



# *Alexandria Police Department*

## **Directive 10.40**



## **LICENSE PLATE READER PROGRAM**

<b>Effective Date: 10-28-2025</b>		<b>Cancels: 03-25-2025</b>	
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### **10.40.01 PURPOSE AND POLICY**

The purpose of this directive is to establish guidelines for the use of the license plate readers and their technology. Unless otherwise noted in this directive, requirements and procedures for report completion remain unchanged.

It is the policy of this department to develop and provide the most effective, efficient and reliable technology for all members of the department. License Plate Readers will be used to increase efficiency in recovering stolen vehicles as well as enhancing the investigations of vehicle-related crime.

LPR systems may take various forms, including stationary devices positioned at fixed locations and mobile devices affixed to law enforcement vehicles and mobile trailers (updated 09-15-2025).

There is a distinction between parking license plate readers, which are used solely for parking enforcement and administrative purposes, and investigative license plate readers, which are used by law enforcement officers for criminal investigations and public safety operations (updated 10-28-2025).

**10.40.02 DEFINITIONS**

**Alarm (aka Hit)** – A positive indication, by visual and/or audible signal, of a potential match between data on the hot list 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.

**Electronic File Management System (EFMS)** - A system consisting of recording devices (ICC, BWC, LPR, etc.) and a cloud-based storage system which houses digital evidence captured by these systems, as well as digital evidence gathered by sources outside the system. For the purposes of this directive, this solely refers to Evidence.com as our current EFMS (updated 09-15-2025).

**Hot List** – A database populated with items of specific concern to the investigative and/or enforcement interests of law enforcement in the City of Alexandria. This may include, but is not limited to, Terrorist Screening Center watch list, 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.

**License Plate Recognition (LPR) system** – Equipment consisting of *one or more* camera(s), computer, and computer software used to automatically recognize and interpret the characters on vehicle license plates. This data is then compared against a list of license plates bearing some significance to law enforcement.

**LPR Administrator:** Support team within the Technology Support Division (TSD) charged with administration, troubleshooting, training, repairing, and coordinating all aspects of the LPR systems for the Police Department. TSD will maintain a list of trained operators (updated 09-15-2025).

**LPR-Generated Data** – All information, including location, date and time of a license plate encounter, the OCR interpolated data, and any LPR-generated digital photographic image(s) of the license plate and vehicle generated entirely through the use of and by the LPR equipment.

**LPR Operator** – A properly trained user of the LPR systems.

**10.40.03 RESPONSIBILITIES****A. LPR Operators:**

- 1 *LPR operators shall undergo training provided by the LPR Administrator or designated trainers before operating LPR devices or accessing LPR systems. Training shall include guidelines on lawful usage, data handling, and legal considerations. (updated 09-15-2025).*
2. Operators, including Parking Enforcement Officers, shall prioritize safety when using LPR systems in vehicles, adhering to all relevant traffic laws and

regulations. Operators must refrain from engaging in any activity that could compromise their focus on safe driving. (updated 09-15-2025).

3. Officers assigned to patrol duties are required to activate and login to their LPR systems at the start of their shifts and maintaining system activation throughout their assigned shifts. All other sworn employees with access to LPR systems are strongly encouraged to keep the system continuously activated as well to maximize the opportunity for scanning vehicles on the hotlist. (updated 09-15-2025).
4. Upon receiving an LPR alert, operators shall exert reasonable efforts to locate the vehicle and undertake necessary law enforcement actions when they are available and positioned to intercept the vehicle. (updated 09-15-2025).
5. When a vehicle is located following an alarm, LPR operators must first confirm the accuracy and nature of the alarm. This includes visually matching the alarm with the vehicle's license plate, or other identifying characteristics of the vehicle, and checking VCIN/NCIC to ensure the circumstance for the alarm is still active. If this criteria is not met, LPR operators must obtain independent reasonable suspicion for the stop. (updated 09-15-2025).
6. Parking Enforcement Officers utilizing the parking LPR system must first visually confirm the accuracy and nature of the alarm before issuing a citation. This includes matching the alarm with the vehicle's license plate and the location of the parking offense. (updated 09-15-2025).
7. It is important to understand that while an alarm can generate reasonable suspicion, achieving probable cause requires separate and independent validation. (updated 09-15-2025).
8. When querying the LPR database, the LPR operator shall document the law enforcement purpose in sufficient detail within the database, to include entering an incident/case number when one is available. This record-keeping is essential for establishing a transparent and comprehensive audit trail of all database queries. (updated 09-15-2025).
9. Whenever an LPR system assists in a law enforcement investigation requiring a police report, operators must document this information within the report. They are also accountable for transferring relevant LPR evidence files from the LPR database to the EFMS. This transfer must occur before the automatic database purge, which typically happens within 21 days of the evidence being captured. Documentation of the evidence storage location should be part of the Officer's police report narrative. (updated 09-15-2025).

#### **B. The LPR Administrators:**

1. The LPR Administrator is responsible for the administrative oversight, troubleshooting, training coordination, maintenance, and repair of all LPR systems within the department. (updated 09-15-2025).

2. The LPR Administrator shall maintain a list of trained LPR operators and organize regular training sessions. (updated 09-15-2025).
3. The LPR Administrator will ensure that all LPR software is up-to-date and functioning optimally. (updated 09-15-2025).
4. The LPR Administrator is responsible for ensuring that the databases used by the system to provide notifications, such as the Virginia State Police hot list, are updated at least 24 hours, or as soon as practicable, after such updates become available. (updated 09-15-2025).
5. The LPR Administrator will oversee the installation and maintenance of LPR software and hardware. (updated 09-15-2025).

