




ARLINGTON COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT DIRECTIVE MANUAL

Chapter: 5 <i>Procedures</i>	Revision Date: January 14, 2025	Initiation Date: June 1, 2012	By Authority of the Chief of Police  Chief Charles A. Penn
Accreditation Standard(s): N/A			

517.07 License Plate Recognition & Pan-Tilt-Zoom Systems

I. Overview

The use of License Plate Recognition (LPR) and Pan-Tilt-Zoom (PTZ) camera equipment is intended to provide authorized personnel with additional resources to aid with the identification of vehicles, license plates, and persons who have a specific interest to law enforcement as part of a criminal investigation, finding a missing or endangered person, or other public safety purpose.

II. Policy

The use of LPR/PTZ equipment shall be limited to law enforcement purposes only and deployed consistent with this policy. Assignment of LPR/PTZ equipment within the agency is made by the Chief of Police, or their designee, based upon the needs of the department.

III. Definitions

- A. License Plate Recognition system – Equipment consisting of a camera(s), a central processing unit (CPU), camera/power/data wires and software used to automatically recognize and interpret the characters on vehicle license plates. This data is then compared against a list of license plates, and or vehicle descriptors, bearing some significance to law enforcement.
- B. Pan-Tilt-Zoom (PTZ) system – Equipment consisting of a camera(s), camera/power/data wires, and software used to observe and manipulate the view of the system.
- C. Hotlist – A database populated with items of specific concern to the investigative and/or enforcement interests of law enforcement in Arlington County. This may include, but is not limited to, Terrorist Screening Center (TSC) watch list, sex offender registry, 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.
- D. Alarm – Also known as a “hit.” A positive indication, by visual and/or audible signal, of a potential match between data on the hotlist 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.
- E. LPR/PTZ Generated Data – All information, both real-time and historical, that is made through the use of an LPR system including location, date and time of a license plate encounter, vehicle descriptors (make, vehicle body, color, external toolboxes, roof racks, bumper stickers, etc.), and any LPR-generated digital image(s) or videos.
- F. LPR Server System Administrator – Designee in Public Safety Information Technology responsible for the LPR Server. Responsibilities include:
 - 1. Overseeing upgrade installations
 - 2. Maintenance
 - 3. Authorized user accountability

4. Ensuring that the electronic hotlists and other downloads are automatically disseminated from the LPR server to deployed LPR units regularly.
- G. LPR Coordinator – A designated supervisor in the department responsible for selecting and training users on the LPR/PTZ system as well as the following:
1. Vehicle, fixed sites, and trailer LPR/PTZ equipment
 2. Installation, removal, maintenance, updating and tracking of the equipment
 3. Establishing parameters for the entry of tags into the system
 4. Establishing parameters and protocols for sharing information with other agencies
- IV. **Procedure** - This procedure establishes basic guidelines to be used in the deployment of LPR/PTZ equipment by department personnel. It applies to use by personnel throughout the department, regardless of assignment. This policy does not apply to the Arlington County Traffic Camera system which is governed by Arlington County policy located in the Arlington County Administrative folder in Power DMS.

A. LPR/PTZ User

1. Prior to using the LPR/PTZ system, authorized users shall receive training.
2. Upon receiving an alarm/"hit," the LPR user should determine the accuracy of the "hit" by completing the following:
 - a. Visually verify that the actual vehicle tag and the read on the LPR screen are the same (i.e., from the same state, correct numbers and letters, etc.).
 - b. Confirm the "hit" is still active by running the information through NCIC/VCIN via their MDT or through the ECC.
 - (1) Receipt of an LPR alarm/"hit" alone is not sufficient probable cause to warrant a detention or arrest without additional verification.
3. Additional information may be manually entered into the LPR system at any time by the LPR Coordinator or their designee.

