



A Report by the American Civil Liberties Union of North Carolina - February 2015

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Surveillance Technology in North Carolina	4
Automatic License Plate Readers	4
Unmanned Aircraft (Drones)	5
GPS Cell Phone Tracking	6
Cell Site Simulators (Stingrays)	6
Police Body Worn Cameras	
Conclusion	8
What Surveillance Tools Do Your Local Police Use?	9





Introduction

Through a series of public records requests and ongoing investigations, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of North Carolina has uncovered a great deal of information about various types of surveillance technology that law enforcement agencies in the state have been amassing.

Carolina 1aw enforcement North agencies are using automatic license plate readers to snap photos of every car that drives by one of these cameras in 11 jurisdictions; using your cell phone to track your location in more than 50 cities or counties; watching citizens with countless eyes in the sky in the form of surveillance cameras, and soon will be able to monitor citizens with unmanned drones. As the ACLU investigated all of these various technologies, one theme emerged: Government agencies making up the rules as they go along without any uniform standard policy or set of rules that would prevent these technologies from being abused to invade North Carolinians' privacy.

New technology is always coming on the scene. While surveillance drones are poised to take over the nation's skies, recent revelations about a technology that has been around for years – Stingrays – show just how little we know about the way government agencies track law abiding North Carolinians' movements. Meanwhile, devices such as police body cameras, which hold the potential to improve relations between police and the public, could also jeopardize the privacy of both law enforcement officers and the communities they are sworn to protect and serve without proper safeguards.

The Fourth Amendment to the United States Constitution protects Americans from unreasonable searches by the government without a warrant, but how is law enforcement applying that standard to new technology?

More importantly, why are they acquiring and operating this technology entirely in the dark without public oversight?

Automatic License Plate Readers

Automatic license plate readers (ALPRs) are cameras, similar to red-light cameras that may be mounted to stop lights, buildings, or mobile units such as police cruisers to capture images of license plates and store data on their time and location.

ALPRs can capture thousands of license plates per minute, scan the license plate number for any red flags and store the photo indefinitely with a time and location stamp. By widespread use of ALPRs, through the stored data, government agencies could effectively map out an individual's location and movements over a period of time. Without constraints on how that information can be used, or how long law enforcement can store it, location data is ripe for abuse.

As one federal appeals court judge wrote, a person's location data might reveal "whether he is a weekly church goer, a heavy drinker, a regular at the gym, an unfaithful husband, an outpatient receiving medical treatment, an associate of particular individuals or political groups – and not just one such fact about a person, but all such facts."

In order to protect this data from abuse, the ACLU-NC supports legislation that would prohibit the retention of license plate information collected by ALPRs for more than 10 days unless law enforcement files a

request for preservation of the data with a court.

In 2012, the ACLU-NC conducted a public records request of 63 North Carolina law enforcement agencies that revealed at least 11 jurisdictions, ranging in size from Wrightsville Beach to Charlotte-Mecklenburg, where ALPRs are already in operation without a state law in place to regulate their use.²

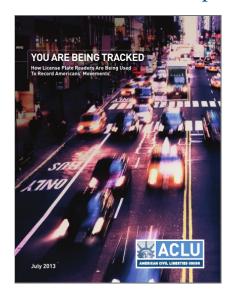
The investigation found that those agencies keep ALPR data for varying lengths of time, from 30 days to "indefinitely." As a result, many departments are keeping innocent people's location information stored for years or even indefinitely, regardless of whether there is any suspicion of a crime.

The Washington Police Department reported 585,000 plate reads between April 2010 and August 2012, approximately 20,000 per month, while the High Point Police Department reported 70,289 plate reads between August 2011 and June 2012. Of those reads, only .08% resulted in "hits," such as a stolen car or suspect.

There have been recent efforts to expand the use of ALPRs to state-owned property through HB 348 Public Safety Technology/ State Right of Ways. This bill was adopted by the House during the 2014 legislative session, but did not advance in the Senate.



ALPRs can capture thousands of license plates per minute, scan the license plate number for any red flags and store the photo indefinitely with a time and location stamp.



