



GENERAL ORDERS		NO: 14-12
<b>LICENSE PLACE RECOGNITION SYSTEM (LPR)</b>		
PAGE 1 OF 8		<b>AUTHORITY: CHIEF CHRISTOPHER J. PREMO</b>
EFFECTIVE DATE: 01/20/2009	AMMENDMENT DATE:	

### License Plate Recognition System (LPR)

**Purpose:**

The Malone Village Police Department has License Plate Recognition (LPR) equipment for primary use during patrol operations and at established details, such as Operation Impact assignments, aggressive driving details, safety restraint and impaired driver checkpoints.

LPR systems use infrared cameras to scan license plate data of moving and stationary vehicles. The date is then compared against an integrated wanted or hot list of stolen vehicles, license plates, suspended and revoked registrations, AMBER Alerts, and any other “want” associated with license plate data.

**Policy:**

**Administration:**

The Chief of Police shall designate a supervisor as the LPR Coordinator to administer and oversee the LPR program. The supervisors responsibility include:

1. Maintaining an adequate number of trainers.
2. Make sure every member is trained in the use of the LPR.
3. Arrange for additional training when, and as deemed necessary.

4. Maintain records identifying approved LPR details and their results. Ensure appropriate documentation of significant incidents and arrests that are related to LPR usage is completed.

**Training:**

Members are prohibited from using the LPR system until they have been properly trained in its use, and been instructed as to operational protocols.

**Operations:**

Patrol: All trained members operating the vehicle with the LPR equipment will use the LPR while patrolling and complete an LPR System use log.

1. LPR System Daily Log: A “daily user log” will be maintained in the LPR vehicle. Daily logs shall be kept in the car equipped with the LPR system. Officers will complete this log each time they use the LPR system. The LPR coordinator designated to oversee the LPR program shall review the log(s) to ensure that inquiries are properly completed and logged. This log must be retained for a minimum of the current year plus one. If the log has an arrest or hit associated with it, it must be retained as part of the case folder. Retain the log until all arrests associated with the log page have reached a final disposition.
2. Special Details: The Chief of Police or a supervisor **MUST** approve LPR use during non-traditional VTL details (ie, high crime areas, criminal investigations).
3. Vehicles: A copy of the Car System User Guide (LPR) shall be maintained at the Police Station and available to all Officers to review.
4. LPR Maintenance: The LPR camera lenses shall be cleaned with a glass cleaner sprayed on a soft cloth at the beginning and ending of each use. Any damage shall be reported immediately to the Chief of Police or to a supervisor. Technical questions concerning the LPR shall be directed to the help desk at 800-342-3619. Members shall **NOT** directly contact the vendor (s). All vendor contact will occur through the LPR coordinator.
5. Hit Verification: Currently on NYS license plates are recognized as wanted hits and the information is dated, typically up to 24 hours old. Members must verify all “hits” through eJusticeNY and follow all eJusticeNY policies and procedures. At this time the LPR does not interface with real time NCIC or eJusticeNY data, the LPR is **ONLY** to be used as an investigative tool. Verified hits (stolen) on an unoccupied vehicle – maintain visual observation while supervisory contact is initiated to determine if immediate recovery action will be taken or whether surveillance will be continued.
6. Updating: Using LPR wanted files – Every Officer using the system will conduct a “start shift” in the Police Station from the Traffic and Criminal Software (TRACS) application to update and transfer required wanted files onto the vehicle computer. After the initial upload to the LPR, if it becomes necessary to add specific information, the database can be “customized” by manually entering the information. This option is provided on the computer desktop screen under the “operation” icon and should be utilized in cases where crimes have been reported after the LPR

has been deployed (e.g. stolen vehicles, AMBER Alert, radio item broadcasts etc.) or when a manual plate check needs to be performed.

