

GENERAL ORDER



Subject License Plate Reader Program		
Topic	Series	Number
OPS	303	09
Effective Date October 28, 2020		
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DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

I.	Purpose	Page	1
II.	Procedures	Page	1
II.A	Authority and Authorized Use	Page	1
II.B	Fixed LPR Systems	Page	2
II.C	Portable LPR Systems	Page	3
II.D	LPR Equipment Damage	Page	5
II.E	Manual Entries	Page	6
II.F	Data Retention	Page	6
III.	Definitions	Page	6

I. PURPOSE

It is the policy of the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) to use license plate readers (LPR) for official law enforcement purposes 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. The purpose of this general order is to establish LPR program procedures.

II. PROCEDURES

A. Authority and Authorized Use

1. The Homeland Security Bureau (HSB) manages the LPR program. The HSB assistant chief shall designate a member of HSB to serve as the LPR program manager. The LPR program manager shall ensure that all members assigned to LPR video monitoring have received Department training and prepare all required reports regarding monetary expenditures and grant funding related to the LPR program.
2. HSB shall manage the LPR system database. The database is a secure, password-protected intranet site that serves as the central clearinghouse for all license plates scanned by the by LPR systems available to the Department.
3. 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. No member shall use or authorize the use of any LPR system or database information for any reasons other than official law

enforcement purposes. LPR systems shall not be used for the purpose of tracking or identifying the presence of individuals participating in First Amendment assemblies who are not engaged in unlawful conduct.

4. Using computer-assisted equipment used to identify and compare license plate numbers to a hot list [i.e., vehicle extract file obtained from the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) or other law enforcement system that identifies license plate numbers of interest to law enforcement], LPR systems enable trained MPD members to look for a license plate or partial license plate, view images and locations of matches, create maps and statistical reports of plate reads and alarms, and view reads and alarms for a specific geographic area and time frame. LPR systems shall be deployed for official law enforcement purposes, including, but not limited to:

LPR Authorized Use	
a.	Locating stolen vehicles, carjacked vehicles, stolen license plates, wanted or missing persons, or vehicles on the hot list
b.	Canvassing areas surrounding recent crimes to capture license plates that may be connected to crime scenes
c.	Assisting with critical infrastructure, dignitary motorcade routes, and special events
d.	Other uses as approved by the appropriate watch commander and documented in the watch commander's report

5. A positive hit [i.e., alert from the LPR system that a scanned tag number may be in NCIC or other law enforcement database for a specific reason (e.g., being related to a stolen car, wanted person, domestic violence protective order or terrorist-related activity)] does **not** establish probable cause. The hit information must be confirmed pursuant to this order prior to taking any related law enforcement action.
6. Upon receipt of a positive LPR hit or email notification of a hit, the Command Information Center (CIC) shall ensure that a member immediately handles the hit according to the procedures set forth in this order.
7. Requests for non-routine use of LPR data or images shall be approved in advance by the affected watch commander who shall document the instance on the PD Form 150 (Watch Commander's Report).

B. Fixed LPR Systems

1. Fixed LPR systems shall be deployed at locations throughout the District as approved by the chief of police or his or her designee. Locations of fixed LPRs may be obtained by contacting the CIC watch commander or accessed through the "Sources Listing" on the LPR web application. These locations **shall not** be released to non-law enforcement personnel.
2. The LPR program manager shall coordinate the deployment and installation of fixed LPR systems and ensure that the systems are properly maintained.

3. The CIC watch commander shall ensure members monitor the LPR system and review images and scanned data in order to take appropriate actions when an alarm is activated.
4. Fixed LPR Hits
 - a. When a member locates a vehicle related to a positive hit, the member shall verify the license plate information and relay this information by radio or mobile data computer (MDC) to the Office of Unified Communications (OUC).
 - b. When an alarm is received alerting members of a positive hit in the hot list database, the monitoring screen will display a digital image of the license plate. 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. Members shall either accept verified positive hits by selecting the "Alarm Confirmed" alarm key on the video monitoring center screen or select the "Alarm Not Confirmed" alarm key when a hit does not result in a positive verification that the captured tag matches the wanted tag and select the appropriate reason from the adjacent drop-down menu.
 - c. Members shall immediately attempt to validate the current status of the hit in the Washington Area Law Enforcement System (WALES)/ NCIC. For confirmed hits, CIC members shall request, through the OUC, that a patrol unit be dispatched to the location of the hit. Upon arrest, members shall notify the element LPR manager for inclusion on the LPR report.

C. Portable LPR Systems

1. Portable LPR systems shall be distributed to elements as directed by the chief of police or his or her designee. Take-home vehicles **shall not** be equipped with LPR systems.
2. Element commanding officials with assigned portable LPR systems are responsible for the following tasks.

Element Commanding Official Responsibilities
a. Designate a sufficient number of trained members to operate and maintain 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.
c. Ensure LPR systems are properly deployed and maintained (e.g., monthly inspections completed, and damage reported).
d. Ensure LPRs are deployed on every shift, when practicable.
e. Designate the element LPR manager.

