Automated license plate readers ("ALPRs") are computer-controlled, high-speed camera systems that automatically capture images of license plates that come into view.
ALPR Components

1. Plate Capture Cameras
   Day or night, these powerful infrared-equipped cameras deliver a high-contrast image to the ALPR Processor for recognition.

2. ALPR Processor
   Recognizes the license plate number and compares it to Hotlists.

3. VeriPlate Application
   Allows the driver to view alerts, add to the local database and more.
ALPR Cameras

Types of ALPR Cameras:

- Fixed locations - like streetlights
- Semi-stationary vehicles - like truck trailers
- Mobile – usually police vehicles.
ALPR Processors/Apps

What is it and how does it work?

After a camera captures an image of a car and its surroundings, the image of the license plate is converted into alphanumerical data.
ALPR

What is it and how does it work?

ALPRs capture the time and place where a license plate was seen for police departments, which then use the data in real time to make traffic stops or store it for future use.

In many ALPR systems, the license plate data is automatically compared against a “hot list” of vehicles of interest. The ALPR then alerts police, who may stop the car.
Stored data may allow police to trace a person’s past movements, determine patterns of behavior, and plot vehicles that were present at a particular location and time.

Historic data may reveal intimate details:

- Where you work
- Where you live & with whom
- What doctors you see
- Who you associate with
EFF PRAs to Oakland PD show ALPR mainly deployed in low-income communities of color.
ALPR-related cases:

6th Circuit: *US v. Ellison* (462 F.3d 557 (2006)): No REP in LP number

9th Circuit: *US v. Diaz-Castaneda* (494 F.3d 1146 (2007)): Court noted consensus among the circuits that single-instance ALPR database check ≠ search
ALPR-related cases:

9th Circuit: **Green v. City & Cnty. of San Francisco** (751 F.3d 1039 (2014)): Court held that genuine issue of material fact existed as to whether officer had reasonable suspicion to make a stop despite an ALPR hit.

GA Court of Appeals: **Hernandez-Lopez v. State** (319 Ga. App. 662 (2013)): Court held that an ALPR hit indicating an outstanding warrant created reasonable suspicion to justify a traffic stop.
How do I fight ALPR evidence?

File an MTS – unverified ALPR hit alone (i.e. software match without visual confirmation) may not justify a stop (Green)

In some states, ALPR use must meet statutory requirements. Some state laws may provide suppression remedy for statutory violations: https://eff.org/ALPRstatelaws
Persistent ALPR use to track a person over a prolonged period of time may implicate 4th Amendment protections and should arguably require a warrant supported by probable cause. Analogize to *US v. Jones*, 565 US 400 (2012) & Cell Site Location Information cases. (see CSLI one-pager)
ALPR

How do I learn more?

ALPR basics: https://eff.org/ALPRprimer

Blog on types of ALPR: https://eff.org/ALPRtypes

ALPR FAQs: https://eff.org/ALPRFAQ