

# Georgia Department of Public Safety

## Policy Manual

<b>SUBJECT</b> <b>LICENSE PLATE READERS (LPR)</b>	<b>POLICY NUMBER</b> <b>6.09</b>
<b>DISTRIBUTION</b> <b>ALL EMPLOYEES</b>	<b>DATE</b> <b>2/17/2016</b>

### 6.09.1 Purpose

To provide guidelines for the proper use of license plate readers (LPR or license plate recognition systems), management of LPR data and maintenance of LPR equipment.

### 6.09.2 Policy

License plate readers provide opportunities for enhanced productivity, effectiveness and officer safety. Members will use LPRs and data captured from LPRs in accordance with the procedures and guidelines set forth herein.

### 6.09.3 Definitions

- A. Hot List – License plate numbers of stolen cars, vehicles owned by persons of interest, and vehicles associated with AMBER Alerts, Mattie’s calls, Levi’s calls and similar alerts that are regularly added to “hot lists” circulated among law enforcement agencies. Information can come from a variety of sources, including the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) database and the Georgia Crime Information Center (GCIC) database. In addition to lists provided by other sources, users may enter license plate numbers to hot lists in order to be alerted if and when a vehicle license plate of interest is read by the LPR system.
- B. LPR - License Plate Reader or License Plate Recognition System.
- C. Member: Sworn law enforcement officers of the department.
- D. Alert – A visual and/or auditory notice that is triggered when the LPR system receives a potential “hit” on a license plate.
- E. Read – Digital images of license plates and vehicles associated and metadata (e.g., date, time, and geographic coordinates associated with the vehicle image capture) that are captured by the LPR system.
- F. Hit – A read matched to a plate that has previously been registered on an agency’s “hot list” of vehicle plates related to stolen vehicles, wanted vehicles, or other factors supporting investigation, or which has been manually entered by a user for further investigation.
- G. Fixed LPR system – LPR cameras that are permanently affixed to a structure, such as a pole, a traffic barrier, a building or a bridge.

- H. Mobile LPR system – LPR cameras that are affixed, either permanently or temporarily to a law enforcement vehicle for mobile deployment.
- I. Portable LPR system – LPR cameras that are transportable and can be moved and deployed in a variety of venues as needed.
- J. LPR Data Query Logs – a record of a search or query of LPR data from the server.

#### **6.09.4 Procedures**

##### **A. General**

1. The use of LPR systems is restricted to legitimate law enforcement purposes.
2. LPR systems, associated equipment and databases are authorized for official law enforcement purposes.
3. Members who misuse LPR systems, equipment, databases or data will be subject to disciplinary action.
4. LPR systems, associated equipment, databases and data are the property of the Department and intended for use in conducting official business.

##### **B. Administration**

1. The LPR Administrator shall have responsibility for oversight for LPR system deployment and operations and shall specifically:
  - a. Establish and maintain protocols for access, collection, storage and retention of LPR data and associated media files;
  - b. Establish and maintain protocols to preserve and document LPR reads and “alerts” or “hits” that are acted on in the field or associated with investigations or prosecutions;
  - c. Establish and maintain protocols to ensure the security and integrity of data captured, stored, and/or retained by the LPR system;
  - d. Establish and maintain protocols for adding license plates to the hot list;
  - e. Establish and maintain protocols to document LPR usage and results, including appropriate documentation of all incidents, arrests, and property recoveries related to LPR usage, and
  - f. Authorize non-traditional requests for LPR system use or data access according to the policies and guidelines of the Department.
2. Designated, trained personnel shall check equipment at the beginning of each shift to ensure functionality and camera alignment. Equipment that falls outside expected functionality shall be removed from service until deficiencies have been corrected.
3. LPR system repairs, hardware or software, shall be made only by members, employees or vendors authorized by the Commissioner or the LPR Administrator.

4. The Property Management Section shall maintain a complete inventory of LPRs which shall include location and assignment.

