Atlanta Police Department – Standard Operating Procedure			
	APD.SOP.5193 – License Plate Recognition (LPR) Systems Effective Date: August 7th, 2026		
Chief Darin Schierbaum	Signature by: DS	Date Signed:8/7/2026	Expires:2030

SIGNIFICANT CHANGES

APD Staff,

The Policy and Standards Section is dedicated to providing the department, and its employees, with accurate, understandable and transparent policies. In order to publish policies that reflect the most up-to-date standards, the Policy and Standard Section regularly reviews all policies to ensure that they are reflective of the current mission and objectives of the Atlanta Police Department.

APD.SOP.5193 – License Plate Recognition (LPR) Systems has been completely revised to reflect the Department's use of modern equipment, updated software, and current operational practices. The revised policy establishes clear requirements for the lawful and appropriate use of LPR systems, such as Flock and FUSUS, and explains how these systems may be used to support public safety, criminal investigations, and effective police operations.

All authorized employees are required to read the policy in its entirety and fully understand when and how LPR systems may be accessed and used.

Failure to comply with the policy or the unauthorized use of LPR systems or captured data may result in disciplinary action up to, and including, termination and/or criminal charges.

Thank you and stay informed!

Policy and Standards Section
Planning, Research, and Accreditation Unit

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1. PURPOSE

To establish procedures for Atlanta Police Department (APD) employees for the deployment, data storage, and training of License Plate Recognition Systems (LPRS) used by the Department.

2. POLICY

It is the policy of the Atlanta Police Department that License Plate Recognition (LPR) systems are used only for legitimate law-enforcement purposes and in accordance with applicable constitutional requirements, federal and state law, and Department policy. Access to LPR systems and captured license plate data is limited to authorized users performing official duties.

No employee will access, search, use, share, or disclose any LPR system or captured license plate data for any personal, retaliatory, discriminatory, political, commercial, or other unauthorized purpose. Employees will not use LPR systems to track or monitor any person or vehicle unless the activity is connected to documented law-enforcement purposes.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 Division, Section and Unit commanders are responsible for ensuring that employees under their command are in compliance with this directive.

3.2 Supervisors will be responsible for immediately initiating an investigation of suspected employee work rule violations arising out of an employee's use of the LPRS. Supervisors are also responsible for inspecting all in-vehicle LPRS assigned to their commands and taking immediate corrective action when necessary.

3.3 The LPR administrator is responsible for the management of the LPR program. This includes program administration, troubleshooting, and coordinating all aspects of the LPR. (CALEA 6th ed. Standard 41.3.9)

3.4 The Training Section commander is responsible for ensuring that all training meets department policies and procedures and is compliant with the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) and the State Law Enforcement Certification Program, regarding the training of sworn personnel in the use of the LPRS. (CALEA 6th ed. Standard 41.3.9c)

3.5 All Personnel utilizing a License Plate Recognition systems is responsible for doing so in accordance with this policy and Georgia state law.

4. ACTION

4.1 AUTHORIZED USE OF LPR

4.1.1 Atlanta Police Department employees who are authorized to access and use an LPR system will receive training on the proper use, handling, and protection of captured license plate data consistent with O.C.G.A. § 35-1-22 and departmental policy.

4.1.2 Authorized employees will use department-approved License Plate Recognition systems only for legitimate law-enforcement purposes and in compliance with applicable laws, departmental policies, and established privacy and data-security safeguards.

4.1.3 Georgia law makes knowingly obtaining or attempting to obtain law-enforcement LPR data under false pretenses, or for something other than a law-enforcement purpose, a misdemeanor of a high

and aggravated nature. Any misuse may result in disciplinary action including termination and/or criminal charges. (CALEA 6th Ed., standard 41.3.9.b)

4.1.4 The following are authorized uses of the LPR systems and equipment. A Lieutenant or above may approve an additional use not specifically identified below, provided the approval is documented in writing and the proposed use serves a legitimate law-enforcement purpose and complies with applicable constitutional requirements and state laws. (CALEA 41.3.9 a)

- Conducting traffic enforcement
- Locating stolen vehicles or stolen license plates
- Locating vehicles associated with wanted persons
- Missing or endangered-person investigations
- Amber, Mattie's Call, or similar alerts
- Investigating violent crimes, vehicle crimes, and other reported offenses
- Supporting an active law-enforcement operation
- Conducting a query connected to a case, intelligence record, or official request
- Sharing information with another authorized law-enforcement agency for a documented law-enforcement purpose

4.1.5 The Office of Professional Standards (OPS), or entities as designated by the Chief of Police will audit the use of each LPR platform monthly to ensure compliance with constitutional rights, federal and state law, and this policy.

4.1.6 Authorization for usage of an LPR system for legitimate internal investigative purpose must be granted at the command level of Section Commander or above. No other personnel may use an LPR system to monitor, locate, or track department personnel or vehicles unless such use is necessary for a documented emergency and has been approved by the Chief of Police.

4.2 LPR Equipment and Software Maintenance

4.2.1 Officers will visually inspect the exterior cameras every shift to ensure the lenses are clear and the cameras are not damaged and have not been altered. LPR camera lenses may be cleaned with glass cleaner or a solution of mild soap and water and a non-abrasive cleaning cloth.

4.2.2 Damage to any equipment associated with the LPRS will be immediately reported to a supervisor. The reporting employee will complete an incident report documenting the damage to City property and forward it to the supervisor for review and any necessary follow-up investigation. If the damage is known or suspected to have resulted from criminal activity, the supervisor is to immediately notify the Homeland Security Unit.