Read the Report: www.aclu.org/alpr

^{1.} U.S. v. Maynard, 615 F. 3d 544, 562 (CADC 2010)

^{2.} Read each agency's response at www.aclu.org/maps/automatic-license-plate-reader-documents-interactive-map

Unmanned Aircraft (Drones)

ment surveillance of the people.

to purchase, operate, and maintain, creating a natural barrier to excessive government surveillance, but drones equipped with surveillance equipment are much less expensive amending the state's law so that the and law enforcement around the use of drones would be limited to country have voiced their eagerness instances where there are specific to put drones to the test, including and articulable grounds to believe here in North Carolina. In 2006, that a drone will collect evidence for example, the Gaston County relating to a specific crime or where Police Department purchased a government officials have obtained drone with \$30,000 in drug forfei- a probable cause warrant. Limited ture funds,3 while in 2013, the exceptions may be considered, such Monroe City Council approved as search and rescue or other timespending \$44,000 in drug forfeiture limited emergency situations where funds to buy a battery-powered particular individuals' lives are at mini drone, complete with a risk. Seventy-two percent of North rotating infrared camera,4 before Carolina voters support a warrant shelving the plan after objections requirement when using a drone to from the public.5

Unmanned aircraft, often times While surveillance drones could referred to as "drones," present a play an important role in law significant new avenue for govern- enforcement operations, their use should be carefully regulated to Manned aircraft are expensive prevent covert mass surveillance, including surveillance of First Amendment-protected activities such as demonstrations or rallies.

> **ACLU-NC** The supports collect information against an individual, according to a 2014 poll.6



Recent Legislation

The 2014 state budget (SB 744) included the language of HB 1099, a bill that ostensibly sought to regulate the use of drones but contained a laundry list of government exceptions to warrant requirements, which could be used to invade the privacy of average North Carolinians.

The ACLU-NC opposed HB 1099 because it was overly vague, carved out too many exceptions to warrant requirements, and could also prohibit First Amendment-protected use of drones, such as art or journalism. HB 4 was introduced in January 2015 to clarify the law.

72 percent of North Carolina voters support requiring police to obtain a warrant before collecting information on a person with a drone.

-Public Policy Polling, March 2014

^{3.} The drone was shelved soon after purchase because of mechanical problems. See: Gasto n Police Department's Dormant Drone Draws Notice, WCNC. (March 10, 2013), www.wcnc.com/story/news/local/2014/07/02/10979942/

^{4.} Monroe City Council OKs \$44,000 drone for police department, WCNC. (March 7, 2013) www.wcnc.com/story/news/local/2014/07/02/10979616/

^{5.} Monroe shelves plan for police drones, WCNC. (March 27, 2013) http://www.wcnc.com/story/news/lccal/2014/07/02/10984740/

^{6.} Public Policy Polling. March 2014. http://www.aduofnc.org/blog/poll-72-of-north-carolina-voters-support-warrant-requirement-for-dronesurveillance.html

Cell Phone Location Tracking

Location information is data about a person's whereabouts that is monitored and stored through cell phones and the Global Positioning System (GPS) to track a person's movements. Cell phone or GPS location information can provide real time location of a person and monitor if a person is stationary or moving. It provides data about where someone has travelled, which phone companies often store for at least a year, yet most law enforcement agencies surveyed in 2011 reported that they do not seek a warrant to obtain such information.7

ACLU-NC public records requests discovered that there is no standard statewide policy or

regulation on how information regarding a person's location is obtained from cell phone companies.8

In Wilson County, for example, police obtained cell phone tracking data where it is "relevant and material" to an ongoing investigation – a standard much lower than probable cause. The ACLUNC is urging the General Assembly to pass legislation requiring that law enforcement obtain a probable cause warrant in order to procure such information, either directly or from a service provider such as a cell phone company.

A 2012 poll showed that 74 percent of North Carolina voters would support such a law.⁹



More than 50 state law enforcement agencies obtain cell phone location data from providers, but few obtain warrants beforehand.

