

GENERAL ORDER



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Subject		
License Plate Reader Program		
Topic	Series	Number
OPS	303	09
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Rescinds:		
TT 01-029-10 [Informational Bulletin - License Plate Reader (LPR) Systems]		
Related to:		
General Order 304.10 (Police-Citizen Contacts, Stops and Frisks)		
GO-OPS-301.13 (Vehicular Pursuits)		

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I. BACKGROUND

The identification of stolen vehicles, stolen license plates, and wanted and missing persons is the primary focus of the Metropolitan Police Department's License Plate Reader Program. The License Plate Reader (LPR) Program uses specialized cameras and computers to rapidly photograph large quantities of license plates and compare the license plate numbers to a listing of the numbers of "plates of interest." The listing of "plates of interest" is referred to as the "Hot List."

LPR Systems can identify a plate of interest within seconds of contact, allowing police officers to identify target vehicles that might otherwise be overlooked. LPR Systems are also capable of recording the location, date, and time of each plate read. LPR technology is available in mobile systems mounted on police vehicles and fixed camera systems that can be mounted on poles or on the roadside. Mobile LPR Systems are designed to allow officers to patrol at normal speeds while the technology reads each license plate contacted and alerts officers when there is a match with a number on a "Hot List."

The Homeland Security Bureau, Intelligence Fusion Division, houses the LPR System Operations Center (LPR-SOC). The LPR-SOC is a secure, password-protected intranet site that serves as the central clearinghouse for all license plates scanned by the Metropolitan Police Department's LPR Systems. The license plate data are maintained on an independent server that is not connected to, or shared with, other law enforcement databases.

Authorized Homeland Security Bureau personnel have the ability to:

- Look for a license plate or partial license plate in the history and view the image and location of matches;
- View maps with the location of plate reads and alarms;
- View statistical reports on reads and alarms; and
- View reads and alarms for a specific geographic area and time frame.

II. POLICY

It is the policy of the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) to use LPRs for law enforcement applications that will promote the health, safety, and welfare of District of Columbia residents and visitors, consistent with legal and constitutional limitations, privacy concerns, and accepted ethical standards.

III. DEFINITIONS

When used in this directive, the following terms shall have the meanings designated:

1. Hit – Alert from the License Plate Reader system that a scanned tag number may be in the NCIC (National Crime Information Center) database for a specific reason including, but not limited to, being related to a stolen car, wanted person, domestic violence protective order or terrorist-related activity.
2. Hot List – Vehicle extract file obtained from the NCIC for use with License Plate Readers that identifies license plate numbers of interest to law enforcement and which is automatically updated twice daily.
3. License Plate Reader (LPR) – Computer assisted equipment, either fixed or mobile, used to identify and compare license plate numbers.
4. LPR Element Manager – Member, the rank of Lieutenant or above, or civilian equivalent, at each police district or other element who manages the LPR Program.
5. LPR Grants Manager – Civilian or sworn employee who handles LPR grant funds and reporting.
6. LPR Program Manager – Designee of the Director, Intelligence Fusion Division, Homeland Security Bureau, responsible for oversight of the LPR Program.
7. Member – Sworn employee of the MPD or MPD Reserve Corps member.

IV. REGULATIONS

- A. LPRs shall be used only by sworn or civilian members who have been trained and certified in the use of the equipment pursuant to MPD requirements.
- B. No civilian or sworn member shall use or authorize the use of any LPR System or any LPR-SOC database information for any reason other than official law enforcement purposes.
- C. Requests for non-routine use of LPR data or images shall be approved in advance by the Field Commander.
- D. LPR resources may be used in Washington Metropolitan Area-wide law enforcement initiatives only with the prior written approval of the Chief of Police or designee.
- E. A positive Hit under the LPR Program does not establish probable cause. The Hit information/data must be confirmed prior to taking any related law enforcement action.
- F. All LPR data and images shall be stored up to thirty (30) days on the Mobile Data Computer (MDC) that captured the information.

