



RESOLUTION 2019-01

The Public Safety and Ontario Law Enforcement Need for Both Front and Rear Licence Plates with Validation Stickers

Preamble:

The purpose of licence plates (number plates) is to allow the identification of the vehicle and the registered owner at a glance. After a crime, traffic offence or security issue the need by law enforcement to accurately identify vehicles is critical. Police frequently make requests to the public to assist with providing CCTV and dash video to help identify vehicles and occupants. During Amber Alerts¹ vehicle licence plates are key pieces of information. This type of community engagement helps build police legitimacy which builds public support for, and cooperation with, the police's efforts to fight crime.

WHEREAS the public expects their law enforcement organizations to identify and solve crimes quickly. With over 415,000 km's of paved roads in Canada² and recognizing the realities that vehicles are often used in the commission of crimes, all means of identifying the vehicle, including both the front and rear licence plates, are essential.

WHEREAS with the prolific expansion of CCTV, dash cameras, forward-facing cameras on transit vehicles, remote cameras on buildings and in every cellular phone, investigators are looking for the "cyber fingerprint" left at or near crime scenes. Often the front and rear licence plates provide information to further police investigations.

WHEREAS in Ontario, all motor vehicles other than a motorcycle and motor-assisted bicycle, require number plates to be "attached and exposed in a conspicuous position on the front and rear of the motor vehicle". – HTA O.Reg 628 9(3), no change to current legislation is required.

WHEREAS Ontario is moving towards expanding the use of camera technology in law and traffic enforcement with the introduction of recent bills. Bill 174, *Cannabis, Smoke-Free Ontario and Road Safety Statute Law Amendment Act, 2017*³ is looking at adding cameras to school buses to catch drivers who illegally pass, putting children at risk. Bill 65, *Safer School Zones Act, 2017*⁴ introduced the opportunity of Automated Speed Enforcement in school and community safety zones. Many municipalities are considering implementation⁵. The province is also allowing municipalities to expand the well-established Red Light Program. At the root of each of these programs is the identification of the vehicle by the licence plate.

WHEREAS front and rear licence plates serve as the best way to quickly and accurately identify a motor vehicle travelling towards or away from police or a

would-be witness. Ontario's Privacy Commissioner recently provided guidance to police agencies who choose to deploy Automated Licence Plate Reader (ALPR) technology as a tool to detect crime and *Highway Traffic Act* violations⁶. Considering the elimination of the front plate will reduce the opportunity to identify a vehicle by a licence plate by 50%."

WHEREAS validation stickers attached to the licence plate provides police with a heads up and instant way to confirm valid vehicle registration. Elimination of this tool, without providing an equally reliable method of detection, would have a negative effect on law enforcements ability to detect and investigate violations.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police echoes the position of the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) which passed a similar resolution in 2018⁷ by recognizing, "the efficient and reliable identification of vehicles is a critical element of national, state [provincial] and local safety and security, supports the issuance of retro-reflective front *and* rear licence plates with clearly identifiable registration numbers".

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that as society moves further into the internet of things the ability to identify any vehicle on the road becomes that much more important from a public safety, investigative and evidentiary perspective. The risk of removing the front licence plate creates a greater threat to public safety and homeland security by not being able to quickly identify vehicles involved in *criminality, terrorism and radicalism*. When it comes to such extremism, police require all the necessary tools in identifying those responsible for such horrendous crimes and as mentioned modes of transportation is a key factor for travel and having the ability to identify through the means of a front and rear licence plate supports public security.

- 1- Ontario Provincial Police web page – The Amber Alert Program
<https://www.opp.ca/index.php?id=115&lng=en&entryid=56b75d598f94aca05828d172>
- 2- Government of Canada web page – Road Transportation
<http://www.tc.gc.ca/eng/policy/anre-menu-3042.htm>
- 3- Bill 174, Cannabis, Smoke-Free Ontario and Road Safety Statute Law Amendment Act, 2017
<https://www.ola.org/en/legislative-business/bills/parliament-41/session-2/bill-174>
- 4- Bill 65, Safer School Zones Act, 2017
<https://www.ola.org/en/legislative-business/bills/parliament-41/session-2/bill-65>
- 5- City of Toronto web page – Automated Speed Enforcement Pilot
<https://www.toronto.ca/services-payments/streets-parking-transportation/road-safety/vision-zero/safety-initiatives/programs-pilots/automated-speed-enforcement-pilot/>

- 6- Guidance on the Use of Automated Licence Plate Recognition Systems by Police Services – July 2017
https://www.ipc.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/alpr_systems.pdf
- 7- International Association of Chiefs of Police 2018 Resolutions, page 18-19
https://www.theiacp.org/sites/default/files/View%20the%20recently%20adopted%202018%20Resolutions.pdf?utm_source=Informz&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Informz%20Email