



AUTOMATIC NUMBER PLATE RECOGNITION (ANPR) cameras are part of a network capturing and analysing vehicle number plates. ANPR cameras are mostly found on main roads and motorways and are used predominantly by the police as a crime fighting tool. Private companies use ANPR in car parks or to monitor speed, traffic flow or location. Licence plates photographed by police ANPR will be stored on a centralised national police database for up to two years.



How do ANPR cameras work?

When a vehicle passes an ANPR camera a photograph of the licence plate is taken. This image is immediately scanned against a police database to determine if the vehicle is associated with a criminal investigation, or in the case of private companies, against databases looking at speed or location.



ANPR cameras are used to:

- Catch criminals
- Combat vehicle tax evasion
- Monitor average speeds
- Monitor box junctions and bus lanes
- Record traffic flow
- Monitor parking in some private car parks
- Enforce the Congestion Zone in London
- Monitor use of toll roads



How do the police use ANPR cameras?

Police ANPR cameras are located on main roads and motorways. They take a photograph of every vehicle licence plate which passes by them.

Originally ANPR was used to investigate specific crimes but since 2006 the programme has been a national network which photographs all vehicles and then filters out those involved in crime.

Police forces around the UK have both fixed and mobile ANPR cameras, with the mobile cameras installed directly onto police vehicles.

For more information about police use of ANPR visit the police.uk website, [here](#).



Who else uses ANPR?

The Highways Agency use ANPR to help calculate journey times across their network. These ANPR cameras are painted green. The Agency keep the data they gather indefinitely.

Private sector companies who provide real time information on the flow of traffic use ANPR cameras. These ANPR cameras are usually painted blue.

Private car parks use ANPR cameras to identify cars coming in and out of the car park and to issue parking tickets.



Which databases does ANPR work with?

National ANPR Data Centre (NADC): This is the ANPR database where the image and details of the vehicle are stored for up to 2 years.

Police National Computer (PNC): The Police National Computer holds details of people who are, or were of interest to UK law enforcement agencies. The police cross check ANPR data against this database.

Driving and Vehicle Licensing Authority (DVLA): The DVLA holds the details of every registered vehicle and every driving licence. The DVLA use ANPR data to find people who haven't purchased their car tax.



ANPR facts and figures

- At present there are nearly 9,000 ANPR cameras operating in the UK.
- Every day between 30 and 35 million number plates are estimated to be photographed.
- By 2018 it is estimated between 50 and 75 million images will be taken each day.
- The NADC database has 22 billion images archived.
- The Metropolitan Police operate 2,840 ANPR cameras.
- West Midlands Police use ANPR on 150 different lanes of traffic in their area.



How does ANPR breach your privacy?

If you drive a vehicle in the UK you cannot avoid ANPR cameras.

Whether you like it or not, your vehicle, your speed and your parking habits are likely to be monitored and stored wherever you go.

Whilst speed cameras are clearly signposted, other than the colour of the camera there is no specific signage to let you know that you are driving past an ANPR camera.

If you are concerned about the amount of data held on you, you can send a Subject Access Request to your local police force or to the private company responsible for the ANPR camera. Remember to include the registration number of your vehicle. For more information see our [Subject Access Request Factsheet](#).



Don't forget

- Your number plate will be captured by an ANPR camera when you drive through a city or on a motorway.
- There is little that you can do to avoid being tracked by this system.
- Number plates are captured nearly 30 million times each day across the UK.
- Should you have any concerns, you can request the data held on you with a Subject Access Request.