

Florida police use license plate cameras to curtail prostitution

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Detailed within the [Orlando Sentinel](#), the police department in Sanford, Florida is following the lead of Baltimore and Oakland police departments by utilizing license plate cameras to track and photograph vehicles that frequent areas of the city where prostitutes gather. Using automated license-plate cameras on patrol vehicles, the Sanford police will photograph vehicles when they see a driver is exhibiting suspicious behavior like circling the block slowly while looking for prostitutes. Hypothetically, another scenario that could get someone photographed would be parking the car in a suspect area and sitting in it for a lengthy amount of time.

After a car has been photographed, a letter is sent to the registered owner of the vehicle that includes a photo of the vehicle in the area, a close-up shot of the license plate and a warning about the dangers of picking up prostitutes. These warnings include information about sexually transmitted diseases as well as criminal activity in the area.

Speaking about the new program in a statement for the community, Sanford police chief Cecil Smith said *“Cracking down on prostitution is an important step toward ensuring the safety and well-being of our community. You can do your part by refraining from bringing your vehicle into this area unnecessarily.”*

The threat of a letter may be enough to keep drivers away from these areas of the city, mainly because the letter could be opened by someone other than the registered owner of the vehicle. Some attorneys in the area have expressed concern about the new program, specifically that it has the potential to incorrectly identify someone looking for a prostitute. Hypothetically, the city could be liable if the police issue a letter to someone that wasn't looking for prostitutes, especially if that action leads to marital disputes or acts of violence between couples. However, both Baltimore and Oakland have been successful with this type of program.