

DALTON POLICE DEPARTMENT

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<i>Subject</i> License Plate Recognition Systems			
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I. Policy

It is the policy of the Dalton Police Department to utilize license plate recognition systems to enhance investigations of crimes involving the use of vehicles and to collect data for use in crime analysis.

II. Definitions

- A. *Alarm* – Also known as a ‘Hit’. A positive indication, by visual and / or audible signal, of a potential match between data on a hot list and a license plate scanned by the license plate recognition system.
- B. *Hot list* – A list of records extracted from criminal justice databases, such as NCIC and GCIC, or compiled by law enforcement agencies that is used by LPR technology to compare captured vehicle license plate information
- C. *License Plate Recognition (LPR) System* – A system of cameras and software that uses advanced technology to capture images of vehicle license plates, interpret the characters on the license plates, and compare the license plates to those listed in a file of records with law enforcement interest, such as stolen vehicles, stolen license plates, missing persons, wanted persons, etc.
- D. *LPR Coordinator* – The Assistant Chief of Police or his / her designee, charged with the administration, training, troubleshooting, repairing, and coordinating of all aspects of the Department’s LPR system program.

III. Training

- A. The LPR Coordinator shall be responsible for overseeing the development and administration of the training program for LPR system operators.
- B. The training program shall consist of a combination of classroom instruction and hands-on use of the system. Training topics shall include:
 - 1. Manufacturer’s guidelines and recommendations

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2. Maintenance procedures
 3. Guidelines for the proper use of the system
 4. NCIC / GCIC regulations
 5. Legal issues regarding the use of the LPR
 6. Applicable Department policies
- C. All LPR system training shall be documented, and the documentation shall be forwarded to the Training Coordinator.
- D. Only Officers that have completed training and demonstrated proficiency in the use of the LPR system shall be assigned to operate the system.

IV. **Procedures**

A. Authority

1. Only authorized LPR systems shall be approved for use by the Department.
2. The LPR Coordinator shall be responsible for the selection of LPR systems to be used by the Department.
3. The LPR Coordinator shall be responsible for the selection of personnel to be trained for the operation of LPR systems.

B. Operations

1. Prior to operating a vehicle with an LPR device, Officers shall perform an inspection of the equipment. The inspection shall include ensuring cameras are positioned properly and securely, the system is working properly, and there is no damage to components.
2. While in operation, the LPR device passively captures the license plates of moving and parked vehicles and compares them to license plates entered in a hot list.
3. Officers shall exercise due care and caution when utilizing an LPR device and operating a vehicle.
4. An Officer shall not detain an individual based solely on an alert from the LPR system unless the Officer has reasonable suspicion to believe that such person is involved in criminal activity. Each incident should be weighed according to the totality of the circumstances presented therein.
5. The following are general guidelines only but should be used to assist the Officer in determining when reasonable suspicion exists concerning various types of LPR alerts.

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- a. The Officer shall visually verify that the scanned license plate matches the alert information regarding plate numbers, letters, and the issuing state.
- b. The Officer should always attempt to visually verify that the vehicle description and any other descriptors provided are consistent between the alert and the vehicle / person in question.
- c. Once the state and all characters of the license plate have been verified as accurate, the following information shall be utilized by the Officer in determining whether or not reasonable suspicious exists:
 - (1) For expired tags, insurance violations, and other license plate suspensions, Officers should verify the status of the tag through GCIC to establish reasonable suspension.
 - (2) For stolen vehicles and stolen license plates, an alert alone is generally sufficient to establish reasonable suspicion.
 - (3) For wanted persons, the alert may be utilized as reasonable suspicion unless the Officer has information that the wanted subject is not inside the vehicle.
 - (4) For lookouts (BOLOs) only, the alert is information only for Officers, and reasonable suspicion may or may not exist based on the alert alone. The narrative of the alert should assist Officers in determining the level of reasonable suspicion, and independent reasonable suspicion may or may not be required in order to detain.
 - (5) For alerts for officer safety, suspected gang member, sexual offender, past offender, associate only, and information only, the alerts are information only for Officers. Reasonable suspicion should be obtained in order to detain.
6. If an alert is determined to be invalid or out of date, the Officer shall notify the originating agency that their entry / records need to be updated or purged.
7. Officers that make arrests or issue citations based on alerts from the LPR system shall save, print, and / or export the LPR alert information for future court reference.

C. Hot Lists and Databases

1. The Department shall maintain a local hot list of vehicles and persons associated with specific vehicles that are sought in connection with criminal investigations. Examples of situations in which an entry to the local hot list may be made include missing persons, wanted persons, child abductions, overdue motorists, attempt to locate, and BOLOs.

