



Alexandria Police Department
Directive 10.40



LICENSE PLATE READER PROGRAM

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10.40.01 PURPOSE AND POLICY

The purpose of this directive is to establish guidelines for the use of the license plate readers and their technology *by sworn law enforcement personnel. This directive does not pertain to any other use of LPR technology by the police department (e.g. parking enforcement).* Unless otherwise noted in this directive, requirements and procedures for report completion remain unchanged.

It is the policy of this department to develop and provide the most effective, efficient and reliable technology for all members of the department. License Plate Readers will be used to increase efficiency in recovering stolen vehicles, as well as enhancing *criminal* investigations.

10.40.02 DEFINITIONS

Alarm (aka Hit) – A positive indication, by visual and/or audible signal, of a potential match between data on the hot list and a license plate scanned by the LPR system. A hit is not conclusive confirmation that a license plate is wanted, and additional investigation is always warranted when a hit is indicated.

Download – The transfer of hot list data from VCIN or other data sources consisting of license plates and associated data. Data may be downloaded from folders and storage on the Alexandria Police intranet based on an automated compilation of the hot list. This allows the files to be accessible by all LPR users regardless of direct access to the VCIN database.

Hot List – A database populated with items of specific concern to the investigative and/or enforcement interests of law enforcement in the City of Alexandria. This may include, but is not limited to, Terrorist Screening Center watch list, stolen/wanted vehicles and license plates, wanted and missing persons, cautions, and license plates associated with Amber Alerts or various watch lists provided for law enforcement purposes.

License Plate Recognition (LPR) system – Equipment consisting of one or more camera(s), computer, and computer software used to automatically recognize and interpret the characters on vehicle license plates. This data is then compared against a list of license plates bearing some significance to law enforcement.

LPR Coordinator – Employee charged with administration, troubleshooting, training, repairing, and coordinating all aspects of the LPR systems for the Police Department. The LPR Coordinator will maintain a list of trained operators.

LPR-Generated Data – All information, including location, date and time of a license plate encounter, the OCR interpolated data, and any LPR-generated digital photographic image(s) of the license plate and vehicle generated entirely through the use of and by the LPR equipment.

LPR Operator – A properly trained user of the LPR systems. The LPR coordinator will maintain a list of trained LPR operators.

10.40.03 RESPONSIBILITIES

A. LPR Operators:

1. LPR operators shall receive training prior to using the LPR system. Training will be conducted by the LPR coordinator or designee. Training will consist of 4 hours of in-house training. This training includes classroom and hands-on use of the LPR system.
2. Employees shall exercise safety when operating the LPR system. Use of the device during the operation of a motor vehicle must comply with current state law. Employees will pay careful attention to driving and will not use the LPR system in any manner that would endanger or distract them, resulting in an accident.
3. The LPR system will automatically update with the latest hotlist and does not require any user intervention.

4. The LPR system works passively and will continue to read license plates and sound alarms even when other programs are being used on the computer. When using an LPR-equipped vehicle, the LPR operators should have the system in operation so as to maximize the opportunity to scan a vehicle on the hot list.
5. LPR operators will enter additional information entered into the LPR system as needed.
 - a. Broadcast and look out information received following the initial download should be manually entered immediately upon receipt by the LPR operator.
 - b. The reason for the entry shall be included in the "note" portion of the entry screen (i.e. stolen vehicle, missing person, abduction, Amber Alert, robbery suspect).
6. Upon completing a manual entry, the LPR operator should query the LPR data to determine if the license plate was scanned previously.
7. Upon receiving an alarm, the LPR operator will use the displayed information to determine the accuracy and nature of the alarm.
8. The LPR operator will visually verify that the subject tag and the actual read on the LPR screen are the same (i.e. correct letters, numbers, state, and any other information that can be matched).
9. Once the user has confirmed that the alarm is valid, the LPR operator will take appropriate action based on the type of alarm.
 - a. If the alarm is for a stolen or felony vehicle, the operator will confirm the alert is still active by running the information through NCIC/VCIN via MDB or by radio.

Receipt of a stolen or felony vehicle LPR alarm may be considered reasonable suspicion but is not sufficient probable cause to warrant an arrest without confirmation that the *hit or warrant* for a vehicle or person is still *active*.
 - b. If the alarm is for another type of hit or alert, the LPR operator will read the description of the alarm and use the appropriate action or reporting method to handle the alarm.
10. The LPR operator will report usage of the LPR systems as required by the LPR Coordinator.

B. The LPR Coordinator will:

1. Create all necessary forms and complete any administrative functions related to the LPR systems;

2. Maintain forms or electronic systems for tracking LPR usage;
3. Maintain an approved LPR training lesson plan with the Personnel & Training Division;
4. Coordinate training, service, repair, and replacement of the LPR systems and software;
5. Maintain the current LPR software and apply updates as needed;
6. Install the LPR software on the computers that the LPR operators use; and

C. Supervisors and Commanders:

Supervisors and commanders will monitor the use of LPR systems and ensure that they are being deployed regularly. Whenever possible, the LPR systems should be assigned to beats or assignments that maximize their ability to scan many license plates.

10.40.04 DATA RETENTION

- A. LPR equipment has the capability to store and/or cause to store LPR-generated data collected during the license plate detection and identification phase of use.
- B. LPR-generated data may be stored on the mobile computer for up to 30 days pending upload to the LPR database.
- C. Data collected by the LPR systems will be sent to a central database.
 1. This database will store LPR data for a *30-day* period at which time the data will be automatically deleted.
 2. Data may be queried and used only for investigative and intelligence gathering relating to criminal activity and will only be accessed by officers and detectives with a specific need relating to criminal investigations.
 3. *This database will be stored separately from any other police department LPR databases that may be used for other purposes (e.g. parking enforcement).*
- D. This data is stored in accordance with city AR 10-10 (Information Systems Security Policies).
- E. LPR data is also available regionally via a data sharing program. Only agencies participating in the Memorandum of Understanding National Capital Region's License Plate Reader Information Sharing Program will have direct access to LPR data from this agency.

10.40.05 LPR MAINTENANCE

- A. The LPR operator should not modify the LPR equipment or software operating system without direction from the LPR Coordinator.
- B. Any time the LPR unit is disconnected or removed from the vehicle, it shall be placed in a protective storage case or the LPR's original packaging and secured to prevent damage.
- C. LPR cameras do not need to be removed from the vehicle prior to entering an automatic car washing facility.
- D. LPR camera lenses may be cleaned with glass cleaner or mild soap and water, and a soft, non-abrasive cloth.
- E. Damage to LPR equipment shall be immediately reported to a supervisor. The supervisor shall document (and investigate, if necessary) the damage in accordance with established procedures. Damage will also be reported to the LPR Coordinator and any reports or documentation will be forwarded to the LPR Coordinator.
- F. The LPR Coordinator shall be notified of any LPR equipment needing maintenance or repair. The LPR Coordinator will ensure that all maintenance and repair of LPR equipment is completed.

BY AUTHORITY OF:

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Chief of Police