#### NYS AMBER Alert and NYS DCJS Missing Child/College Student Alert Activations:

1. Communications: Upon receiving notification (via fax, eJusticeNY, email or other notification system) that a NYS AMBER Alert or NYS DCJS Missing Child/College Student Alert has occurred, communications staff must immediately review the details and notify a supervisor.
2. Unless directed to take alternate action, communications staff must immediately broadcast Alert details to all available patrols and must specifically advise patrols using LPR equipment to manually place involved vehicle plate number (s) into respective vehicle LPR databases.
3. Upon receipt of updated information, communication staff should immediately provide this information to supervisor and patrols. If an involved vehicle plate number patrols using LPR equipment should be directed to update database entries. All actions taken by communications staff should be documented in accordance with agency policy and procedures.
4. Upon notification of an Alert, all patrols using LPR equipment must manually place involved vehicle plate number (s) into the vehicle database. Officers should proceed to patrol areas that are likely to increase the change of encountering the vehicle. Upon receipt of updated information, patrols must immediately update database entries.
5. Look Back: Officers must promptly search the vehicle LPR databases to determine if a record of past encounters exists., If so information should immediately be provided to supervisor for investigative action. Also, supervisors should review the agency record databases, if one exists, to determine if patrols had previously encountered the target plate. Logs should be updated according to the preciously cited general procedures.
6. Recovery: If the vehicle is encountered, the actions taken should ensure the safe recovery of the missing child. Officer experience and judgment, as well as agency specific policies and procedures will dictate the best course of action to take. All actions should be documented in accordance with agency policies and procedures.

#### Patrol

The following protocols are suggested for use of the LPR and technology. The proactive entry of any data, except as stipulated in this directive, or the access to LPR records **MUST** be approved by a supervisor, and the request **MUST** have a specific criminal investigative or patrol purpose. Deployment of LPR equipment is intended to provide access to wanted files, and for the furtherance of criminal investigations. Use is restricted to these purposes. No Officer may use, or authorize the use of, the equipment or database records for any other reason. A request for LPR use or data access beyond the cited reason (s) herein must be made to the Chief of Police.

#### 1. Administration:

A supervisor is to administer and oversee the LPR program whose responsibilities include the following:

- a. Maintain an adequate number of trainers.

- b. Select and train approved members to operate the LPR system (All training must be documented).
- c. Arrange for additional training when and as deemed necessary.
- d. Maintain records identifying approved LPR details and their results and ensure appropriate documentation of significant incidents and arrests that are related to LPR usage.

#### **LPR Operator Selection:**

Consider the following qualifications when approving members for LPR training:

- a. Members driving record.
- b. Past demonstration of good judgment regarding vehicle pursuits.
- c. Excellent VTL and Penal Law Enforcement activity.

#### **Training:**

Officers are **prohibited** from using the LPR system until they have been properly trained in its use, and have been instructed as to operational protocols.

#### **Patrol Operations:**

Officers **MUST** notify and obtain approval from a supervisor to use the LPR during routine patrol. This information must be documented on the LPR System Use Log. A supervisor **MUST** be notified of all appropriate matters (i.e. pursuits, significant arrests, etc.) Activity must be reported monthly on the DCJS LPR Survey Form.

**Daily LPR User Log:** A “daily user” log will be maintained in the LPR vehicle or station where it is being used. Activity reports shall be consolidated and forwarded to the Chief of Police monthly. The Chief of Police or his designee approved to oversee the LPR program shall review the log (s) to ensure the inquiries are properly completed and logged. This log must be retained for a minimum of current year plus one year. If the log has an arrest or his associated with it, it must be retained as part of the case folder. Retain the log until all arrests associated with the log page have reached a final disposition.

**LPR Data Query Log:** Requests to review stored data shall be recorded and maintained in the same manner as criminal history logs. LPR data is stored for a short time frame on the LPR hard drive (up the thirty days) Access shall be limited to designated personnel in each Department who have been provided account access to conduct authorized LPR stored data queries. The Officer conducting the query must make the log entry. The log shall be retained for a minimum of current year plus one year. If the log has an arrest of hit associated with it, it must be retained as part of the case folder. Retain the log until all arrests associated with the log page have reached a final disposition.

**Special Details:** The Chief of Police or his designee **MUST** approved LPR use during non – traditional VTL details, (i.e in high crime areas during Operation Impact details, or during directed criminal investigations).

