



Surveillance Impact Report

Vehicle Trackers

San Diego Police Department

DESCRIPTION

Vehicle tracking devices are electronic devices installed in vehicles to track and monitor their movements and activities. These devices use GPS (Global Positioning System) technology to determine the exact location of a vehicle at any given time and transmit this information to a central server, where it can be accessed by authorized personnel.

PURPOSE

The San Diego Police Department utilizes vehicle tracking devices to track suspects' vehicles involved in ongoing criminal investigations and locate wanted suspects and stolen property.

LOCATION

Vehicle trackers are used in the field by investigators. The target of the vehicle tracker is determined by the investigator based on their investigations. Vehicle trackers collect location data of where the actual device is by using GPS and Cell Towers. As the tracker moves, it collects the GPS coordinates and speed of the device.

City of San Diego crime statistics can be viewed at [Crime Statistics & Crime Mapping | Police | City of San Diego Official Website](#).

IMPACT

Vehicle trackers enhance law enforcement capabilities by locating and tracking suspects' vehicles in real time, which can aid in the investigation and apprehension of suspects. The real-time location data can be used to make more informed decisions. By monitoring the location and movements of suspects' vehicles, law enforcement officers can better assess potential risks and threats, improving safety for officers and the public.

Understandably, there are privacy concerns with the use of vehicle trackers. The use of vehicle trackers by law enforcement must comply with legal guidelines and regulations, and any misuse or abuse of these devices can lead to legal issues and challenges. The use of vehicle trackers can be seen as an infringement on civil liberties and may be perceived as an overly intrusive method of investigation.

However, there are critical benefits to law enforcement's use of vehicle trackers. The trackers can improve public safety by enabling law enforcement agencies to track and locate vehicles quickly. This helps recover stolen property and apprehend suspects involved in crimes such as car theft, robbery, homicide or abduction. The presence of vehicle trackers can act as a deterrent for potential criminals. Knowing that law enforcement can monitor and track their movements can discourage individuals from engaging in illegal activities involving vehicles. Vehicle trackers enable law enforcement agencies to optimize resource allocation and provide valuable evidence and investigative support in criminal investigations. Tracking data can establish timelines, corroborate witness statements, or identify potential suspects.

The San Diego Police Department's Vehicle Trackers Surveillance Use Policy safeguards civil liberties and civil rights. The uses and deployments of surveillance technology are not based on discriminatory



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or viewpoint-based factors. The Department's use of surveillance technology is intended to support and benefit the communities of San Diego while minimizing and mitigating potential impacts on the civil rights and civil liberties of community members.

MITIGATIONS

When a tracker is requested by an SDPD member, a Special Equipment Technician of the Robbery Unit will be assigned the request. The technician will speak with the SDPD member to fully understand the mission of how the device will be used. The request will be evaluated for equipment suitability and legal standing. If equipment deployment is appropriate, a request form stating the crime being investigated and the legal authority to use the tracker will be completed. It is important to note that vehicle trackers can only be deployed with a warrant or if the subject of the track is a Fourth Amendment waiver. The request form will also state all personnel who will have access to monitor the equipment.

All requests for a vehicle tracker must be approved by a Robbery Unit sergeant and a Robbery Unit lieutenant. The program administrator will grant authorization to all required members to monitor the device and create the required reports about the evidence collected from the device.

Legal authority to use a vehicle tracker can help mitigate privacy concerns by providing a clear legal framework for how the device can be used, who can use it, and under what circumstances. By establishing legal guidelines, law enforcement agencies can help ensure that the use of vehicle trackers is lawful, ethical, justified and respectful of individual privacy rights.

The collection, use, retention, or dissemination of data shall not be used to violate the Constitutional rights of any person or be used in any manner that would discriminate against any person based upon their ethnicity, race, gender, natural origin, religion, sexual orientation or gender identity.

