



ADVANCING POLICING:

Responsible Artificial Intelligence for Public Safety

Over the past two decades, artificial intelligence (AI) has rapidly evolved from academic theory to everyday infrastructure, shaping sectors from finance and healthcare to transportation and national security. As AI continues to advance and reshape both public and private sectors, its potential applications in public safety have drawn significant interest from law enforcement agencies nationwide. This research brief explores current applications and benefits of the use of AI in law enforcement, while also delving into the potential risks associated with this new technology from both a privacy and labor perspective – all pointing to the strong need for a clear set of policies that govern the use of AI in policing.

CURRENT APPLICATIONS OF AI IN LAW ENFORCEMENT

Law enforcement agencies in the United States are increasingly adopting AI applications to enhance operational capacity and efficiency, improve resource allocation, and support crime prevention efforts. The integration of AI applications is transforming traditional policing methods, enabling more strategic resource allocation and evidence-based interventions and offering a glimpse into the future of policing.

Some examples of these tools in action include:

Triaging & Assessing Incoming Calls for Service: Assists already short-staffed 911 dispatchers by fielding, analyzing and triaging routine calls,¹ allowing the dispatchers to focus on more serious emergency calls, which can be especially helpful during emergency situations like major weather events.² Natural Language Processing (NLP) algorithms can analyze emergency calls in real-time, extracting critical information even when callers are distressed, thereby optimizing emergency response efforts.³ AI can also assist in translation to ensure that all residents can get the help they need in a timely, efficient manner.⁴



▶ **In Practice:** Cities across the country have implemented these tools. In Arlington, Virginia, agencies have integrated AI into their dispatching system – utilizing this tool to filter 35% of non-emergency calls away from more high-priority emergencies.⁵

Facial Recognition Technology: Analyzes and matches faces against databases to assist law enforcement in identifying individuals in images or video footage – aiding in suspect identification and the tracking down of suspects and victims in missing persons cases.

▶ **In Practice:** In 2019, a California peace officer put a photo from the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children into an AI-powered facial recognition tool that identified online ads featuring the child's photo. Using the information from the ads, the child was located and rescued in a matter of weeks.⁶

Automatic License Plate Readers (ALPR): AI-enabled technology that automatically captures the license plate numbers of all passing vehicles and can compare the plate with law enforcement databases to identify vehicles of interest.

▶ **In Practice:** In 2025, Petaluma police used ALPR technology to capture a man suspected of road rage vandalism within 20 minutes of the suspect fleeing the scene.⁷

Incident Report Writing: Generates automated police reports using body camera audio to ease administrative burdens on officers who spend several hours each day writing these reports. This is similar to other industries, like healthcare, which require significant documentation of activities.

▶ **In Practice:** Law enforcement technology company Axon is piloting a new AI tool called “Draft One” with 75 officers across several police departments, including in California. This program uses generative AI technology to draft reports based on camera audio, reducing writing time by more than 60%.⁸

Video Processing & Redacting: Reviews body-worn camera footage to transcribe videos, translate content, and redact key information to assist agencies in documentation, criminal investigations, and response with Freedom of Information and Public Records Act requests more efficiently.

▶ **In Practice:** This year, the Riverside County Sheriff’s Office announced a partnership with AI-powered redaction software company Veritone to assist in identifying and redacting confidential, race-related or sensitive information from individuals involved in investigation.^{9,10}

BENEFITS OF AI IN PUBLIC SAFETY

The integration of AI into law enforcement operations offers a range of potential benefits that can improve public safety outcomes, increase efficiency, and protect both officers and the public. While these technologies must never replace human judgment and skilled professionals, they can serve as force multipliers when used responsibly and transparently.



Reduced Administrative Burdens

AI tools can help departments reduce administrative burdens by cutting down the time it takes officers to fill out incident reports. While incident reporting is absolutely critical for good police work, studies have found that officers **spend nearly 40% of their day**¹¹ on report writing. At a time when law enforcement staffing is historically low, equipping officers with cutting-edge technology is a lifeline for departments.



Enhanced Data Analysis & Outcomes

Police investigations require sifting through large amounts of data including surveillance footage, social media, and public records. AI tools can process large amounts of information and analyze hours of surveillance footage in minutes, speeding up investigations and freeing up the limited human resources each department has to respond to incidence in the field.



