

Procedural Guidance

Automatic Number Plate Recognition System

Security Marking:

Not Protectively Marked

Please click on the hyperlink for related [Policy Statements](#).

1. Introduction

This policy explains the operational guidance for the use of Automatic Number Plate Recognition equipment (ANPR) and associated intelligence matters.

Reference documents relating to ANPR can be found at [\\hqfs01\groups\\$\ANPR policy docs](#)

For the purposes of governance, responsibility for ANPR sits with the Chief Superintendent, Operations Department .

2. General Principle

Avon and Somerset Constabulary is committed to the use of intelligence led policing in the fight against crime by ensuring ANPR systems are effectively deployed to promote public safety and minimise the fear of road related crime or disorder.

3. Legality

The legal basis for this policy comes from:

[Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984](#)
[The Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000](#)
[Data Protection Act 1998](#)
[Road Traffic act 1988](#)
[Freedom of Information Act 2000](#)

4. Administrative Procedures

ANPR is a technology that automatically reads vehicle registration marks (VRMs). An ANPR camera takes an image of a number plate and passes this to a reader which uses Optical Character Recognition (OCR) software to 'read' the VRM. In some cases an overview image of the vehicle is also captured. The resultant image(s) and textual data are transmitted to a Back Office Facility (BOF) for storage and retrieval. The VRMs are compared against records held on databases and if a match is found an alarm is generated. Guidance on searching and retrieving data are contained later in this policy. Avon and Somerset Constabulary deploy fixed and mobile ANPR assets. Access to mobile systems is password controlled and ONLY those officers who are authorised may use these systems.

- 4.1** Staff who use in car systems must be aware of the need to ensure the security of the ANPR equipment and if there is any concern because of the area or circumstances the vehicle should be kept within view of the operating staff. If the vehicle is left unattended for any reason the ANPR system will be switched off and the vehicle locked and alarmed
- 4.2** If a vehicle fitted with ANPR is required to go to an outside repairer the databases MUST first be deleted from the computer. If required, advice on how to delete databases can be obtained from the Force ANPR Manager or any ANPR trainer.
- 4.3** ANPR cars are fitted with a screen that shows details of the vehicle checks. When dealing with members of the public it is common practice to invite that person to sit in the rear of the police vehicle while the necessary procedures are completed. When a member of the public is in the rear of the police vehicle officers will ensure that the screen is blanked by means of the button provided for that purpose.
- 4.4** To comply with The Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986, vehicles fitted with Cleartone mobile ANPR have a software enabled motion lock to prevent the driver from being distracted whilst the vehicle is in motion. Each time the vehicle moves the motion lock will operate and the display will revert to the radio screen. An indication will appear at the top of the screen to show that motion lock is active. Motion lock will stop when the vehicle has been stationary for more than 15 seconds and the indicator will go off. The user is able at any time to override the motion lock but the system will automatically reset itself each time the vehicle stops for more than 15 seconds. If motion lock is overridden the indicator will change to red and the event will be recorded in the computer event log.

5. Back Office Facility (BOF II)

ANPR data is stored on a Back Office Facility referred to as BOF II. This system is classified as RESTRICTED and is of a national standard.

Data is retained and weeded in accordance with National guidelines as follows:

Reads	
Text Data	2 Years
Plate patch image	2 Years
Overview image	90 Days
Hits	
Text Data	5 Years
Plate patch image	5 Years
Overview image	2 Years

Staff carrying out searches must be vetted to CTC level before being granted access. The ability to search the database is restricted to members of the Intelligence Community and is limited to 90 days.. Staff carrying out searches should record details of the search, including reason in a source document.

Searches beyond 90 days may be requested using the form 161 *ANPR/BOF Data Check Request* available on Outlook, submitted to #ANPR (search).

Requests to search other forces' data should use the same form, again forwarding to #ANPR (search).

Completed forms 161 will be retained for 2 years for the purpose of audit.

The rationale and time scales for searching the database are clearly defined in National Standards and are as follows:

Period Since Capture of Data	Authority Required	Access Restrictions
Up to 90 days	Self Authorised	None for staff with permission to search the system.
91 days to 1 year	Inspector	Access for Major/Serious Crime and Terrorism purposes only.
1 year to 2 years	Superintendent	Access for Most Serious Crime and Terrorism purposes only.

