

COVINGTON POLICE DEPARTMENT

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

Subject: AUTOMATED LICENSE PLATE READER DEVICES

Date of Issue: 12-10-2013

Number of Pages: 4

Policy No. P145

Review Date:

Distribution: ALL

Revision Date:

I. Purpose

To establish guidelines for the deployment, maintenance and training associated with the Automated License Plate Reader System (ALPR).

II. Statement of Policy

It shall be the policy of the Covington Police Department to enhance the investigative capabilities by utilizing the latest technologies for crime prevention and apprehension of criminals. LPRs utilize such technology to scan, detect, and identify license plate numbers which appear on selected Hot Lists. **Officers will receive the appropriate training prior to being authorized to use the device for law enforcement purposes.** All LPRs will be used and maintained in accordance with manufacturer recommendations and this policy.

III. Definitions

- A. Alert – Audible and visual alarm indicating a potential match has been made from the “Hot List” database.
- B. License Plate Reader (LPR) – A specialized system consisting of equipment designed to read, store and check license plates. The LPR is commonly mounted to a patrol vehicle and connected to a computer within the vehicle; however, there are other device configurations available. (Hand-held, Stationary/Fixed)
- C. Hot List Download – The method by which the Hot List data is transferred to a computer within the patrol vehicle.
- D. Hot Lists – A list of stolen plates and vehicles entered into the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) database, as well as any information that is entered manually by the operating officer.
- E. System Administrator – The department’s Information Systems Specialist is responsible for the technology portion of LPR program, as well as the operational integrity of the LPR System.

IV. Responsibilities

- A. Authority to issue or approve LPR devices to officers shall be vested in Patrol Division Commander and may be delegated to the Team Lieutenants.
- B. Only devices authorized by the department will be approved for use by officers.
 - 1. Officers utilizing the LPR system will be trained in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications.
 - 2. Officers will follow established guidelines and procedures for the use and maintenance of the LPR.
 - 3. The sergeants of each LPR system operator will be trained in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications and directly responsible to ensure proper, appropriate, ethical and legal operation of said system by direct reports.
 - 4. Patrol lieutenants are also directly responsible for the proper operations of LPR systems on their tour of duty.
 - 5. Repairs and replacement of damaged or non-functional LPRs are documented and performed as directed by the Patrol Commander.

V. Procedures

- A. Issuance of the LPR
 - 1. An LPR device will be issued to officers who have had training on the operation of the device.
 - 2. All LPR devices must be properly maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations as detailed in the training prior to use.
- B. Training
 - 1. Prior to using an LPR device for law enforcement purposes, officers will complete a department approved LPR course and demonstrate proficiency on the device's capabilities.
 - 2. Training will be based on the manufacturer's recommendations.
 - 3. Training will include at a minimum
 - a. Setup and maintenance procedures.
 - b. Proper use guidelines.
 - c. Legal issues involved with the use of the LPR device.
 - d. Reporting requirements; and
 - e. Other issues as deemed appropriate and necessary.

C. Guidelines for Use

1. LPR operation and access to LPR collected data shall be for official agency purposes only.
2. The LPR device passively reads the license plates of moving or parked motor vehicles using LPR optical character recognition technology and compares them against a Hot List.
 - a. A Hot List download will be performed automatically when the system is initiated with the most current wanted vehicle information available from NCIC/GCIC and the manufacturer.
 - b. Manual additions to the Hot List can also be made to the system as they are received or as the result of the officer or department's legitimate investigative needs. Examples of possible scenarios where manual entry of a license plate number include, but not limited to:
 - i. Be On Look Out (BOLO)
 - ii. Attempt to locate
 - iii. Overdue motorist
 - iv. AMBER Alert
 - v. Child abduction
 - vi. Wanted person
 - vii. Missing person
3. During operation, LPR "Alerts" are indicated by an audible and visual alarm. An LPR "Alert" **shall not be used** as the sole reason for a traffic stop or enforcement contact until all provisions contained in this section have been satisfied. Contact with the vehicle and its occupants will only be made after the "Alert" is confirmed.
 - a. The officer receiving the notification must first visually verify that the "Alert" entry matches the digital image displayed by the LPR. If, for any reason, it does not match, the "Alert" will be rejected. If, however, it does match, the "Alert" will be accepted and the officer will verify the "Alert" through NCIC/GCIC.
 - b. After verifying the "Alert" through NCIC/GCIC, the officer may then take enforcement action.

D. Maintenance

1. The Patrol Division Commander will be responsible for overseeing the installation, implementation and maintenance of the LPRs. In the event the LPR needs repair, the officer should immediately notify his immediate supervisor to make arrangements for repair.
2. The LPR will not be disconnected for repairs by anyone, except a technician authorized to make repairs.
3. The department's Information Systems Specialist is responsible for procuring any technical support for repairs to be made.

4. External LPR equipment should be removed during officers' off days and secured within the patrol vehicle. Officers need to be mindful of the potential for theft and/or damage to the LPR equipment and secure the external equipment when practical.
 5. The LPR camera lenses should be cleaned as recommended in training, on a regular basis or as needed. Any damage observed shall be immediately reported to a supervisor.
- E. Data Retention
1. Data generated from the operation of the LPRs shall be archived for a period of 180 days.
 2. Data is only to be utilized to further investigations in open criminal investigations or intelligence gathering into illegal activities.

This SOP supersedes any SOP previously issued.

BY ORDER OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE:

Stacey L. Cotton
Stacey L. Cotton
Chief of Police