NOTE: After thirty (30) days, the LPR System will begin transferring the data automatically to the LPR-SOC server and overwriting the data on the MDC.

- G. LPR computer-aided captured images and data shall be stored on the LPR-SOC server for a period of one (1) year and shall be archived but retrievable for a period of three (3) years.
- H. Mobile LPR Systems (including MDCs) shall not be removed from a vehicle without prior authorization from the element Commanding Official.
- I. Vehicles equipped with LPR Systems shall be secured and garaged or stored at a police facility when not in use.
- J. Take-home vehicles that are equipped with LPR Systems shall have the equipment properly secured when not in use.

V. PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES

- A. General

LPR Systems shall be deployed for official law enforcement purposes, including, but not limited to:

1. Locating stolen vehicles, carjacked vehicles, stolen license plates, wanted or missing persons, or vehicles on the Hot List;

2. Canvassing of areas surrounding recent crimes or for stolen vehicles or stolen tags that may be connected to crime scenes; and
3. Other uses as approved by the Field Commander.

B. Fixed License Plate Reader Systems

1. LPR Systems shall be deployed at fixed locations throughout the District of Columbia as approved by the Chief of Police or his/her designee.
2. The MPD Chief Technology Officer shall coordinate the deployment and installation of the Fixed LPR Systems and ensure the systems are properly maintained.
3. The Watch Commander, Command Information Center (CIC) shall ensure members are assigned to monitor LPR video images and the scanned data in order to take the appropriate action(s) when an alarm is activated.
4. When a member locates a vehicle related to a positive fixed LPR System Hit, the member shall verify the license plate information and relay this information by radio or mobile data computer to the Office of Unified Communications (OUC) in accordance with related MPD policies and procedures.
5. Fixed LPR System Hits
 - a. When an alarm is received alerting members of a positive Hit in the Hot List database, a digital image of the license plate will be displayed on the monitoring screen.
 - b. Members shall compare the digital image of the license plate to the Hot List information to verify the Hit for both the state and characters on the plate.
 - (1) Members shall accept verified, positive Hits by activating the "accept" alarm key on the video monitoring center screen; or
 - (2) Members shall activate the "reject" alarm key when a Hit does not result in a positive verification.
 - c. Members shall immediately attempt to confirm the Hit in WALES/NCIC in accordance with MPD policies and procedures.
 - d. For verified, positive Hits, members shall request through the OUC that a patrol unit be dispatched to the location of the Hit.

- e. Members shall immediately notify the Watch Commander, CIC, of arrests resulting from positive LPR Hits for inclusion on the Daily CIC Report.

6. Damage to Fixed LPR Equipment

- a. Upon discovery that any LPR equipment is inoperable or damaged in any way, members shall:
 - (1) Immediately notify the Watch Commander, CIC; and
 - (2) Initiate a PD Form 43 (Report of Loss or Damage to District Government Property) if damage is detected.
- b. The Watch Commander, CIC, shall:
 - (1) Immediately notify the LPR Grants Manager;
 - (2) When applicable, ensure the PD Form 43 is completed and submitted according to MPD policies and procedures; and
 - (3) Forward through the chain of command the completed PD Form 43 to the LPR Program Manager, the LPR Grants Manager, and the Director, Office of Risk Management.
- c. The LPR Grants Manager shall coordinate any required repair with the LPR vendor and the MPD Office of the Chief Technology Officer (MPD-OCTO).

