Affirmed Constitutionality of License Plate Readers

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Five Key Decisions - from Courts of Varying Ideologies - Demonstrate that Law Enforcement Use of License Plate Recognition (LPR) Technology Accords with Fourth Amendment Privacy Protections

Court	Case	Finding
U.S. Supreme Court (Blackmun)	*Cardwell v. Lewis (1974)*	Examination of a vehicle's exterior does not infringe the Fourth Amendment. Vehicles have a lesser expectation of privacy because they travel on public roads in plain view.
U.S. Supreme Court (Alito, Concurring)	*United States v. Jones (2012)*	Constant, long-term GPS tracking of a vehicle's every movement requires a warrant.
U.S. Supreme Court (Roberts)	*Carpenter v. United States (2018)*	Cell site data requires a warrant. Tracking a cell phone's location achieves near perfect surveillance and shows a person's whole movements, akin to an ankle monitor. Cell site is more invasive than tracking a vehicle, which individuals leave. Conventional surveillance techniques and tools, like security cameras, remain acceptable.
Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals (Bea, Concurring)	*United States v. Yang (2019)*	The use of an LPR database is not a search under the Fourth Amendment where the data does not reveal the whole of a person's physical movements.
Massachusetts Supreme Court	*Massachusetts v. McCarthy (2020)*	The limited use of LPR data does not infringe upon privacy rights.