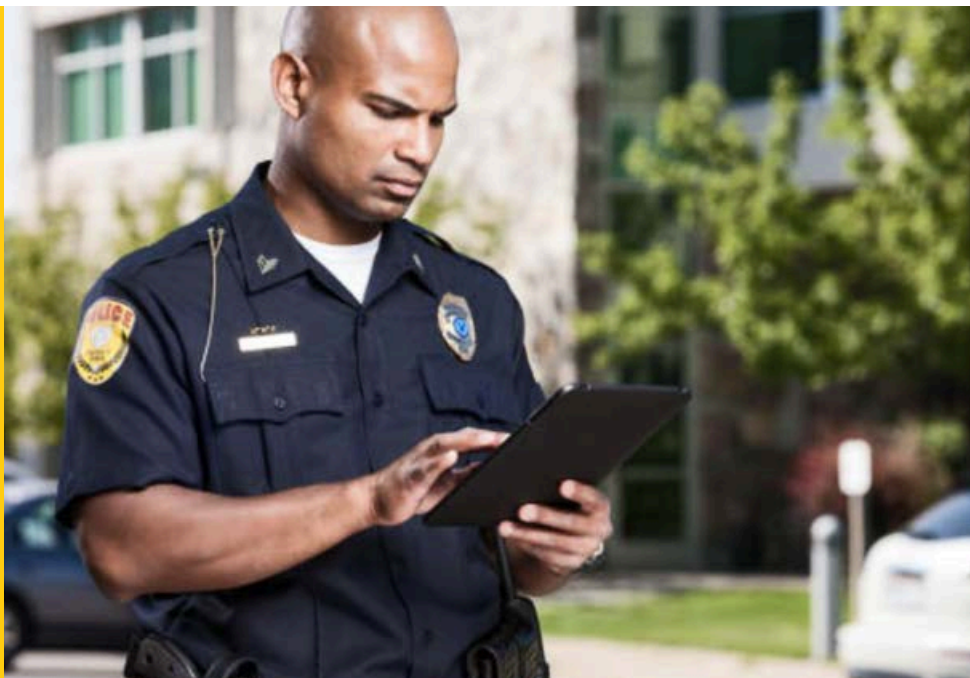
Objective Report Generation

Manual reporting processes can delay reports and impact accuracy. AI tools can create police reports using actual audio from interactions, automatically redacting references to confidential or sensitive information in written reports.¹² This helps ensure accuracy and protect privacy in law enforcement documentation.

RISKS & CONCERNS OF UTILIZING AI IN LAW ENFORCEMENT

While AI tools have benefits for both law enforcement officers and the communities they serve, rapid adoption raises several key concerns to be considered:

- ▶ **Impacts to Basic Labor Rights:** There are a number of AI tools that have been designed to supplant human judgement and people management – for example, technology that claims to be able to predict police misconduct or conduct internal investigations into alleged officer wrongdoing.¹³ Utilizing these tools, which have no understanding of the actual decisions officers are forced to make in the field, inserts technology into what is – and must remain – an inherently human process. AI cannot and should not replace this function: it is a violation of basic labor rights and puts our workforce at risk.
- ▶ **Privacy & Mass Data Collection Concerns:** AI's greatest strength is also a weakness – AI tools can collect and analyze enormous amounts of data, often capturing images, videos, and content of people who are not suspected of any crime. Collecting and having access to large amounts of data raises concerns about the right to privacy. In fact, a number of cities in California have already banned the use of facial recognition by law enforcement, citing privacy concerns.¹⁴
- ▶ **Amplification of Historical Biases:** Ultimately, AI systems are a series of code written by humans using data that was collected by humans. For example, if an AI tool relies on historical crime data, that data may inherently reflect existing biases towards communities of color.¹⁵ Without thorough testing prior to adoption, using predictive policing technologies that rely on potentially flawed data can exacerbate these disparities further.
- ▶ **Lack of Transparency & Implications for Officers:** Many AI tools are created by private companies and their use adopted by government entities like law enforcement agencies who have little to no insight into how the tools are coded. This puts peace officers in the difficult position of having to judge, often without clear guidance or training, when the AI is being used correctly or not.
- ▶ **Inherent Technological Flaws:** While AI tools help save a great deal of time in reporting and analysis, police departments should be cautious about over relying on this technology which is far from perfect. For example, AI bots can sometimes generate fictional information called 'hallucinations' that may unintentionally impact results. In addition, for more in-depth analyses, critics also call attention to the "black box" problem – since understanding the decision-making processes of AI can be challenging. As such, analyses and research developed with the help of AI must be sufficiently scrutinized – especially when it comes to public safety.



