



December 27, 2017

Privacy Guidance: Agency Access to and Use of License Plate Reader Data and Technology

Direct questions about this guidance to the ICE Office of Information Governance and Privacy (202-732-3300).

I. Purpose and Applicability

As part of its criminal and civil law enforcement missions, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) relies on a variety of law enforcement tools and techniques to ensure public safety and national security. License plate reader (LPR) data and technology provide an important tool to support ICE mission activities. To maximize the use of this tool consistent with privacy and civil liberties requirements, this document provides ICE personnel guidance on the acceptable use of LPR data and technology within the scope of their official duties. This document serves as interim guidance until the publication of an ICE directive.

II. Definitions

LPR Technology. A system consisting of a high-speed camera(s) and related equipment mounted on vehicles or in fixed locations that automatically and without direct human control locates, focuses on, and photographs license plates and vehicles that come into range of the device. The system automatically converts the digital photographic images of license plates and associated data into a computer-readable format, i.e., a “read,” that contains LPR data.

LPR Data. Information derived from LPR technology, including but not limited to: (1) license plate number; (2) digital image of the license plate as well as the vehicle’s make and model; (3) state of registration; (4) camera identification (i.e., camera owner and type); (5) Global Positioning System (GPS) coordinates¹ or other location information taken at the time the information was captured; and (6) date and time of observation.

LPR Database/System. Any central data repository that is used exclusively for the storage of recorded license plate numbers and other LPR data. The database/system may also use front-end tools that allow users to view and analyze data in different ways.

Commercial LPR Services. Query-based access to a LPR database offered by commercial vendors that provides some or all LPR data based on license plate numbers. LPR data is uploaded to the database from a variety of governmental and private sources including, but not limited to, access control systems, such as toll road or parking lot cameras; vehicle repossession companies; and law

¹ GPS is a satellite-based navigation system that provides location and time information anywhere on or near the Earth where there is an unobstructed line of sight to four or more GPS satellites.