Policy 1015

LICENSE PLATE READERS (LPRs)

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19 February 2019	**1 of 6**

By Order of the Police Commissioner

POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance for the proper operation, management, and maintenance of the Department's fixed and mobile License Plate Reader (LPR) technology. LPRs are an advanced tool that can aid members in locating vehicles and suspects, and as such, their use must adhere to local and federal laws and submit to annual audits.

CORE PRINCIPLES

1. **Technology**. The Baltimore Police Department (BPD) utilizes LPRs to identify vehicles, license plates, registered owners, and operators via digital photographic image without direct intervention by an officer. Locating vehicles having a specific law enforcement interest is consistent with the mission of the BPD.

2. **Violent Crime Reduction**. The primary goal of the LPR initiative is to enhance information sharing through technology to reduce violent crime.

3. **Privacy Protection.** A breach in LPR data security, careless handling of LPR data, and/or intentional release of LPR data to non-authorized individuals could jeopardize the privacy of the general public. Accordingly, members shall take the utmost care and caution to ensure that LPR data is not mishandled or misused.

DEFINITIONS

Alarm / Hit — A positive indication by visual and/or audio signal of a potential match between data on the "Hot List" and the license plate scanned by the LPR. A Hit is not conclusive confirmation that a license plate is wanted. Additional investigation is always warranted when a Hit is indicated.

Hot List / Hit List — A database populated with items of specific concern to the investigative and/or enforcement interests of law enforcement. This database might include data from, but is not limited to: LotusNotes, RMS, MVA, Gang Database, NCIC, etc.

License Plate Reader — Equipment consisting of a camera(s), computer, and computer software used to automatically recognize and interpret the characters on vehicle license plates. This data is then compared with a list of license plates bearing some significance to law enforcement.

LPR Coordinator — Employee charged with coordinating all aspects of the LPR system for the BPD.

LPR Generated Data — All information, including location, date and time of a license plate encounter and any LPR generated digital photographic images of the license plate and vehicle generated entirely

through the use of and by the LPR equipment.

GENERAL

1.   The use of a LPR system and access to LPR data requires a legitimate law enforcement purpose. No member may use or authorize the use of the LPR equipment or data for any other reason.

2.   LPRs enhance information sharing capabilities with regional law enforcement personnel and provide members with timely access to criminal intelligence data.

3.   LPR equipment enables rapid scanning and return of information to law enforcement personnel. An infrared camera with built-in LPR software recognizes, reads, and checks license plates with downloaded databases in real time, day and night.

4.   LPR technology will be employed to target vehicles operated by known violent offenders of investigative interest, as well as stolen vehicles and registered vehicle owners with active warrants.

5.   A positive LPR Hit alone does not establish probable cause. The Hit must be confirmed prior to taking any enforcement action.

6.   All scanned LPR data will be transmitted to a BPD server and retained in the system for 18 months.

7.   LPR data stored on BPD servers shall be audited annually to ensure compliance with this policy and state and federal laws.

REQUIRED ACTION

Member

LPR Operation

1.   Mobile LPR systems will be installed in designated BPD vehicles.

2.   All personnel utilizing and maintaining the LPR systems shall be properly trained to ensure that operation of the system is for legitimate law enforcement purposes.

3.   The Watch Center will monitor the Enterprise Operations Center (EOC) and will serve as the central clearinghouse for all license plates scanned by the LPR software.

4.   When a license plate is scanned that matches a license plate in the LPR system, an alarm is received alerting to a positive Hit and a digital image of the license plate is displayed on the mobile data computer screen for review.

5.   Members who receive a positive Hit shall compare the digital image of the license plate to the information on the Hit List to verify the Hit through the National Crime Information Center (NCIC),

Hot Desk, Communications Unit, or other reliable law enforcement source.

5.1. Members will accept verified positive Hit by activating the "accept" alarm key on the video monitoring center screen.