Regardless of the potential benefits that AI presents for the law enforcement profession, it is clear that the implementation of this technology demands rigorous safeguards – mandatory audits, transparent policies, and robust training – to protect both officers and the communities we serve.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

It is clear that society is moving towards the adoption of AI technologies to improve efficiency – and law enforcement should not be left behind. However, **PORAC believes in the need for a clear set of policies that govern law enforcement's use of AI**, ensuring that the deployment of these tools supports officers and enhances public safety without losing the human touch of community policing that is at the core of our work.

PORAC Supports:

- Thoughtful, **strategic integration of emerging technologies in law enforcement** to support the evolution of law enforcement practices, not supplanting officers, that enhance public safety and bolster operational efficiency – ultimately strengthening the safety and well-being of the communities we serve.
- Emerging technologies being subject to **meet-and-confer agreements codified in state and federal law**, to prioritize officer and community safety before implementation.
- **Implementation of comprehensive training** to ensure that officers can effectively use new technologies, thereby maximizing their potential benefits while minimizing misuse.
- **Rigorous safeguards for data privacy and AI bias** – including mandatory audits, transparent policies, and robust training – to protect all community members.
- Allocating resources towards the development of **new technologies that can help improve policing outcomes** and **developing robust data analytics capabilities** to inform strategic decisions and proactive policing.
- Development of **clear privacy guidelines and transparency** in data collection and analysis processes to uphold accountability and public trust.

AI tools are helpful when used responsibly and law enforcement should closely study how AI integration can improve longstanding policing processes. But this must be done through thoughtful regulation and oversight of these emerging technologies before they are adopted to ensure we maintain the balance between safety, labor rights, and innovation.

¹ <https://www.ntia.gov/category/next-generation-911/improving-911-operations-with-artificial-intelligence>

² <https://www.police1.com/artificial-intelligence/can-ai-fix-911s-biggest-problems-or-make-them-worse>

³ <https://www.policinginstitute.org/onpolicing/large-language-models-using-chatgpt-for-police-leaders/>

⁴ <https://www.ntia.gov/category/next-generation-911/improving-911-operations-with-artificial-intelligence>

⁵ <https://www.police1.com/artificial-intelligence/can-ai-fix-911s-biggest-problems-or-make-them-worse>

⁶ <https://www.wired.com/story/how-facial-recognition-fighting-child-sex-trafficking>

⁷ <https://www.petaluma360.com/article/news/petaluma-police-surveillance-flock-cameras/>

⁸ <https://www.cnbc.com/2024/11/26/police-departments-are-using-ai-to-write-crime-reports.html>

⁹ <https://statescoop.com/california-county-sheriffs-office-ai-redaction/>

¹⁰ <https://www.police1.com/police-products/investigation/investigative-software/veritone-signs-agreement-with-riverside-county-sheriffs-office-for-ai-redaction-technology>

¹¹ <https://www.axon.com/resources/7-key-trends-in-records-management>

¹² <https://www.policechiefmagazine.org/paperwork-burden-in-policing/>

¹³ [#:~:text=While%20incident%20reporting%20is%20vital,reporting%20in%20the%20patrol%20vehicle.](https://www.benchmarkanalytics.com/#:~:text=While%20incident%20reporting%20is%20vital,reporting%20in%20the%20patrol%20vehicle.)

¹³ <https://www.benchmarkanalytics.com/>

¹⁴ <https://innotechtoday.com/13-cities-where-police-are-banned-from-using-facial-recognition-tech/>

¹⁵ <https://legal.thomsonreuters.com/blog/predictive-policing-navigating-the-challenges/>