**B. Supervisors and Commanders:**

1. All supervisors, irrespective of their training in the LPR system, are accountable for ensuring that the LPR system is utilized by their subordinate officers in a manner consistent with this policy and all applicable laws. Any deviations from these guidelines shall be promptly addressed. (updated 09-15-2025).
2. Patrol and Parking supervisors are tasked with ensuring that both themselves and their subordinate officers receive training and access to LPR systems. These supervisors shall collaborate with the LPR Administrator to facilitate officer enrollment in LPR training at the earliest opportunity available. (updated 09-15-2025).
3. Patrol and Parking supervisors are responsible for ensuring that their subordinate officers activate their LPR systems at the start of their shifts, and the systems remain active throughout the entirety of the shift. (updated 09-15-2025).
4. Patrol supervisors must ensure that officers who receive an LPR alert and are available and in a position to intercept the vehicle make reasonable efforts to intercept it and take necessary law enforcement action. (updated 09-15-2025).

<b>10.40.04      DATA RETENTION</b>
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**A.      LPR Data Storage:**

1.      LPR equipment may collect and store LPR-generated data during the license plate detection and identification phase of use.
2.      The LPR databases will be configured to adhere to legal regulations regarding data retention.
3.      LPR data will be transmitted to a centralized database and retained for no longer than 21 days, after which, a mandatory purge will occur (per Virginia Code § 2.2-5517). Operators must stay updated on the current retention schedule for various LPR systems through training. They ensure

prompt retention of relevant data within the EFMS upon learning its significance to an investigation. Operators should remain mindful that many LPR files are purged after 21 days.

4. Operators are responsible for transferring LPR database files to the EFMS when the data pertains to an ongoing law enforcement investigation and before the automatic purge of the database. (updated 09-15-2025).

B. Data Access:

1. Access to the database, to include downloading system data, shall be limited to trained law enforcement officers with specific needs related to a criminal offense investigation (VA law), stolen vehicle, stolen plate, missing or endangered person, human trafficking, or fugitive from justice. Additionally, professional staff employees assigned to the Crime Analysis Section shall have similar access privileges for the purpose of supporting investigations. (updated 09-15-2025).
2. The LPR database used for law enforcement purposes will be maintained separately from any other database used for non-law enforcement purposes (e.g., parking enforcement). (updated 09-15-2025).
3. The parking LPR database should not be used for purposes other than parking-related matters. If a query must be conducted for matters unrelated to parking enforcement, it can be approved and conducted by any of the following people: Commander of the Special Operations Division (typically a Captain or higher), Commander of Traffic Safety Section (typically a Lieutenant or higher), Sworn Supervisor of the Parking Enforcement Unit (typically a Sergeant or higher). The query conducted, and all related information that was provided, shall be saved for retention on a Departmental network drive (SharePoint, or similar network) and provided to the Virginia State Police upon request. This includes the following: date & time of query, APD case number, subject and results of query, recipient of the results of the query, if an arrest was made. (updated 09-15-2025).

C. Data Security:

1. LPR data will be stored and handled in compliance with City AR 10-10 (Information Systems Security Policies) to ensure the security and integrity of the system, system data, and audit trail data, and protect against unauthorized access, destruction, use, modification or disclosure. (updated 09-15-2025).
2. The Mobile Computer Unit Sergeant is responsible for performing an internal audit once every 30 days of the LPR database to ensure that officers are utilizing the LPR system in accordance with this policy and applicable state laws. Suspected discrepancies will be reported

immediately to the Commander of the Technology Services Division.  
(updated 09-15-2025).

D. Data Sharing:

1. LPR system and audit trail data may only be shared with other Virginia law enforcement agencies to assist with accomplishing law enforcement objectives. LPR data can only be provided to other state or federal law enforcement agencies pursuant to a search warrant or court issued subpoena. APD officers and crime analysts can access LPR databases of other law enforcement agencies when access is available and necessary to achieve a law enforcement objective. LPR system and audit trail data shall not be subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act. (updated 09-15-2025).
2. APD reserves the right to terminate or suspend any data-sharing agreement with an external agency. (updated 09-15-2025).
3. APD is prohibited by law from selling any system or audit trail data. (updated 09-15-2025).

<b>10.40.05 LPR MAINTENANCE</b>
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1. LPR operators shall not make any modifications to the LPR equipment or software operating system without explicit direction from the LPR Administrator. (updated 09-15-2025).
2. LPR camera lenses may be cleaned using a soft, non-abrasive cloth. (updated 09-15-2025).
3. Damage to LPR equipment should be promptly reported to a supervisor, and a documented report will be forwarded to the LPR Administrator for necessary action. (updated 09-15-2025).
4. The LPR Administrator shall be notified of any LPR equipment requiring maintenance or repair, and appropriate measures shall be taken to ensure timely maintenance and repairs. (updated 09-15-2025).

<b>10.40.06 COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT</b>
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The Alexandria Police Department recognizes the importance of transparency and open communication with the community regarding the utilization of LPR technology. The Alexandria Police Department is committed to ensuring that the public is well-informed about the purpose, benefits, and privacy protections associated with LPR usage. This section outlines our efforts to engage with the community:

A. Community Education and Awareness:

1. The Alexandria Police Department shall proactively engage in community education and awareness initiatives to inform the public about the role and benefits of LPR technology in enhancing public safety and assisting law enforcement agencies.
2. The Alexandria Police Department shall provide easily accessible information to explain how LPR systems function, their potential impact on crime prevention, and the safeguards in place to protect the privacy of individuals.
3. The Alexandria Police Department shall make its LPR policy publicly accessible. This accessibility ensures that the public can review and understand the guidelines governing LPR usage within the department. (updated 09-15-2025).

**BY AUTHORITY OF:**

**Tarrick McGuire**  
Chief of Police

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tarrick McGuire", with a stylized flourish at the end.

10/28/25