



License Plate Recognition System

.01 Policy

The policy of the Bladensburg Police Department is to utilize technology in the furtherance of law enforcement efforts to locate and apprehend criminal suspects; to enforce traffic laws; and to ensure that the use of technology devices such as the License Plate Recognition System should not intentionally or otherwise compromise legitimate privacy concerns of law abiding citizens.

.02 Terms

Alarm: An audible and or visual alert generated by an LPR system to the user indicating that a license plate is on the hot list.

License Plate Recognition (LPR): Also known as an Automated License Plate Recognition or Automated License Plate Reader; a system that includes cameras and computer hardware and software.

Hot List: The current electronic file of license plates which will cause the LPR system to trigger an alarm and alert the officer..

Read: The process by which an LPR system photographs a license plate, translates the photograph into alphanumeric characters and compares that data to the hot list.

Statewide LPR Systems: LPR systems that are networked with the Maryland Coordination and Analysis Center (MCAC) Operations Center server through an encrypted Virtual Private Network.

Shift Supervisor: A sworn noncommissioned officer (NCO) who is responsible for directing the enforcement activities of officers assigned to the patrol division.

Dispatcher: A communications operator responsible for providing realtime information to law enforcement personnel.

LPRS Operator: A sworn member of the Department trained and approved by the Chief of Police to operate LPRS equipment.

.03 Governing Legislation and Reference

Governing Legislation:

Memorandum of Understanding with the State.

Forms:

Tag Reader Log (Form 649).

Reference:

Amends GO 316 (June 1, 2011)

.04 Procedure

A. Overview

The LPR Program focuses on the identification of stolen vehicles, stolen license plates and wanted and missing persons. LPR technology uses specialized cameras and computers to quickly capture large numbers of license plate photographs and compares them to the hot list. LPR systems can identify a target plate within seconds of contact with it, allowing law enforcement to identify vehicles that may otherwise be overlooked. LPR systems also record every license plate they scan and record the location (using GPS coordinates), date and time of each license plate read. The technology is available in mobile systems, which are mounted on police vehicles and are designed to allow officers to patrol at normal speeds while the system reads license plates with which they come into contact and alerts them if there is a match to a hot list.

B. LPR Program Supervisor

The Chief of Police appoints the LPR Program Supervisor. The LPR Program Supervisor is responsible for:

- Coordinating technical troubleshooting of LPR systems with Integrated Mobile Data Terminals (MDT's);
- Coordinating the installation and removal of mobile LPR systems from patrol vehicles;
- Coordinating software and hardware upgrades for mobile systems;
- Coordinating the repair or replacement of LPR systems; and,
- Providing LPR training to personnel.

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B. Cleaning and Maintenance

LPR equipment will be cleaned and maintained according to the manufacturer's recommendations.

Any damage to LPR systems will be reported immediately according to established policy and procedures related to the loss of or damage to department equipment.

C. Hot Lists

- Hot lists are updated at 0745 hours and 1645 hours daily.
- The MCAC LPR Program Administrator or his designee will ensure that updated hot lists are transmitted to all statewide LPR systems.
- Personnel operating mobile LPR systems will ensure that the system's hot list is updated prior to use and that the GPS is connected and working as designated.
- Problems related to hot lists should be reported to the MCAC Program Manager immediately.
- If it becomes necessary to add specific information after a hot list update, the LPR operator will:
 - ensure that all custom manual inputs have a legitimate law enforcement purpose;
 - ensure that the on-duty supervisor approves all manual inputs requested by personnel operating mobile units before they are entered into the MCAC Operations Center database;
 - contact the MCAC Watch Division (1-800-492-TIPS) and request that the license plate information be manually entered into the Operations Center database;
 - document the entry in the CAD system; and,
 - remove the information from the mobile LPR system when it is no longer needed.
- The MCAC Watch Division will ensure that any manually entered license plate information is transmitted to all statewide LPR systems.

D. Use of LPR Systems

1. LPR equipment provides access to stolen and wanted files and is also used in furtherance of criminal investigations. The use of LPR systems and access to its data requires a legitimate law enforcement purpose.
2. No employee may use or authorize the use of the equipment or database records in any situation that does not involve a legitimate law enforcement purpose.
3. An alarm alone does not establish probable cause; the alarm must be confirmed prior to taking any enforcement action.
4. Prior to taking any enforcement action, personnel who receive an alarm will provide the information to the communications. Communications personnel will immediately attempt to confirm the information according to established policy.

D. Mobile LPR Systems

Mobile LPR systems should be installed in vehicles that perform routine traffic enforcement.

LPR Supervisors shall:

- Ensure mobile LPR systems are properly deployed and maintained;
- Ensure all personnel using or maintaining mobile LPR systems are properly trained prior to using the system;
- Ensure all significant incidents and arrests that are related to LPR usage are properly documented and forwarded through the chain of command to the Chief of Police; and,
- Ensure all mobile LPR system equipment is inspected each month and documented on the employee's vehicle inspection report. Any deficiencies will be immediately brought to the attention of the Chief of Police or his designee.