Cell Site Simulators (Stingrays)

Cell site simulator devices, also known as "Stingrays," mimic cell service provider towers and trick any cell phone in the vicinity into broadcasting back to the device its unique identifying number and other data. Because of the extreme secrecy surrounding the use of Stingrays, it is unclear exactly how much data is reported back to law enforcement using the device, but it is certain that Stingrays can pinpoint an individual cell phone's location down to a room in a building. By tracking the transmissions from cell phones, Stingrays can locate phones with

precision and record their movements over time. Stingrays do not target just one individual, but instead gather information and interfere with the phones of any innocent bystanders in the vicinity. Because Stingrays do not—and, to the best of the ACLU's knowledge, cannot—target only a single individual, even were law enforcement to obtain a search warrant to use a Stingray to locate an individual, the technology presents serious Fourth Amendment concerns.

The secrecy surrounding use of

this technology is extremely concerning; according to the Associated Press, the Obama administration has instructed local police departments to not disclose their use of Stingrays.¹⁰ The ACLU has confirmed that at least four North Carolina law enforcement agencies -Charlotte, Durham, Raleigh, and Wilmington - own and operate Stingrays.¹¹ Court records obtained by the Charlotte Observer showed that Charlotte-Mecklenburg police have sought permission to use Stingrays more than 500 times since 2010, or about twice a week.¹²

^{7.} www.acluofnc.org/blog/aclu-releases-documents-detailing-cell-phone-tracking-by-north-carolina-police-departments.html

^{8.} More than 40 N.C. law enforcement agencies responded to the request.

^{9.} Public Policy Polling, June 2012. www.aduofnc.org/blog/poll-strong-majority-of-north-carolina-voters-would-support-cell-phone-privacy-law.html 10. Obama administration pushing local cops to stay mum on surveillance, Associated Press. (June 14, 2014)

www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/06/12/obama-local-police-surveillance_n_5489706.html

^{11.} https://www.aclu.org/maps/stingray-tracking-devices-whos-got-them

^{12.} Mecklenburg County District Attorney's Office to review surveillance cases, Charlotte Observer. (November 21, 2014) www.charlotteobserver.com/2014/11/20/5330929/mecklenburg-county-district-attorneys.html

At least four North Carolina law enforcement agencies – Charlotte, Durham, Raleigh, and Wilmington – own and operate Stingrays, but their use is shrouded in secrecy.



Photo credit: US Patent & Trademark Office

Police Body Worn Cameras

Body worn cameras are video and audio recording devices that can clip to an officer's uniform or be worn as a headset to document an officer's interaction with the public and other officers. Since the events in Ferguson, Missouri, unfolded last summer, there has been widespread law enforcement interest in police body worn cameras.

While these cameras do present a threat to privacy, with the right policies in place, these cameras serve the dual purpose of protecting law enforcement officers from false accusations while allowing the public an avenue to document officers' actions and hold bad actors accountable.

Once again, law enforcement agencies are beginning to implement the use of body cameras in North Carolina without any guidance or statewide rules regulating them.

Of utmost importance when developing policies to regulate the use of body cameras, the ACLU urges clear guidelines about when the body cameras should be activated and requirements that once the body camera is activated, it must be allowed to record an entire interaction without officer interference. Mandatory training and effective discipline should be part of policies governing the use of body cameras. Anything less allows officers to effectively edit recordings they capture on-the-fly and eviscerates the body cameras' potential to serve as a check on bad government actors.

Policymakers exploring the use of body cameras should consider making sure that citizens are notified that they may be recorded and that policies regulating the use of the body cameras are made public, including how the recordings may be accessed by civilians.

Additionally, as many of the recordings captured will be of perfectly innocent interactions between law enforcement and community members, there must be clear retention guidelines for both recordings of potential criminal activity or police

misconduct, as well as innocent behavior.

These retention guidelines should also be accessible by the public so that North Carolinians may actually make use of this government accountability tool.

'According to Taser
International, one of two
major body camera
suppliers, approximately
50 agencies in North
Carolina currently use its
Axon-model cameras.'