- a. Careful consideration must be given to appropriate staffing. It is recommended details focused in high crime areas be comprise of no less than four Officers/Investigators and one supervisor, usually a non – commissioned Officer.
- b. LPR equipment may be used to further criminal investigations by providing access to stored records and/or by assigning LPR equipment in a designated manner and areas.
- c. Participation by outside agencies ist prohibited.
- d. Use of the LPR system in a roving capacity on details should require a driver and a system operator in the LPR equipped vehicle. The LPR operator is responsible for confirming any hot list hits via eJusticeNY, and to identify target vehicles for the support vehicles. Support vehicles may be one or two person units as directed by the detail supervisor.
- e. Concealed use LPR vehicles, focused on high crime reduction initiatives, will not be used to initiate the traffic stop absent exigent circumstances.
- f. Stationary mode usage requires only one member to operate the system, verify hits and identify target vehicles for the support cars.
- g. Note: Commissioned Officers may issue further restrictions, taking into account knowledge of the area to be patrolled and the particular assignment.

#### **Vehicles:**

LPR equipped vehicles should be used as often as possible. When not in use, every effort is to be made to ensure that the LPR vehicle is garage.

- a. A copy of the Car System User Guide shall be maintained in a folder in each LPR equipped vehicle.

#### **LPR Maintenance:**

The LPR camera lenses shall be cleaned with a glass cleaner sprayed on a soft cloth at the beginning and end of each use.

- a. Any damage shall be reported immediately through channels to the Commissioned Officer in charge. Technical questions concerning the LPR shall be directed to the vendor.
- b. Officers shall **NOT** directly contact the technical support. All technical support contact will be handled by the vendor.

#### **Hit Verification:**

The information received from license plates that are recognized as wanted hits is dated, typically up to 24 hours old. Officers must verify all “hits” through eJusticeNY, and follow all eJusticeNY policies and procedures. At this time the LPR does not interface with real time NCIC or eJusticeNY dada, the LPR is **ONLY** to be used as an investigative tool. Confirmation is essential prior to a stop.

Verified hits on a unoccupied vehicle: maintain visual observation while supervisory contact is initiated to determine if immediate recovery action will be taken or whether surveillance will be continued.

**Updating/Using LPR Wanted Files:**

For vehicles equipped with Traffic and Criminal Software (TRACS), at the beginning of each detail or shift using the LPR, a “start shift” from the TRACS application shall be conducted to update and transfer the required wanted files to the vehicle computer.

**User Added Hot Files (Plates):**

After the initial upload to the LPR if it becomes necessary to add specific information, the database can be “customized” by manually entering the information. This option is provided on the computer desktop screen under the “operation” icon and should be utilized in cases where crimes are reported after the LPR has been deployed (e.g., stolen vehicles, AMBER Alerts, radio item broadcasts, etc.) or when a manual plate check needs to be performed. A Commissioned Officer must approve any additional data entry (i.e. entering local police department gang information, patrol awareness for Project Impact assignments, etc.)

**Investigations:**

The LPR has been used for many purposes by investigative units throughout New York State. Initially it was used to address the stolen vehicle issue and was quickly determined the limiting the use of the LPR to locating stolen vehicles was not an effective use of the personnel assigned to these details. Throughout the State, few stolen cars are recovered parked on the street with their original license plates attached. If a valid license plate is attached to a stolen car, the LPR will not know the car is stolen.

Numerous details conducted have yielded the following effective strategies when using the LPR for investigative purposes. The LPR is used by specialized units with uniform patrol support in an effort to saturate a specific geographical area. The change of identifying a crime in progress is directly related to the amount of vehicles stopped for violating the law. This requires that all vehicles whose registration plates return a hit by the LPR are in suspended and revoked registration category.

These vehicles should be impounded and therefore require an inventory search to safeguard the contents of the vehicle. This application works well, especially when specialized personnel from narcotics, auto theft, fraudulent documents, gun and gang units are present to examine any issues that arise. Be advised, addressing all suspended and revoked registrations can quickly exhaust the resources of a detail. Consideration must be given to having the appropriate number of personnel available and, subsequently scaling back which “hits” will be addressed or ending the detail when the support vehicles are no longer available. The combining of forces within an agency as well as with state, county, and local police has been very effective when conducting these saturation details.

The LPR can be used to locate vehicles of interest for a specific investigation. An example would be locating one or more recently stolen vehicles in close proximity to each other or located near a suspected chop shop. The stolen vehicle (s) can then be monitored and/or have a GPS placed on them, which will afford investigators the ability to follow them to their ultimate destination.

Specific vehicle files can be loaded into the LPR that may relate to a situation of concern to a certain geographical area. Some examples would be gang members or associates, prior sex offenders, burglary, robbery, auto theft, larceny and criminal mischief targets. The data collected may enable investigators to take immediate action or provide solid leads should a crime occur in the vicinity of the captured plate.