C. Mobile License Plate Reader Systems

- 1. Mobile LPR Systems shall be deployed as directed by the Chief of Police or his/her designee.
- 2. Element Commanding Officials assigned Mobile LPR Systems shall:
 - a. Designate a sufficient number of members to operate and maintain the LPR Systems;
 - b. Ensure that designated LPR members meet any initial and continuing MPD training requirements and that the receipt of such training is documented in writing;
 - c. Ensure the LPR Systems are properly deployed and maintained;
 - d. Ensure the LPRs are deployed, when practicable, on every tour of duty; and

- e. Designate an official the rank of Lieutenant or above to serve as the LPR Element Manager.
3. LPR Element Managers shall:
 - a. Ensure any required LPR program logs and records are properly established and maintained in accordance with MPD recordkeeping policies and procedures; and
 - b. Ensure that all LPR System equipment is inspected, at minimum, on a monthly basis.
4. Members assigned Mobile LPR Systems shall:
 - a. Ensure that the LPR is properly affixed to the assigned police vehicles;
 - b. Log onto the MPD LPR System website to activate the system and receive the automatic updated Hot List at the beginning of each tour of duty;
 - c. Ensure that the mobile data computer speakers are enabled and set to a level sufficient to hear the LPR System's audible alarm in the event of a Hit; and
 - d. Handle LPR System Hits in accordance with Part C.5 below.
5. Mobile LPR System Hits
 - a. All license plate data scanned by LPR Systems are transmitted to the mobile data computer inside the vehicle on which the equipment is installed and checked against the computer-based Hot List.
 - b. When an alarm is received alerting members of a positive Hit in the Hot List database, a digital image of the license plate will be displayed on the mobile data computer screen.
 - c. Members shall compare the digital image of the license plate to the Hot List information to verify the Hit for both the state and characters on the plate.
 - (1) Members shall accept verified, positive Hits by activating the "accept" alarm key on the video monitoring center screen; or
 - (2) Members shall activate the "reject" alarm key when a Hit does not result in a positive verification.

- d. Members shall provide the LPR information by radio or mobile data computer to the OUC in order to immediately attempt to confirm the Hit in accordance with related MPD policy and procedures and prior to taking enforcement or other type of police action (absent exigent circumstances).
 - e. Members shall immediately notify their supervisors when a verified, positive LPR Hit results in an arrest.
 - f. The supervisor so notified shall notify the element Watch Commander.
 - g. The element Watch Commander shall notify the Watch Commander, CIC, of the arrest resulting from the positive LPR Hit for inclusion on the Daily CIC Report.
6. Damage to Mobile LPR Equipment
- a. Members shall not attempt to repair defective or inoperable LPR equipment.
 - b. Upon discovery of any LPR equipment that is inoperable or damaged in any way, members shall:
 - (1) Immediately notify a supervisor; and
 - (2) Initiate a PD Form 43 (Report of Loss or Damage to District Government Property) if damage is detected.
 - (3) Document the damage/issue on their PD Form 775 (Daily Vehicle Inspection and Activity Report).
 - c. Supervisors notified of damaged or inoperable LPR equipment shall:
 - (1) Immediately notify the LPR Element Manager;
 - (2) When applicable, ensure the PD Form 43 is completed and submitted according to MPD policies and procedures; and
 - (3) Provide the LPR Element Manager with a copy of the completed PD Form 43.
 - d. Upon notification or discovery of a Mobile LPR System that has been damaged or is inoperable, LPR Element Managers shall:
 - (1) Immediately notify their element Commanding Officials or designee;

- (2) When applicable, initiate a PD Form 43; and
 - (3) Forward through the chain of command copies of the completed PD Form 43 to the LPR Program Manager, the LPR Grants Manager, and the Director, Office of Risk Management.
- e. The LPR Grants Manager shall coordinate any required repairs with the LPR vendor and MPD-OCTO.

D. Manual Inputs into the LPR-SOC

1. Only the LPR Program Manager or the Watch Commander, CIC, are authorized to approve manual entries into the LPR-SOC.

NOTE: Manual entries into the LPR-SOC can be accomplished through the LPR operational console.

2. The LPR Program Manager or the Watch Commander, CIC, shall only approve the manual input of data into the LPR-SOC when:
 - a. Crimes are reported after the LPR has been deployed (e.g., lookouts for stolen vehicles before they have been entered into NCIC, AMBER alerts, radio broadcasts); or
 - b. Manual license plate checks need to be performed.
3. Prior to authorizing the manual input of data into the LPR-SOC, the LPR Program Manager or the Watch Commander, CIC, shall ensure the custom manual input is related to a specific criminal investigative or patrol purpose.