-CMPD evaluating procedures for body cameras on officers, WCNC. (December 3, 2014)

Conclusion

More than 70 local and county law enforcement agencies across North Carolina, covering more than 7 million North Carolinians, use one or several types of surveillance technology to track the movements of North Carolinians without statewide laws to prevent abuse.

As technology advances, so must our laws, in order to preserve the constitutional guarantee of privacy in the 21st century. When the Founding Fathers the Fourth wrote Amendment, automatic license plate readers, Stingrays, and GPS tracking did not exist. But today, as it did in the 18th century, the government's ability to conduct unwarranted surveillance on citizens still poses a grave threat to our liberty. If the government knows where you are, it knows who you are, and what you are doing - even when it's none of the government's business.

There may be legitimate reasons for law enforcement to conduct surveillance, but to-day's technology should be subject to the same constitutional limitations that restrains government surveillance in many other circumstances – the Fourth Amendment warrant requirements.





Moreover, the government should not be amassing a vast database of information about who North Carolinians talk to, or where they go and when.

Information gathered by tools like ALPRs and Stingrays about North Carolinians who are not implicated in any criminal activity should certainly not be retained indefinitely.

The North Carolina General Assembly should act to limit the gathering of this sensitive information and place common-sense limits on its retention in order to protect North Carolinians' privacy from this state of surveillance.

What Surveillance Tools Do Your Local Police Use?

County/City	Population ¹³	Police Body Cameras ¹⁴	GPS Cell Phone Tracking ¹⁵	Automatic License Plate Readers ¹⁶	Drones	Facial Recognition Software	Stingrays ¹⁷
Albemarle Police	15,903	O 18					
Alamance Co. Sheriff	154,378		0				
Anson Co. Sheriff	26,162		0				
Apex Police	42,214						
Asheville Police	87,236	19	0				
Avery Co. Sheriff	17,713						
Beaufort Co. Sheriff	47,464						
Brunswick Co. Sherff	115,301	20	0				
Buncombe Co. Sheriff	247,912	21	0				
Burke Co. Sheriff	89,842						
Burlington Police	51,510	22					

- 13. Populations based on U.S. Census data available at http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/37/3702140.html.
- 14. Includes agencies that are in the process of obtaining cameras or undergoing a pilot program.
- 15. https://www.aclu.org/protecting-civil-liberties-digital-age/cell-phone-location-tracking-documents-north-carolina
- 16. http://www.acluofnc.org/blog/investigation-shows-location-information-being-kept-on-thousands-of-innocent-north-carolinians.html
- 17. https://www.aclu.org/maps/stingray-tracking-devices-whos-got-them
- 18. CMPD evaluating procedures for body cameras on offices, WCNC. (December 3, 2014) www.wcnc.com/story/news/local/2014/12/03/cmpd-evaluating-procedures-for-body-cameras-on-officers/19821925/
- 19. City police want more wearable body cameras, Asheville Citizen-Times. (October 8, 2014) www.citizen-times.com/story/news/local/2014/10/08/city-police-want-wearable-cameras/16925709/
- 20. Brunswick County to equip deputies with body cameras, Wilmington Star News. (November 25, 2014) www.starnewsonline.com/article/20141125/ARTICLES/141129824
- 21. Buncombe patrol deputies to wear body camera, Asheville Citizen-Times. (October 31, 2014) www.citizen-times.com/story/news/crime/2014/10/31/buncombe-patrol-deputies-wear-body-cams/18254833/
- 22. Triad law enforcement already eyeing body cameras ahead of national push, My Fox 8. (August 15, 2014) myfox8.com/2014/08/15/triad-law-enforcement-already-eyeing-body-cameras-ahead-of-national-push/

County/City	Population	Police Body Cameras	GPS Cell Phone Tracking	Automatic License Plate Readers	Drones	Facial Recognition Software	Stingrays
Caldwell Co. Sheriff	81,990		0				
Camden Co. Sheriff	154,378		0				
Carrboro Police	20,908	23					
Carteret Co. Sheriff	68,434						
Carthage Police	2,205	24					
Cary Police	151,088						
Caswell Co. Sheriff	23,190		0				
Catawba Co. Sheriff	154,810						
Chapel Hill Police	59,635		0				
Charlotte- Mecklenburg Police	990,997	25	0	0			0
Chatham Co. Sheriff	66,817		0				
Cherryville Police	5,862	26					
Concord Police	83,506		0				