3. A member, the rank of lieutenant or above or civilian equivalent, at each element who manages the LPR program shall serve as the element LPR manager. Element LPR managers are responsible for the following tasks.

Element LPR Manager Responsibilities
a. Ensure any required LPR program logs and records are properly maintained.
b. Ensure that all LPR system equipment is inspected on a monthly basis.
c. Ensure that when notified of an inoperable or damaged LPR, the MDC is reimaged as an LPR MDC per the LPR program manager before being returned to service.

4. Members assigned portable LPR systems are responsible for the following tasks.

Portable LPR System Tasks
a. Ensure that the LPR is properly affixed to assigned police vehicles.
b. Program the MPD LPR car system software to activate the system and receive the automatic updated hot list at the beginning of each shift.
c. Ensure that the LPR system is fully operational.
d. Ensure that the portable data computer speakers are enabled and set to a sufficient volume to hear the LPR system's audible hit alarm.
e. Handle LPR system hits in accordance with this order.

5. Portable LPR systems (including MDCs) **shall not** be removed from a vehicle without prior authorization from the SOD commander or element commander. The LPR program manager shall be notified of each such transfer.
6. In the event that a vehicle with a LPR becomes unavailable for an extended period of time, commanding officials may authorize the LPR equipment to be moved to another vehicle. When a portable LPR is moved from one vehicle to another, the MDC in the new vehicle shall be configured to ensure that the LPR unit works properly.
7. Portable LPR equipment shall be assembled, mounted, and deployed according to the manufacturer's instructions on marked, unmarked, or surveillance vehicles owned or in use by the MPD. Vehicles equipped with LPR systems shall be secured and garaged or stored at a police facility when not in use.
8. The MDC and LPR System shall remain with the assigned vehicle after the LPR software has been installed on the MDC. The MDC in the assigned MPD vehicle serves as a video monitoring center and central clearinghouse for all license plates scanned by the LPR.
9. Portable LPR 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, the monitoring screen will display a digital image of the license plate. 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. Members shall either accept verified, positive

hits by activating the “accept” alarm key on the video monitoring center screen or activate the “reject” alarm key when a hit does not result in a positive verification.

- c. Members shall provide the LPR information by radio or mobile data computer to the OUC in order to immediately attempt to confirm the hit prior to taking enforcement or other type of police action (absent exigent circumstances).
- e. Members shall immediately notify the CIC and element watch commander, providing the name of the notified CIC member. The JSTACC Director shall ensure all notifications are sent to the LPR program manager for inclusion in the LPR report.

D. LPR Equipment Damage

- 1. Members shall not attempt to repair defective or inoperable LPR equipment. Upon discovery of damaged or inoperable LPR equipment:

Damaged LPR Equipment	
Portable LPR	Members shall notify a supervisor. Notified supervisors shall immediately notify the element LPR manager who shall notify the commanding official and LPR program manager.
Fixed LPR	Members shall notify the CIC watch commander.

- 2. If there is damage detected, members shall execute a PD Form 43 and, when applicable, document the damage on their PD Form 775 (Daily Vehicle Inspection and Activity Report).
- 3. Element LPR managers and CIC watch commanders notified of damaged or inoperable LPR equipment shall immediately notify the LPR program manager. When applicable, he or she shall ensure the PD Form 43 is properly completed and forwarded to the LPR program manager and the Office of Risk Management director, through the chain of command. The LPR program manager shall coordinate any required repairs.

E. Manual Entries

- 1. Manual entries may be needed when 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), manual license plate checks need to be performed, or plates need to be entered for other authorized investigative purposes. Manual entries into the LPR database can be accomplished through the operational console.
- 2. Only the JSTACC director, LPR program manager, and field commander are authorized to approve manual entries into the database after ensuring that custom manual input is related to a specific criminal investigative or patrol purpose.

3. In cases where a vehicle is wanted and manually entered, but the investigation does not rise to the level where a WALES/NCIC submission is required, the authorizing member shall ensure the name of the requesting detective/member and contact number is documented and available to CIC personnel. In the event that the vehicle is stopped, this will enable the CIC or units in the field to contact the appropriate member for further instructions.

F. Data Retention

1. Portable LPR data will be stored up to 30 days on the MDC after which time the LPR system will overwrite the data on the MDC. LPR data shall be stored for a period of 90 days and then destroyed unless the LPR data results in a verified, positive hit. Such data shall be retained for a period of one year and then destroyed.
2. Members seeking LPR images or data for investigative purposes shall submit a request to the Investigative Support Section (ISS) at mpdcrs@dc.gov. ISS shall provide a response to the requesting member within 24 hours. Members shall ensure all images and data are appropriately uploaded in the investigative file and evidence.com.
3. The LPR program manager shall ensure that all LPR data covered by a litigation hold, relevant to pending litigation, or reasonably suspected to be relevant to future litigation are retained in evidence.com until notified that the subject litigation has concluded.



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