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2. The Intelligence Analyst or other person that has been designated by the LPR Coordinator shall be responsible for maintaining and updating the local hot list.
3. If a license plate has been, or will be, entered into GCIC / NCIC or the Department of Revenue hotlist, it should generally not be entered into the local hot list, unless there are extenuating circumstances that dictate a faster entry.
4. Only complete license plate numbers shall be entered into the hot list. Requests to enter partial plate numbers shall be rejected.
5. Entries of license plate numbers into the local hot list shall be set with an expiration of no longer than thirty (30) days from the date of entry. Should the entry require renewal, the request shall be approved by a Supervisor.
6. Once an entry into the local hot list is determined to no longer be valid or required, the Intelligence Analyst or other designated personnel shall be notified to remove the entry from the system.
7. LPR databases may be queried only for official investigative and intelligence-gathering purposes, strictly related to criminal activity. Personal use of LPR-generated data is strictly prohibited and is subject to disciplinary action or other penalties, as applicable under law.

D. Fixed LPR devices

1. Fixed LPR devices may be mounted to a stationary object, such as a utility pole, in areas with high crime rates or significant amounts of traffic.
2. The mounting of fixed LPR devices shall be coordinated with Dalton Public Works or other applicable utility companies.
3. Fixed LPR devices shall only be moved after receiving approval by the LPR Coordinator and only by personnel who have been properly trained.

V. **Maintenance**

- A. The LPR system user shall conduct an inspection of his / her assigned LPR equipment prior to and after his / her tour of duty. The user is responsible for the general maintenance and cleanliness of the assigned LPR equipment.
- B. The user shall not modify the LPR equipment or software operating system without approval by the LPR Coordinator.
- C. Any time a mobile LPR unit is disconnected or removed from a vehicle, the unit shall be placed in a protective storage area or packaging to prevent damage.
- D. Mobile LPR cameras shall be removed from the exterior of the vehicle prior to entering an automatic car washing facility.

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- E. LPR camera lenses may be cleaned with mild soap and water and a soft, non-abrasive cloth. Glass cleaners or other chemical products shall not be used to clean LPR camera lenses.
- F. Damage to LPR equipment shall be immediately reported to a Supervisor. The damage shall be documented, and the documentation shall be forwarded to the LPR Coordinator.
- G. The LPR Coordinator shall be notified of any LPR equipment in need of maintenance or repair and shall ensure that all maintenance and repairs are completed.
- H. Mobile camera mounts and focus shall not be adjusted, unless approved by the LPR Coordinator.

VI. **Data Security and Access**

- A. LPR systems shall be used and accessed for law enforcement purposes only.
- B. Officers who are assigned access to LPR devices and / or databases shall be issued a username and password specific to each individual.
- C. When conducting investigative queries into an LPR database, the requestor's name, case number (if available), and a reason shall be listed with the associated search. Queries regarding administrative or auditing purposes shall be excluded from the requirement to provide a case number.
- D. The LPR system creates a log of all user actions, including date and time, conducted within the database.
- E. Personnel shall not release any specific information obtained by the LPR devices that would be considered a privacy issue, or create the appearance of one, to non-law enforcement personnel, unless required by law. This shall not preclude personnel from releasing general information as to the effectiveness of the LPR program and other such communications.
- F. An audit shall be conducted at least annually to ensure compliance with these requirements. The Support Services Division Commander or his / her designee shall be responsible for conducting and documenting the annual audit.

VII. **Data Storage and Retention**

- A. The Department utilizes LPR devices obtained through multiple vendors. ~~participates as a member agency in the Atlanta Carolinas High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (AC-HIDTA) LPRP Database program which allows for information sharing between a number of local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies.~~
- B. All LPR data collected by the Department's LPR units is transmitted to the LPR vendor for storage. ~~the AC-HIDTA Operations Center via a fiber optic line through~~

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~~an encrypted Virtual Private Network. The data is maintained on the Operations Center server independent of any other law enforcement database housed at the AC-HIDTA Operations Center.~~

- C. ~~All LPR data provided to AC-HIDTA shall be stored on the Operations Center server for a period of three (3) years. After the three (3) year period, the data shall be purged unless it has become, or it is reasonable to believe that it will become, evidence, including evidence that tends to inculcate or exculpate a suspect, in a specific criminal or other law enforcement investigation or action.~~ LPR data transmitted to the vendor for storage shall be retained per vendor retention schedules.

This policy supersedes any previous policies issued.

BY ORDER OF

CHIEF OF POLICE

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