#### **Mutual Aid Situations:**

#### **Emergency Based Operations**

During the course of normal Law Enforcement duties, incidents may occur that require immediate assistance from other local, county or State Law Enforcement agencies. The LPR can be a valuable tool in these situations, such as an AMBER Alert, bank robbery, or other violent crime, and can help bring the incident to a safe and successful conclusion.

The DCJS, as part of the letter of agreement to receive a plate reader, requires the deployment of available license plate readers in the event of an AMBER or DCJS Missing Child/College Student Alert is announced. A coordinated plan is presented below so that local, county, and state law enforcement agencies can maximize the coverage area to search for any vehicle involved in the abduction.

#### **NYS AMBER and NYS DCJS Missing Child/College Student Alert Activations**

**Communications:** Upon receiving notification (via fax, eJusticeNY, email or other notification system) that a NYS AMBER Alert or NYS DCJS Missing Child/College Student Alert has occurred, communications staff must immediately review details and notify supervision.

Unless directed to take alternate action, communications staff must immediately broadcast Alert details to all available patrols and must specifically advise patrols using LPR equipment to manually place involved vehicle plate number (s) into respective vehicle LPR databases.

Upon receipt of updated information, communications staff should immediately provide this information to supervisor and patrols. If an involved vehicle plate number changes, patrols using LPR equipment should be directed to update database entries. All actions taken by communications staff should be documented in accordance with agency policies and procedures.

**Upon notification of an Alert:** All patrols using LPR equipment must manually place involved vehicle plate number (s) into the vehicle database. Officers should process to patrol areas which are likely to increase the chance of encountering the vehicle. Upon receipt of updated information (i.e. involved vehicle plate number changes) patrols must immediately update database entries.

**Look Back:** Officers must promptly search the vehicle LPR databases to determine if a record of past encounters exists. If so, information should immediately be provided to supervision for investigative action. Also, supervision should review the agency records database, if one exists, to determine if patrols had previously encountered the target plate. Logs should be updated according to the previously cited general procedures.

**Recovery:** If the vehicle is encountered, the actions taken should ensure the safe recovery of the missing child. Officer experience and judgment, as well as agency specific policies and procedures (i.e., critical incident management) will dictate the best course of actions to take. All actions should be documented in accordance with agency policies and procedures.

Additionally, registration plates can be added to the LPR database during a detail. These plates are then brought to the attention of law enforcement after the existing data has been downloaded into the LPR. Examples would be vehicles reported stolen after 5AM that date, AMBER or DCJS Missing Child/College Student Alert or any other vehicle involved in an incident or crime that is being sought by law enforcement. LPR units can be deployed to college all registration plates in an area surrounding a major crime scene or incident. LPR units can also be placed at “pinch points” or major routes of escape/travel immediately after such an event.

### **Coordinated Scheduled Operations**

When other violent crimes occur (bank robberies, murder, kidnapping) local agencies should contact adjacent law enforcement agencies with LPRs and determine the proper level of assistance needed. They should work together to determine a perimeter and deploy the LPR accordingly.

The development of a mutual aid plan follows an outline that, at a minimum addresses the following issues:

1. Definitions and concepts.
2. Levels of mutual aid.
3. Mutual aid procedures.
4. Practical issues.
5. Law Enforcement Agency Roles and Responsibilities.

DCJS encourages local, county and state law enforcement agencies to utilize the LPRs in targeted traffic enforcement details such as StopDWI checkpoints or seat belt enforcement details. LPRs can be a valuable tool in other interagency coordinated efforts to monitor traffic safety on roadways that traverse several law enforcement jurisdictions to improve the safety on New York’s roadways. As with any roadblock or targeted operation, the department involved should consult with the proper legal authority for their jurisdiction and discuss the proper manner in which to conduct the roadblock, taking into consideration established legal precedent and the legal rights of the person (s) involved.

In conclusion, DCJS will facilitate meetings to assist local agencies in developing a plan of operation in mutual aid situations that focuses on interagency cooperation and information sharing to ensure that the LPRs are deployed in the most effective manner. DCJS will also conduct debriefings with affected agencies to fine tune the mutual aid response process and cooperative identify the strengths and weaknesses in the overall deployment plan.