^{23.} Carrboro Police request body cameras, Chapelboro.com. (June 1, 2014) chapelboro.com/news/safety/police-cameras-proposal/24. Michael Brown shooting sparks interest in body cameras for NC police forces, WNCN. (August 26, 2014)

www.wncn.com/story/26378615/michael-brown-shooting-sparks-interest-in-body-cameras-for-nc-police-forces

25. Charlotte City Council votes to spend \$7 million on body cams for police, Charlotte Observer. (January 27, 2015)

www.charlotteobserver.com/2015/01/26/5472398/charlotte-city-council-to-vote.html

^{26.} Cherryville PD: Officers required to wear video cameras, WSOC-TV. (March 10, 2014) www.wsoctv.com/news/news/local/cherryville-pd-officers-required-wear-video-camera/nd9N3/

County/City	Population	Police Body Cameras	GPS Cell Phone Tracking	Automatic License Plate Readers	Drones	Facial Recognition Software	Stingrays
Cumberland Co. Sheriff	319,431	27					
Davidson Police	10,944	28					
Davie Co. Sheriff	41,554		0				
Durham City Tax Administrator	245,475			0			
Durham Police	245,475						0
Edgecombe Co. Sheriff	55,574		0				
Fayetteville Police	204,408		0	0			
Forsyth Co. Sheriff	361,220	29					
Garner Police	26,772	30					
Gaston Co. Sheriff	209,420						
Gaston Co. Police	209,420				31		
Gastonia Police	73,209		0				
Goldsboro Police	36,306		0				

^{27.} Brown shooting, WNCN.

^{28.} Davidson Police first in Mecklenburg to use body cameras, WBTV. (October 21, 2014) www.wbtv.com/story/26849350/davidson-police-first-in-mecklenburg-county-using-body-cameras

^{29.} Sheriff's Office plans to get 25 body cameras, Winston-Salem Journal. (June 16, 2014) www.journalnow.com/news/local/sheriff-s-office-plans-to-get-body-cameras/article_8bbd0a2c-6830-5676-92e0-93eb0e179ecd.html

^{30.} Triangle law enforcement agencies testing body cameras, News & Observer. (December 10, 2014) www.newsobserver.com/2014/12/10/4393904_triangle-law-agencies-testing.html

^{31.} Gaston's dormant drone draws notice, WCNC. (March 10, 2013) http://www.wcnc.com/story/news/local/2014/07/02/10979942/

County/City	Population	Police Body Cameras	GPS Cell Phone Tracking	Automatic License Plate Readers	Drones	Facial Recognition Software	Stingrays
Greensboro Police	279,639	32	0	0			
Greenville Police	89,130		0	0			
Guilford Co. Sheriff	506,610		0				
Halifax Co. Sheriff	53,453		0				
Hertford Co. Sheriff	24,431		0				
Hickory Police	40,361	33					
High Point Police	107,741		0	0			
Hillsborough Police	6,381	34					
Hoke Co. Sheriff	51,322	35					
Huntersville Police	50,458						
Jacksonville Police	69,079		0	0			
Jones. Co. Sheriff	10,215						

^{32.} Greensboro police ask for more body cameras, News & Record. (August 19, 2013)

www.news-record.com/news/local_news/greensboro-police-ask-for-more-body-cameras/article_552c1de6-08e7-11e3-924e-001a4bcf6878.html

^{33.} Hickory police officers fitted for new body cameras, WSOC-TV. (September 25, 2014)

www.wsoctv.com/news/news/local/hickory-police-officers-fitted-new-body-cameras/nhT47/34. *Triangle law enforcement agencies testing body cameras*, Chapel Hill News. (December 21, 2014)

www.chapelhillnews.com/2014/12/21/4420318_triangle-law-agencies-testing.html?rh=1 35. *Hoke County sheriff equipping lawmen with body cameras*, Fayetteville Observer. (August 21, 2014) www.fayobserver.com/news/local/hokecounty-sheriff-equipping-lawmen-with-body-cameras/article_9e3d046b-5b72-5be2-a9c7-036d41bb0b8e.html

