; it also demands comprehensive training for law enforcement personnel. Officers must be fully aware of the privacy implications and legal frameworks governing the use of ALPR systems. HB 1081 emphasizes the importance of privacy safeguards, making it critical for agencies to implement training programs that focus on privacy best practices, legal compliance, and responsible data management. Educating personnel helps reduce misuse risks and ensures ethical use of the technology.

## 5 YOU MUST BALANCE PUBLIC SAFETY WITH PRIVACY

While the public safety benefits of ALPR technology are clear, it is vital to balance these with respect for individual privacy rights. Features like data minimization, secure access controls, and vendor restrictions (prohibiting vendor access without explicit permission) are integral to responsible use. HB 1081 prohibits the sharing of ALPR data with federal or state agencies outside Maryland without specific authorization, ensuring data is controlled and used only for legitimate purposes. Agencies must continually evaluate their ALPR practices to ensure they align with both public safety goals and privacy considerations.

## CONCLUSION

As ALPR technology evolves, so do the privacy and legal landscapes surrounding it. Agencies must diligently address the associated privacy challenges by focusing on data security, maintaining a transparent chain of custody, implementing customizable data retention policies, and ensuring thorough training for personnel. House Bill 1081 provides the legal framework for these best practices, ensuring that law enforcement agencies can continue to enhance public safety while safeguarding individual privacy.

For agencies seeking an advanced solution that integrates these best practices, PULSAR by Utility™ is designed with privacy and security at its core. Offering reliable, compliant tools, PULSAR helps law enforcement protect both public safety and privacy. Visit our website for more information on how PULSAR can support your agency.