5.2. When an alarm does not result in a verified positive Hit, members will activate the "reject" alarm key.

6. Members shall then take the appropriate investigative/enforcement action.

LPR Data Entry/Retrieval

1. Watch Center personnel will immediately enter all license plate information related to AMBER, Silver, and Blue Alerts to the LPR system.

2. Members may request that a license plate be manually entered into the LPR system to aid in an investigation (e.g., homicide, shooting, robbery investigation, etc.), or request to query data from the LPR system by completing a Form 385, LPR Data Query Form and submitting the form to the Watch Center.

Cleaning and Maintenance

1. LPR operators are responsible for the inspection and maintenance of all mobile LPR computer systems and all related hardware and software.

2. LPR operators shall clean and maintain LPR equipment according to the manufacturer's recommendations.

3. Any damage or loss of LPR systems shall be reported immediately to the operator's first–line supervisor, the LPR Coordinator, and the Director, ITS.

LPR Coordinator

The LPR Coordinator shall:

1. Provide training and maintain a list of qualified operators.

2. Maintain statistical data on LPR usage.

3. Develop procedures for updating the "Hot List."

4. Ensure LPR software updates are completed.

5. Ensure all maintenance and repair of LPR equipment is completed.

6. Conduct an annual audit by randomly selecting 1% of records within the LPR server to ensure:

6.1. BPD compliance with this policy and state and federal laws.

6.2. Members with access to and use of LPR data have been properly screened and trained.

6.3. BPD has adequate procedures related to the use of the LPR system, and that queries and information obtained through the system are conducted, shared, and/or disseminated for legitimate law enforcement purposes.

Internal Audits Section

The Internal Audits Section shall:

1. Certify annual LPR data audits as performed by the LPR Coordinator.

2. Maintain all completed and certified LPR Record Audit Forms for no less than 3 years.

APPENDIX

A. Form 385, LPR Data Query Form
B. LPR Record Audit Form

RESCISSION

Remove and destroy/recycle Policy 1015, *License Plate Readers (LPRs)* dated 1 August 2016.

COMMUNICATION OF POLICY

This Policy is effective on the date listed herein. Each employee is responsible for complying with the contents of this policy.

APPENDIX A

Form 385, LPR Data Query Form

Form 385 revised 8/2018

BALTIMORE POLICE DEPARTMENT
LPR REQUEST FOR SERVICE

DATE

TIME:
REQUEST #:
TAKEN BY (seq #):

CUSTODIAN OF RECORDS BALTIMORE POLICE WATCH CENTER

Requestor Name:	Requestor Seq #:

Assignment:

Phone #:	Email Address:

CC #

Suspect ☐	Victim ☐	Witness ☐	Other (explain) ☐

Name	SID / FBI /OLN #'s
Address	Race/Sex
DOB	Phone
SSN	Vehicle Tag #

Specific Type of Investigation (Required: type of crime/case, please use plain language):

What Does Requestor Want to Know?:

Request Type:
☐ Immediate (Must be time sensitive/Officer Safety/Fresh Pursuit)
☐ Routine (within 48 hours)

NOTES:
- All LPR Requests for Service must be in pursuit of a specific law enforcement purpose.
- Immediate requests are reserved for time sensitive emergencies. Examples include: homicide, kidnapping, police manhunt, or SWAT incident.
- LPR data are purged after 18 months on the server.

For questions concerning the Baltimore Police Department's LPR System contact the Watch Center at (410) 396-2640.

Form 385 revised 8/2018

APPENDIX B

LPR Record Audit Form

LPR Records Audit Form

Record #	Question 1 Report/Incident #	Question 2 Is the date and time of the request documented?	Question 3 Is the purpose of the request documented?	Question 4 Does the request include the identity of the agency requesting the query?	Question 5 Has the request been validated through the requester's agency?	Results Findings shall be listed as: Accurate, Unable to Locate, or Incomplete

LPR Coordinator: _____