DATA TYPES AND SOURCES

Vehicle trackers collect location data of where the actual device is by using GPS and Cell Towers. As the tracker moves, it collects the GPS coordinates and speed of the device. The tracker also collects ambient air temperature around the device for diagnostic purposes. In addition to GPS location data, vehicle trackers can collect time-stamped location data, which can help create a detailed record of the vehicle's movement over time.

DATA SECURITY

All vehicle tracker data is encrypted and will be downloaded from a secure data management solution to a mobile workstation and shall be accessible only through a login/password-protected system with the ability of two-factor authentication. All department members who will have access to the system while the devices are assigned will be documented and will only have access to the data pertaining to their deployment.

All data evidence collected by the vehicle tracker will be downloaded as needed by the SDPD Department members who were assigned the device or by an authorized user. The data will be impounded and stored



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pursuant to D.P. 3.02 Impound, Release, and Disposal of Property Evidence. Once the data has been collected and impounded, the data will be deleted from the data management solution.

FISCAL COST

The newest edition tracker cost \$1,095.00 to purchase. If trading in an old tracker, the cost would be \$995.00. Each tracker costs \$540.00 for the service of tracking. We currently have thirteen trackers. The service for the year of tracking is \$7,020.00.

When the tracker is damaged, it is sent in for service. If the tracker is outdated or no longer in good working order, it is replaced.

THIRD PARTY DEPENDENCE

Location data may be released to other authorized and verified law enforcement officials and agencies for legitimate law enforcement purposes, which include criminal investigations and prosecution as allowed by law. The location data will not be used in immigration enforcement.

ALTERNATIVES

There is currently no other company that provides this type of service.

TRACK RECORD

The trackers allow investigators to follow a vehicle from a safe distance. Sometimes suspects will make erratic movements when casing potential targets. By allowing the investigators to keep their distance, fewer suspects are alerted to being followed. In US Supreme Court Case United States v. Jones 2012 it was ruled that installation of a GPS device on a target's vehicle, and its use of that device to monitor the vehicle's movements, constitutes a 'search' under the Fourth Amendment. As such, the San Diego Police Department ensures that the subject they are using the device for has waived their Fourth Amendment rights or they have obtained a warrant.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND COMMENTS

On January 11, 2024, at 1800 hours, there was a publicly held meeting in all nine council districts in the City of San Diego. The following surveillance technologies were presented by the San Diego Police Department:

1. ARJISNET
2. Cal-Photo
3. Code5Group GPS Bike
4. Covert Cloud-Based Mobile Application
5. NICE Logging Recorder
6. Object Tracker
7. Parole LEADS
8. SDLaw
9. TLOxp
10. Vehicle Tracker



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There were no attendees in District 1. There were no attendees in District 2. There were no attendees in District 3. There were four attendees in District 4. There were no attendees in District 5. There was one attendees in District 6. There were no attendees in District 7. There were no attendees in District 8. There were two attendees in District 9. There was a total of one comment and no questions out of the seven attendees. There were no comments submitted to the online public comment form.

Question:

Question regarding the lack of notification of the meetings and a comment regarding the fiscal impact and waste of City employee time and wasted city funds for the presentations, in compliance with the ordinance.

Answer:

Advance notification was given because we want to hear everyone's voice.

To maximize the reach of the materials presented at the community meetings, the Police Department created a link to the City of San Diego's technology website which provides all materials for presented technologies as well as upcoming technologies and additional materials. The materials and questions/comments section could be accessed by visiting the below web address:

www.sandiego.gov/police/technology. The web address was posted in conjunction with the QR code at the community meeting.

The Department also video recorded a meeting so that it could be presented to a larger group. The benefit of the video was the capability of translating the presentation into over 100 languages such as Spanish, and other languages frequently used by the communities within San Diego, to maximize penetration of the materials to affected groups. The link to the video is at the San Diego Police Department's YouTube channel under: [Surveillance Technology Community Meeting 01/11/2024 \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SurveillanceTechnologyCommunityMeeting01112024)