The MDT in the patrol vehicle will act as a video monitoring center. All license plates scanned by the mobile LPR system are transmitted to the MDT and checked against the hot list and MVA records. When an alarm is received, a digital image of the license plate will be displayed on the MDT screen for review.

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Personnel who receive an alarm or a scanned license plate will compare the digital image of the license plate to the hot list or MVA information displayed overtop of the digital image. Verified alarms will be accepted by touching the "Accept" button on the video monitoring center screen. When an alarm is not verified, personnel will touch the "Reject" button.

All scanned LPR data will be transmitted to MCAC through an encrypted VPN and purged automatically from the video monitoring center after one day.

The Operations Commander will be responsible for overseeing the mobile LPR system program and ensuring compliance with Department policy.

E. Alarm Verification

- At this time, the LPR system does not interface with real-time METERS or NCIC data.
- LPR alarms may be dated and up to 24 hours old.
- Personnel must verify all alarms through METERS and NCIC; and follow all Department policies and procedures.
- The LPR system is only to be used as an investigative tool; confirmation of an alarm is mandatory prior to a stop.

F. Emergency Operations

During the course of normal law enforcement duties, incidents may occur that require immediate assistance. The LPR system can be a valuable tool in these situations, such as AMBER Alerts, bank robberies, or other crimes and can help bring those incidents to a safe and successful conclusion.

All license plate information related to AMBER, Silver, and Blue alerts will be immediately entered into the MCAC LPR Operations Center database by the MCAC Watch Division. The hot list will be updated with the alert information. The MCAC Watch Division will ensure the timely transfer of information to all statewide LPR systems.

In the event of a critical situation with vehicle registration information, the deployment of an LPR system can maximize the coverage area to search for any vehicle involved.

LPR equipped vehicles should be directed to patrol areas which are likely to increase the chance of encountering the vehicle.

The on-duty supervisor will contact the MCAC Watch Division and request that the LPR Operations Center database be queried to determine if any mobile or fixed LPR systems had previously encountered the target plate.

G. Terrorist or Gang Watch List

Once the LPR Hit is confirmed by the dispatcher and it involves a Terrorist/ Gang watch list plate, the dispatcher should broadcast to the patrol units: "All units be on the lookout for the following LPR hit [vehicle description] for a Person of Interest." dispatchers should not broadcast "terrorist or gang watch list." The vehicle registration will immediately be checked through METERS.

Once the hit is VERIFIED, the dispatcher shall review the Threat Code that is listed beside the person's name and immediately relay that information to the patrol units. The Terrorist Screening Codes are:

- CODE 1: Arrest Immediately;
- CODE 2: Detain, investigate and contact the Terrorist Screening Center (TSC); and,
- CODE 3: Obtain pertinent information such as whereabouts, reason for travel, location of residency, occupants in the vehicle (*this code is strictly for intelligence gathering and probable cause is needed to initiate a traffic stop*).

The Screening Code will determine the action required to be taken by the police. Codes 1 and 2 provide sufficient probable cause to stop a vehicle. Code 3 requires officers to develop their own probable cause to stop a vehicle. If a Code 3 vehicle is stopped, the **SUBJECTS ARE NOT TO BE ALERTED THAT THEY ARE ON A WATCH LIST**. The officer should conduct a normal traffic stop while attempting to gain as much information as possible about who is in the vehicle, travel plans, etc. NOTE: The actual person of interest may not be in the vehicle.

For Codes 1 & 2, the on-duty supervisor will immediately contact the Terrorist Screening Center (TSC) (866-872-9001) and the Maryland Coordination and Analysis Center (MCAC) (443-436-8800) for further instructions. For Code 3, the officer involved in the stop will contact the TSC and MCAC as

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soon as the stop is complete. A Case Report will be completed with relevant information and will be e-mailed to MCAC prior to the end of the shift. TSC/ MCAC information will be included in the Case Report.

If a verified Terrorist/ Gang watch list vehicle is not stopped, the on-duty supervisor will contact the TSC and MCAC and advise the hit, time, direction of travel and all other pertinent information. Additionally, the dispatcher shall immediately notify the surrounding jurisdictions of the hit and relay all relevant information. A Case Report should be completed with relevant information and should be e-mailed to MCAC prior to the end of the shift. Additional notifications of this type of incident should be forwarded through the chain of command to the Chief of Police.

H. Reporting

LPR users are responsible for completing a daily tag reader log for enforcement actions and broadcasts.

The LPR Program Supervisor shall compile LPR statistics and forward them to the Chief of Police by the tenth of each month.

E-TIX System Equipped Vehicles

The E-TIX system should be used for all LPR traffic enforcement action. The arrest code "S" has been designated for LPR stops by the District Court of Maryland.

Retention

All LPR reports shall be retained for a minimum of the current calendar year plus one year.

HISTORY: Adopted February 6, 2014

This General Order supersedes all other orders and memoranda in conflict therewith.

Authority:



Charles L. Owens

Chief of Police