BOF II is subject to audit. User accounts are reviewed to ensure that there is still a policing requirement to access the database; user accounts found to be inactive for more than 3 months will be suspended.

Evidence

The ability to create evidence from ANPR is restricted to ANPR staff. All requests for evidential submission of ANPR data should be submitted to #ANPR (support) and no evidence should be used without reference to the Force ANPR Manager.

ANPR is a RESTRICTED system. Under no circumstances will images and/or other data be copied and pasted into other documents without consent of the ANPR Manager.

6. Databases

ANPR systems use a combination of national and local databases.

The primary source of Police intelligence for ANPR should be PNC. An ACT report will ensure that the intelligence reaches the widest audience in the quickest time. INF markers are NOT visible to ANPR. Information on how to place reports on PNC can be found at [\\hqfs01\groups\\$\ANPR policy docs](#)

- 6.1** The Avon and Somerset local database – asintel – is maintained by ANPR staff and is the responsibility of the Force ANPR Manager. Intelligence which is intended for inclusion on asintel should be indicated as such by checking the 'ANPR Interest' flag within Guardian. This 'flag' is for use by Intelligence trained staff **ONLY**. This is then subjected to checking by ANPR staff before being entered onto the database. Unless there are extenuating circumstances, local database entries will be weeded after 3 months. Local databases may be created for specific operations. Guidance on creating local databases may be sought from the Force ANPR Manager or by emailing #ANPR (support).

- 6.2** Firearms markers will NOT be placed on a local hotlist. Intelligence regarding Firearms MUST be submitted to the Force Incident Manager for risk assessment prior to creating a report on PNC
- 6.3** Certain departments have the ability to create and manage their own databases. To maintain accuracy these databases should be subject to weekly review, and systems should be put in place to ensure compliance.

7. Authorities for Deployment

The Human Rights Act 1998 allows an individual's right to privacy to be engaged where the policing activity is both lawful and necessary in order to safeguard national security and public safety, prevent disorder and crime or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.

- 7.1** The use of nationally verified databases and local databases created from intelligence verified using the 5x5x5 system will ensure that the use of ANPR equipment is a proportionate operational response. Where a vehicle equipped with ANPR is engaged on general monitoring no authority under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) is required. If ANPR equipment is deployed to target a specific vehicle, person or group of persons a RIPA authority will be required and the equipment will not be deployed without such an authority being obtained prior to the anticipated deployment. (Advice on surveillance authorities can be obtained from the Force Authorities Unit, Force Intelligence Bureau).

8. Health and Safety

When deciding on an appropriate site to park the ANPR vehicle the officers will carry out a risk assessment and ensure that it is legal and safe to park it in the chosen position. The stopping team will also carry out a risk assessment at the selected stopping site and will ensure that appropriate signing is placed to protect the traveling public, members of the public who are directed into the stopping site and officers engaged at the stopping site.

9. Using ANPR

Information on how to obtain ANPR services through the Tactical Crime Unit of RPU is contained in Appendix A, together with a list of key roles and contact details.

- 9.1** ANPR is a versatile investigative tool for both pre-planned and post incident scenes. Advice on how to use ANPR is available from the Force ANPR Manager on 63676

10. Tactics

There are no tactical issues in this guidance

11. How to Complain

Complaints about this policy may be made via:

- [Police Misconduct and Complaints against Members of Staff Policy](#)
- [Direction and Control Complaints Policy](#)

Procedural Guidance Information	
Procedural Guidance Owner:	C/Supt Operations Dept.
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Guidance notes when requesting ANPR

ANPR is a trawling tool best suited to use in high volume traffic areas. The average ratio of 'hits' to 'reads' is around 3%, therefore the greater the volume of traffic the higher the number of 'hits'.

The Tactical Crime Unit is Operations Department's proactive ANPR Unit and is available to Districts through the PAT process. The unit comprises uniform and covert arms, each with a Sergeant and 6 officers with a total of 2 dedicated ANPR vans and 8 ANPR equipped patrol cars, both marked and unmarked.