#### C. LPR Usage

1. LPR operation and access to LPR collected data shall be for official agency purposes only.
2. Only members who have been trained shall be permitted to use the LPR.
3. At the beginning of each shift, the member will verify that the LPR system is functioning properly and that the system has been updated with the most current hot lists available.
4. All LPR data transmissions must be made utilizing an encrypted Virtual Private Network (VPN).
5. LPR Alerts/Hits: Prior to the initiation of a traffic stop based on LPR alert, the member must:
  - a. Visually verify that the vehicle plate number matches the plate number run by the LPR system, including both alphanumeric characters of the license plate and the state of issuance, and
  - b. Verify the current status of the plate through the communications center or MDT query.
  - c. This section shall not prevent a member from taking immediate action when a verifiable emergency situation exists for the sake of officer safety.
6. If an LPR alert cannot be verified, the alert will be rejected.
7. Hot lists may be updated manually if the user enters a specific plate into the LPR system and wants to be alerted when that plate is located. Whenever a plate is manually entered into the LPR system, the officer shall document the reason.
8. LPR use during non-traditional deployments (e.g., special operations or during a criminal investigation) must be approved by the LPR Administrator.
9. Emergency requests for assistance from other law enforcement agencies.
  - a. When a member receives a request for assistance from another law enforcement agency to utilize the LPR system, the member shall determine the specific reason the license plate should be entered in the hotlist.
  - b. Members shall not make a manual entry to the hotlist, or utilize the LPR system unless the reason given is a legitimate law enforcement action.
  - c. A valid agency case number or case officer name and contact information must be provided by the requesting agency and documented with the manual entry to the hotlist.

### 6.09.5 Installation

- A. The Department will be responsible for overseeing the installation, implementation,

and maintenance of the LPR. In the event the LPR needs repair, the member shall coordinate with the LPR Administrator.

- B. The LPR will not be disconnected for repairs by anyone, except when authorized by the LPR Administrator.
- C. The LPR will not be transferred to another vehicle by anyone, except with the approval of the LPR Administrator.

#### **6.09.6 Care of Equipment**

- A. All LPRs must be properly maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations as detailed in the training provided prior to use.
- B. Department members on leave should remove magnetically mounted external LPR equipment and secure it within the trunk of their patrol vehicle or within their residence.
- C. The LPR camera lenses should be cleaned at the beginning and ending of the member's shift. Any damage observed shall be immediately reported to the LPR Administrator.
- D. Magnetically mounted LPR cameras shall be removed prior to a department member utilizing an automated car wash system. Vehicles equipped with permanent LPR camera mounts shall not utilize an automated car wash system.

#### **6.09.7 Training**

The LPR Administrator shall coordinate training.

#### **6.09.8 Data Sharing and Dissemination**

LPR data shall be considered FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY and can be shared for legitimate law enforcement purposes in the circumstances outlined in this paragraph.

- A. When LPR data is disseminated outside the agency, it should be documented on a dissemination log that is maintained by the LPR Administrator.
- B. Information sharing among agencies shall be documented in a written Memorandum of Understanding or agreement signed by the Commissioner.

#### **6.09.9 Record Retention**

- A. All LPR system data will be stored on the designated LPR system server for a period not to exceed three years.
- B. After the three year period, the data will be purged unless it has become, or is reasonable to believe, that it will become evidence, including evidence that tends to inculcate or exculpate a suspect in a specific criminal or other law enforcement investigation or action.

- C. Should data be determined to be of evidentiary value, the following paragraph applies:

In those circumstances when data is identified as having evidentiary value, the LPR Administrator, or designee, will review the facts of the specific case and determine if the data should be saved. If the LPR Administrator determines it is reasonable to believe the data has evidentiary value, the LPR Administrator will authorize the transfer of the applicable data from the LPR server to a form of digital storage media (CD, DVD, etc.) or other portable storage device.