




# Clayton County Police Department PROCEDURES

Subject <b>LICENSE PLATE READER (LPR)</b>		Procedure # <b>D17</b>	
Authorizing Signature 	Effective <b>03-02-2023</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> New <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Amended <input type="checkbox"/> Rescinds	Total Pages <b>5</b>

## I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide employees with guidelines on the proper use of license plate readers (LPR or license plate recognition systems), management of LPR data, and maintenance of LPR equipment.

## II. POLICY

License plate readers (LPR) provide opportunities for enhanced productivity, effectiveness and officer safety. Employees of the Clayton County Police Department will use LPR and data captured from such device in accordance with procedures and guidelines set forth herein.

## III. DEFINITIONS

**Alert:** A visual and/or auditory notice that is triggered when the LPR system receives a potential “hit” on a license plate.

**Fixed LPR system:** LPR cameras that are permanently affixed to a structure, such as a pole, a traffic barrier, a building or a bridge.

**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.

**H.O.T. Lane:** High Occupancy Toll Lanes are optional travel lanes adjacent to existing interstate highways in congested corridors through the metropolitan Atlanta area. Drivers in designated lanes are charged nominal fees for the use of these lanes.

**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.

LPR: License Plate Reader or License Plate Recognition System.

LPR Data Query Logs: A record of a search or query of LPR data from the server.

Mobile LPR System: LPR cameras that are affixed, either permanently or temporarily to a law enforcement vehicle for mobile deployment.

Portable LPR System: LPR cameras that are transportable and can be moved and deployed in a variety of venues as needed.

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.

#### **IV. 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. Employees who misuse LPR systems, equipment, databases or data will be subject to disciplinary action.
4. The Department's LPR systems, associated equipment, databases and data are the property of the Department and intended for use in conducting official business.

##### **B. Responsibility**

1. The Shift and/or Unit Commander of the Traffic Unit will be the Department's Administrator of the LPR System. The LPR Administrator will be responsible for the deployment and operations of the LPR system and shall:
  - 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 authorized vendors or employees authorized by the Shift and/or Unit Commander of the Traffic Unit.
4. The Shift and/or Unit Commander of the Traffic Unit shall maintain a complete inventory of LPRs which shall include location and assignment.

C. Use of the Department's LPR System

1. Personnel will exercise due care and caution when utilizing the LPR system and operating a vehicle.
2. LPR operation and access to LPR collected data shall be for law enforcement purposes only. Only personnel who have been trained shall be permitted to use the LPR.
3. At the start of each shift, users will verify that the LPR system is functioning properly and that the system has been updated with the most current hot lists available.

If the LPR is not functioning properly, it will not be used until the deficiencies have been corrected.

4. All LPR data transmissions must be made utilizing an encrypted Virtual Private Network (VPN). Personnel will ensure they are logged into the LPR system under the username assigned to them.
5. LPR Alerts/Hits

Prior to the initiation of a traffic stop based on LPR alert, the officer 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 E911/Communications dispatcher or MDT query, when circumstances allow.
- c. Make reasonable efforts to verify that the driver and/or occupants physically match the description of any wanted person(s).

The aforementioned information shall not prevent an officer 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 throughout the shift, 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 an employee receives a request for assistance from another law enforcement agency to utilize the LPR system, the employee shall determine the specific reason the license plate should be entered in the hotlist.
  - b. Employees 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 the investigating officer's name and contact information must be provided by the requesting agency and documented with the manual entry to the hotlist.

#### D. Installation

1. The Department will be responsible for overseeing the installation, implementation, and maintenance of the LPR. In the event the LPR needs repair, the officer shall coordinate with the LPR Administrator, or authorized designee.
2. The LPR will not be disconnected for repairs by anyone, except when authorized by the LPR Administrator, or authorized designee.
3. The LPR will not be transferred to another vehicle by anyone, except with the approval of the LPR Administrator, or authorized designee.

#### E. Care of Equipment

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

#### F. Training

1. Officers that are in possession of a vehicle equipped with the LPR system must have, at a minimum, GCIC Security Awareness training and the LPR basic operational training.
2. Only officers who have been properly trained in the use and operational protocols of the LPR system shall be permitted to use it.

#### G. LPR Data Sharing and Dissemination

1. LPR data shall be considered *For Law Enforcement Purposes Only* and can be shared with other law enforcement agencies only as outlined in this policy.
2. When LPR data is disseminated to another law enforcement agency, it should be documented on a dissemination log that is maintained by the LPR Administrator.

3. Personnel will not release any information obtained by the LPR devices to non-law enforcement personnel unless required by law.

#### H. Record Retention

1. Data should only be utilized to conduct further investigation in an open criminal investigation or intelligence into illegal activity.
2. All Department LPR system data will be stored on the LPR system server for a period not to exceed thirty (30) months.
3. After the thirty (30) month period, the data will be purged unless, the date is related to the investigation of a criminal offense or intelligence into illegal activity initiated by a law enforcement agency. If the LPR Administrator, or authorized designee, determines that data should be retained based upon the aforementioned criteria, the LPR Administrator will authorize the transfer of the applicable data from the LPR server to a form of digital storage media or other portable storage device.
4. Pursuant to O.C.G.A. §35-1-22(f), captured LPR data shall not be subject to public disclosure pursuant to the Georgia Open Records Act.

#### I. State Road and Tollway Authority (SRTA)

1. The SRTA is a state-level, independent Authority created by the Georgia General Assembly to operate tolled transportation facilities within Georgia and act as the transportation financing arm for the State.
2. SRTA manages the collection of tolls on Georgia's Express Lanes System through the use of Peach Pass, the state's all-electronic tolling technology. The Georgia SRTA shall store and maintain SRTA LPR data.

### V. CANCELLATION

This procedure amends and supersedes the following standard operating procedure: *Automatic License Plate Recognition (LPR) Devices*, dated September 25, 2018.