

The Timmins Police Service uses Automated License Plate Recognition (ALPR) cameras to automatically scan and detect license plates in the surrounding area of a police cruiser. This makes it more difficult for suspended drivers, drivers of stolen cars, and other vehicles with plates in poor standing to drive undetected. Under optimal conditions, the ALPR system is capable of scanning thousands of license plates per hour.

### **What does ALPR look like?**

A camera is mounted on the windshield of a police cruiser. The camera points forward and scans cars in front of the police vehicle.

### **How does it work?**

The license plate scanner continuously scans license plates as an officer drives around the city. The officer is notified when there is a “hit” and will take the appropriate enforcement action. For example, if the hit indicated a license plate was owned by a suspended driver, the officer would stop the vehicle to determine if the driver of the vehicle was that person.

### **What is a hot list?**

Officers who are assigned an ALPR-equipped vehicle have access to an Ontario Ministry of Transportation and Canadian Police Information Centre “hot list,” which is a data base that contains millions of license plates in poor standing. If the ALPR camera scans a license plate that is registered to the hot list, it produces a hit, alerting the officers on a monitor in the cruiser that the plate is in poor standing.

License plates that are in poor standing can fall into one or more of the following categories:

- Plates that belong to a driver with a suspended license
- Plates associated with stolen vehicles or that are reported stolen or missing
- Plates that have been suspended
- Plates with expired validation tags
- Plates associated with persons with outstanding Canada-wide warrants or who are reported missing

For a complete list of reasons, please [read the IPC's report](#).

The information stored in the hotlist is information that is already available to our officers if they were to run your license plate on the computer in their car themselves; it does not give them access to any new information.

## **What is a hit?**

A hit happens when a scanned license plate matches a license plate on the hotlist.

## **What is a non-hit?**

A non-hit happens when a scanned license plate does not match a plate on the hotlist.

## **What happens if you scan my license plate? Is my information stored in your system?**

If your license plate is a non-hit, the officer will not even be notified that your plate was scanned. All information related to a non-hit is deleted.

If your license plate is a hit, the officer will receive a notification of the hit and will receive basic information about the vehicle and the registered owner such as the make, model and colour of the vehicle, and the name, gender and date of birth of the owner.

The officer must then stop the vehicle and verify all information within the hit before taking any enforcement action. Hit information is retained in accordance with the [Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act \(MFIPPA\)](#).

## **Can the scanner take pictures or video of anything else?**

The scanner is part of the police cruiser's in-car video system. In-Car Camera systems are devices that are attached to a police cruiser to record audio and video for both outside facing activity and within the prisoner control area of the rear seat.

## **Privacy**

The Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario (IPC) has released [guidelines on the use of ALPRS by police services](#). The report ensures that the Police Service's use of this technology respects citizens privacy rights recognized under the [Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms](#), and that personal information is handled in a lawful manner.

Our collection, retention, use and disclosure of any personal information obtained from the ALPRS program is done so in compliance with the [Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act \(MFIPPA\)](#).

## **Questions**

If you have any questions or concerns related to this technology, please call 705-264-1201.