County/City	Population	Police Body Cameras	GPS Cell Phone Tracking	Automatic License Plate Readers	Drones	Facial Recognition Software	Stingrays
Kinston Police	21,677	36					
Knightdale Police	13,291	37					
Lenoir Co. Sheriff	58,914		0				
Moore Co. Sheriff	91,587		0				
Mt. Olive Police	4,589	38					
New Hanover Co. Sheriff	213,267	39	0				
Onslow Co. Sheriff	185,220		0				
Orange Co. Sheriff	140,352		0				
Raleigh Police	431,746		0	0		40	0
Randolph Co. Sheriff	142,577		0				
Rockingham Co. Sheriff	91,878		0				
Sampson Co. Sheriff	64,150		0				
Spring Lake Police	13,037	41					
Stanly Co. Sheriff	60,635		0	JCT (December 3			

^{36.} Police body cameras are growing presence in Eastern North Carolina, WNCT. (December 3, 2014) www.wnct.com/story/27543422/police-body-cameras-a-growing-presence-in-eastern-north-carolina

^{37.} Knightdale police adapt to body-worn cameras, Eastern Wake News. (October 7, 2014) www.easternwake.news.com/2014/10/07/4214529/knightdale-police-other-departments.html

^{38.} Police body cameras are growing presence in Eastern North Carolina, WNCT.

^{39.} New Hanover County approves grant for sheriffs office body cameras, WECT. (December 31, 2014) www.wect.com/story/27738544/new-hanover-county-approves-grant-for-sheriffs-office-body-cameras

^{40.} Raleigh police will test facial recognition technology to fight crime, News & Observer. (September 18, 2014) www.newsobserver.com/welcome_page/?shf=/2014/09/18/4162497_raleigh-police-department-adds.html

^{41.} Spring Lake police equips all officers with body cameras, WNCN. (January 16, 2015) www.wncn.com/story/27872510/spring-lake-police-equips-all-officers-with-body-cameras

County/City	Population	Police Body Cameras	GPS Cell Phone Tracking	Automatic License Plate Readers	Drones	Facial Recognition Software	Stingrays
Statesville Police	24,633	O 42					
Stokes Co. Sheriff	46,588						
Surry Co. Sheriff	73,050		0				
Transylvania Co. Sheriff	32,903						
Union Co. Sheriff	212,756		0				
Wake Co. Sheriff	900,993	O 43					
Washington Police	9,811			0			
Wilkesboro Police	3,413	44					
Wilmington Police	112,067		0	0			0
Wilson Co. Sheriff	81,667		0				
Winston- Salem Police	236,441	45					
Wrightsville Beach Police	2,477			0			
Total affected population ⁴⁶	7,055,784						

^{42.} CMPD evaluating procedures for body cameras on offices, WCNC. (December 3, 2014.)

^{43.} Triangle law enforcement agencies testing body cameras, News & Observer. (December 10, 2014)

^{44.} CMPD evaluating procedures for body cameras on offices, WCNC. (December 3, 2014)

^{45.} Winston-Salem police to increase use of body cameras, Winston-Salem Journal. (March 18, 2014) www.journalnow.com/news/local/winston-salem-police-to-increase-use-of-body-cameras/article_b2a12708-0a9f-53d4-91f8-b47443a98667.html

^{46.} Total population has been adjusted to reflect areas where jurisdictions overlap.

About the ACLU of North Carolina

Founded in 1965, the ACLU of North Carolina is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to preserving and expanding the guarantees of individual liberty found in the United States and North Carolina Constitutions and related federal and state civil rights laws.

With more than 12,000 members and supporters throughout the state and an office located in Raleigh, the organization achieves its mission through advocacy, public education, community outreach, and when necessary, litigation.

Visit acluofnc.org for more information.



P.O. Box 28004 Raleigh, NC 27611

Amendment IV

"The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized."

U.S. Constitution



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