4.2.3 Officers will sign-in to the department approved LPR System using their individually assigned credentials and, when operating an LPR-equipped vehicle or device, will keep the system operational throughout their tour of duty, unless otherwise directed by a supervisor or the system is unavailable due to maintenance, malfunction, or another documented operational reason. (CALEA 6th Ed., standard 41.3.9.b).

4.2.4 Training will be provided to all personnel authorized to access Department-approved LPR systems. Standard training will include a basic understanding of system operations, authorized and prohibited uses, alert-verification requirements, and applicable Department procedures. (CALEA 6th ed., Standard 41.3.9(c))

- Recruits and lateral officers will receive initial LPR system training through the Police Academy before receiving access to the system.

- Civilian employees whose assigned duties require access to an LPR system will receive training from the designated unit before access is granted.
- Refresher training will be provided to personnel through Roll Call or another Department-approved training method at least once every two years.

4.2.5 Neither the LPRS equipment nor the LPR software outside of the administrative settings will be modified without authorization from the Chief Administrative Officer.

4.2.6 LPR units that are disconnected or removed from a vehicle will be stored in a protective case or in the unit's original packaging.

4.3 SEARCHES, HOT LISTS, AND HITS

4.3.1 All searches conducted within an LPR system must include an accurate reason for the search and a valid case number associated with the vehicle being searched.

4.3.2 Individual officers, zones details, and/or task-force units may create a specialized Hot Lists as needed for legitimate law-enforcement purposes.

4.3.3 Any authorized user may add a vehicle to a hot list, however, the user who adds the vehicle is responsible for removing it promptly once the investigation is resolved or the vehicle is no longer relevant to a legitimate law-enforcement purpose.

4.3.4 A report or Field Interview Form (FIF) is required for any vehicle added to a Hot List, which will include the reason for the vehicle being added and the length of time needed to be on the list.

4.3.5 Upon receiving an LPR alert or hit, officers are to verify the vehicle and license plate information through GCIC/ACIC to confirm the accuracy, nature, and current validity of the alert before taking enforcement action. An LPR alert alone is to be treated as an investigative lead and does not immediately and independently establish reasonable suspicion or probable cause.

4.3.6 Once the alert is confirmed as valid, officers will take appropriate action based on the type of alert in accordance with departmental policies and procedures.

4.3.7 When information such as, but not limited to, a warrant or BOLO tied to a vehicle, is no longer active, has expired, or is no longer needed for a documented law-enforcement purpose, the officer who created the entry is required to promptly remove it from the hot list. If that officer is unavailable, the officer's supervisor or the system administrator must ensure the entry is removed as soon as possible. (CALEA 6th Ed., standard 41.3.9.d)

4.4 DATA RETENTION, SHARING, AND DESTRUCTION

4.4.1 Captured license plate data, collected and saved from a license plate recognition device, will not be subject to public disclosure pursuant to the Georgia Open Records Act. (CALEA 6th Ed., standard 41.3.9.b)

4.4.2 Information obtained by an LPR System may be shared to other law enforcement agencies for law enforcement purposes only.

4.4.3 Data captured from LPR systems are to be stored immediately upon collection and not accessed except for a law enforcement purpose. All LPR data will be purged after a 12-month retention period unless the data has been identified for court or investigative purposes in which it may be held until

the statute of limitations expires for the given crime being investigated in the case. (CALEA 6th Ed., standard 41.3.9.d)

5. DEFINITIONS

License Plate Recognition System (LPR System): One or more cameras, together with computer algorithms or related software, used to capture images of license plates and convert those images into computer-readable data. The term includes fixed, mobile, portable, and vendor-operated systems used to collect, store, analyze, search, or share captured license plate data.

Captured License Plate Data: Information collected by or derived from an LPR system, including a license plate image or number, photograph of the associated vehicle, date and time of capture, geographic location or GPS coordinates, direction of travel, and any other data generated or associated with the detection. This definition is based on O.C.G.A. § 35-1-22.

Alert or Hit: An automated notification generated when captured license plate data appear to match a license plate or vehicle contained in a hot list or associated with a user-created alert. An alert or hit constitutes an investigative lead and must be independently reviewed and verified before enforcement action is taken.

Hot List: A database or electronic list of license plates or vehicles associated with a documented law-enforcement purpose, including stolen vehicles, stolen or lost license plates, wanted persons, missing or endangered persons, or vehicles connected to an active investigation. A hot list may be obtained from an authorized criminal justice database, another law-enforcement agency, or an authorized manual entry.

Investigative Query: A search of current or historical LPR data conducted by an authorized user for a documented law-enforcement purpose. An investigative query may include a search by complete or partial license plate number, vehicle characteristics, date, time, geographic area, direction of travel, or other authorized search criteria.

Law-Enforcement Purpose: The investigation of an offense or activity initiated by a law-enforcement agency, as defined by O.C.G.A. § 35-1-22. For purposes of this policy, the term includes activities reasonably related to the prevention, detection, investigation, or prosecution of criminal offenses; the apprehension of wanted persons; the recovery of stolen property; the location of missing or endangered persons; or another lawful public-safety function.

Authorized User: A Department employee or other specifically approved individual who has completed required training, has a legitimate job-related need to access the ALPR system, and has been granted access consistent with the individual's assigned duties and level of authorization.

Shared LPR Data: Captured license plate data collected, maintained, or made available by another law-enforcement agency, governmental entity, authorized private entity, regional network, or third-party system. Access to or use of external or shared ALPR data must be for a documented law-enforcement purpose and must comply with applicable law, Department policy, and any lawful restrictions imposed by the originating entity.

6. CANCELLATIONS

APD.SOP.5193 "License Plate Recognition System," effective September 7th, 2021

7. REFERENCES

Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) 6th Edition,