E. Reporting Requirements

1. The LPR Grants Manager shall prepare all required reports regarding monetary expenditures related to the LPR program, as well as the incremental reporting required by the grant used to purchase the systems.
2. The LPR Program Manager shall prepare and submit a monthly report through the chain of command to the Commanding Official, Criminal Investigations Division, and the Assistant Chief, Patrol Services and School Security Bureau, of the city-wide totals of verified, positive LPR System Hits resulting in arrest including the district of occurrence and type of crime, by no later than the fifth (5th) day of the following month.

F. LPR Installation and Maintenance

1. Mobile LPR equipment shall be:
 - a. Mounted and deployed on marked, unmarked, or surveillance vehicles owned or in use by the MPD; and
 - b. Assembled and mounted on MPD vehicles:
 - (1) By MPD-OCTO in coordination with the Corporate Support Bureau, General Support Services Division, Fleet Services Branch; and
 - (2) Solely in the manner described in the related user manuals and manufacturer's instructions.
2. The MDC and LPR System shall remain with the assigned vehicle after the LPR software has been installed on the MDC.

NOTE: The MDC in the assigned MPD vehicle serves as a video monitoring center and central clearinghouse for all license plates scanned by the LPR.
3. The LPR Grants Manager shall work with MPD-OCTO to assist in the installation on fixed sites.
4. LPRs shall be moved from one vehicle to another only with the prior approval of the element Commanding Official. The LPR Program Manager shall be notified of each such transfer.

VI. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. Members shall be responsible for operating LPR equipment consistent with the procedures outlined in this order.
- B. Supervisors shall be responsible for immediately notifying the Watch Commander when notified of an arrest resulting from a verified positive LPR Hit.
- C. LPR Element Managers shall be responsible for conducting monthly inspections of LPR equipment in accordance with this order.
- D. The LPR Program Manager shall be responsible for authorizing manual input of data into the LPR-SOC and for compiling the monthly report submitted through the chain of command to the Commanding Official, Criminal Investigations Division, and the Assistant Chief, Patrol Services and School Security Bureau, of the city-wide totals of verified, positive LPR System Hits resulting in arrest including the district of occurrence and type of crime no later than the fifth (5th) day of the following month.

- E. The LPR Grants Manager shall be responsible for preparing all required reports regarding monetary expenditures related to the program and for serving as the liaison between the MPD and the vendor from which the LPR Systems have been purchased.
- F. The Director, Fleet Services Branch, shall be responsible for ensuring the proper installation of Mobile LPR Systems in MPD vehicles in conjunction with the MPD-OCTO.
- G. The Chief Technology Officer, MPD-OCTO, shall be responsible for ensuring the proper installation and maintenance of the LPR-SOC server, Mobile and Fixed LPR Systems, and all related hardware and software.
- H. Element Watch Commanders shall be responsible for notifying the Watch Commander, Command Information Center, of all verified, positive LPR Hits that result in arrest.
- I. The Watch Commander, CIC, shall be responsible for ensuring all arrests resulting from verified positive LPR Hits are included on the Daily CIC Report and for authorizing manual input of data into the LPR-SOC.
- J. The Field Commander shall be responsible for authorizing all non-routine uses of LPR Systems.
- K. Element Commanding Officials assigned Mobile LPR Systems shall be responsible for the designation of members to deploy, operate and maintain the LPR Systems, and for ensuring that designated LPR members meet MPD training requirements and training is documented in writing.
- L. The Assistant Chief, Homeland Security Bureau, shall be responsible for ensuring that all sworn and civilian members assigned to LPR video monitoring in the CIC have received any required initial and continuing training and the training is documented in writing.
- M. The Assistant Chief, Professional Development Bureau, shall be responsible for developing and implementing training for sworn and civilian members assigned to LPR video monitoring.



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