B. LPR/PTZ Information Queries

1. Downloads of any LPR/PTZ system information may only occur when such information would be of investigative or evidentiary value to a criminal case or other active public safety incident.
2. When querying historical LPR or PTZ generated data within any LPR/PTZ system, an LPR/PTZ user shall list the case number associated with the incident they are investigating in the search reason text box.
 - a. When an incident has yet to generate a case number or where the entry of a case number is not readily feasible, an LPR/PTZ user shall list a brief descriptor to sufficiently identify the incident for which the query is being made (e.g., 2D Tobacco Hut Robbery, John Doe, Missing Person Search, or Costco Ford SUV GLA).
 - b. LPR/PTZ users shall not enter random characters into the search reason text box.
 - c. Each LPR/PTZ user shall verify that the returns from the LPR/PTZ system are accurate to the criteria that they entered for their query.
 - (1) This quality control shall take place before the LPR/PTZ user chooses to move forward on any investigative leads developed by the query of historical LPR or PTZ generated data.
 - d. If an LPR user encounters a vehicle with a TSC "hit," they shall verify the "hit" as outlined in this policy, then proceed as directed by Department Manual Section 522.10.

C. Deployment

1. Supervisors should make every effort to deploy LPR-equipped vehicles regularly. LPR-equipped units should be identified on daily worksheets.
2. The deployment of all LPR/PTZ non-vehicle mounted equipment and assets will be made at the discretion of the LPR coordinator or designee.

D. Data Retention, Access, and Dissemination

1. LPR or PTZ generated data that is not part of an active criminal investigation shall not be routinely retained for a period greater than 6 months, without specific authorization by the Chief of Police or their designee.
2. The LPR Coordinator will manage user accounts after completion of requisite training.
 - a. Authorized users shall be limited to current employees who are legally authorized to review LPR/PTZ data for crime prevention and detection purposes.
3. LPR/PTZ generated data, hotlist information, and the networking resources used to support it shall only be used for law enforcement purposes and must be consistent with the law.
 - a. Under no circumstances shall officers share LPR/PTZ data with any non-law enforcement agency.
 - (1) Any requests for LPR/PTZ information from a non-law enforcement agency shall be forwarded to the Office of Professional Responsibility.
4. The LPR Coordinator or designee is responsible for reviewing, accepting, and sending requests to share and receive LPR data access with other law enforcement agencies.
5. LPR/PTZ users may provide Arlington LPR/PTZ generated data, hotlist information, and the networking resources used to support it, to other law enforcement agencies in the furtherance of a legitimate law enforcement investigation.
 - a. LPR/PTZ users shall not provide the LPR/PTZ generated data, hotlist information, and networking resources of a sharing partner agency, that has shared such materials with Arlington County Police Department, to a separate third-party agency without the approval of the sharing partner agency (e.g., an Arlington officer authorized to access the department's LPR systems may not search for or disseminate LPR-generated data owned by Loudoun County at the request of a Fairfax County officer, without first receiving approval from Loudoun County to do so).
6. An authorized user shall not access information in the LPR/PTZ system by using a name or password that was assigned to another person, including another user.

E. Maintenance

1. The LPR/PTZ equipment maintenance is the responsibility of the LPR Coordinator.
 - a. LPR/PTZ users shall not attempt to modify the LPR/PTZ equipment or software operating system.
 - b. LPR/PTZ users shall notify the LPR Coordinator of the need for maintenance or repair of any parts of the system.
 - c. LPR camera lenses may be cleaned, as needed, by any LPR/PTZ user with glass cleaner or mild soap and water, and a soft, non-abrasive cloth.
2. Damage or loss of any LPR/PTZ equipment shall be immediately reported to a supervisor and the LPR Coordinator or designee.
3. LPR cameras and CPU units shall be removed from a vehicle prior to being sent out for repairs at a facility other than the County repair yard. The LPR coordinator shall be notified to remove the LPR equipment.
4. Any time the LPR unit is disconnected, dismantled, or removed from the vehicle, it shall be stored

and secured in such a manner to prevent damage to the equipment.

5. Audits of the system use conducted by any LPR/PTZ user can be performed by the LPR Coordinator or their designee at any time to ensure that such user activities are being conducted ethically and with a legitimate law enforcement purpose. Both the content of the user activities, as well as the search reason provided for queries will be subject to scrutiny in these audits.
 - a. Audits of the system use will be conducted every January and June by the Office of Professional Responsibility in coordination with the LPR Coordinator or their designee. Audits shall be retained for four years.