Section 4/300 ◆ Traffic Enforcement		
4 / 313	License Plate Reader	12/7/07
Accreditation Standards		

4 / 313.05 GENERAL

To provide guidelines for the implementation, installation, and use of mobile and stationary LICENSE PLATE READER (LPR) (MPH-900) technology and equipment at selected locations to scan, detect, and identify license plate numbers appearing on selected "Hot Lists".

4 / 313.10 POLICY

The Laurel Police Department will utilize LPR technology in selected cars and at stationary locations to accurately identify license plates entered in a static "Hot List" created from NCIC (National Crime Information Center) and MVA (Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration) data using LPR optical character recognition technology and to evaluate the operational usefulness of this technology in completing Laurel Police Department's mission.

4 / 313.15 SYSTEM

Installation - Stationary and mobile scanners will be installed at selected locations and on selected unmarked vehicles.

System Specifications - The LPR scanners are expected to read license plates at 80-95% accuracy. The system should function in a variety of weather, light, and road conditions. In mobile applications, optimal performance is expected when the speed differential between the target vehicle and the patrol car is no more than 35 mph.

System Operation - The LPR equipment passively reads the registration / license plates of moving or parked motor vehicles and compares them against "Hot Lists" containing records from MVA and NCIC files. The "Hot List" database will be updated with the most current wanted vehicle information available from MVA and NCIC daily. There is no direct connection between the LPR equipment and NCIC and MVA. Manual additions to "Hot Lists" can be made at the local level. During operation, plate matches are indicated by an audible and a visual alarm. In addition to verification of the plate number and state, an officer or dispatcher is responsible for verifying the status of the entry before the suspect vehicle is stopped. No database of license plates scanned will be stored.

Training - Dispatchers, radio operators, sworn officers, civilian support staff, and network administrators shall receive appropriate training from qualified LPD staff or vendor representatives prior to using or maintaining the LPR equipment.

4 / 313.20 USER MANUALS

The following manufacturer's user manual, which provides operational procedures, is available for reference.

Mobile Auto-Detector User Manual - Used for officer training and operation, this manual provides:

- System composition and configuration;
- Description of system functions;
- Operating procedures;
- Description of the orientation and visual field of the cameras;
- Description of the layout and use of the laptop computer screen display (human computer interface); and
- Alarm and data transfer procedures.

4 / 313.25 RESPONSIBILITIES

1. User (Sworn or Civilian)

The LPR will be utilized by appropriately trained personnel, which will consist of sworn and civilian support staff (e.g.: Animal warden/parking enforcement officer and auxiliary members).

- Verify that the Automatic Plate Reader (MPH-900) "hit" on the plate matches the image and then follow established procedures to file check MVA/NCIC. Ensure equipment is functioning properly. The Statistical Analysis function will determine if the LPR is functioning correctly. The system should indicate a number of plates that have been checked. If there are no plates indicated, the system is not functioning. If the system shows that plates are being scanned, the system is working correctly. . The Statistical Analysis section is found in section 6 of the User's Guide.

2. Information Technology & Community Services

Responsible for coordinating maintenance and repair, employee training, and coordinating the establishment of parameters for download of NCIC and MVA.

3. Public Information Officer

All media contacts will be coordinated through the Chief or Deputy Chief of Police, who shall be consulted prior to releasing any information to the news media.

4. Office of the Deputy Chief

This unit will have electronic retrieval capability to access the LPR system and download data for evaluation. Evaluation will include performance measures related to technical features (number of plates read correctly), operations (handling multiple "hits"), and outcomes (number of stolen vehicles recovered, along with MVA violations).

4 / 313.30 FUNCTIONALITY AND OPERATION

1. Probable Cause - An Automatic Plate Reader (MPH-900) "hit" shall not be used as probable cause for a traffic stop or enforcement contact. Contact with the vehicle and occupants shall only be made after the "hit" is confirmed through MVA/NCIC.

2. Manual Entry by User into "Hot List" Database. Upon approval from a supervisor, Officers can manually place vehicles and information onto the "Hot List." The entries listed do not give the officer probable cause to stop and detain the vehicle and/or occupants.

- Manual entries will have a default deletion date of seven days after the entry.
- A shorter or longer length may be entered, but there should be a rationale for the change (type of situation, AMBER Alert, officer safety, etc.)
- Examples of possible reasons for manual insertion of a plate number include: Be On Look Out (BOLO), Attempt To Locate (ATL), Fail to Pay, Motorist overdue to destination, AMBER Alert, Wanted Person, Missing Persons.

3. 'O' vs. Zero - Because of standardized NCIC formats, a letter"O" and a zero in a license plate number are synonymous in NCIC records. Therefore, the "Hot List", NCIC, and the Automatic Plate Reader (MPH-900) reads the letter "O" as a zero. Any plate entry, including any manually entered by an officer or a dispatcher with an "O", is automatically converted to a zero.

4. Update of Patrol Car "Hot List" Database - The mobile unit must be have a data transfer daily the "Hot List" update and the vehicle's data compiled on LPR identified "hits" must be manually updated daily.

5. Mobile Unit Operation - When mobile LPR equipment detects a "Hot List" entry, the officer receives audible and visual notification on the in-car laptop computer. The notification consists of the plate number from the "Hot List" and a digital (black and white) image of the license plate read.

Visual Verification - The Operator receiving the notification will first visually verify that the registration from the "Hot List" (plate number and state) is the same as the registration shown in the digital image.

If No Match - If for any reason they do not match, the "hit" will be rejected.

If Match -If they do match, the "hit" will be accepted and must be verified through NCIC/MVA.

6. Notification - After receiving a valid "hit" through NCIC, the officer will notify the Police Communications Dispatcher. The Operator will request back up from the closest available officer. The back-up Officer will be notified of the reason for the "hit", that the call for assistance is the result of the LPR stolen hit and that the "hit" has been validated through NCIC.

7. Traffic Stop: Before the officer intercepts and stops the vehicle, the Hit must be verified unless there is other probable cause to make a traffic stop.

Verification of Hit - If, for any reason, the LPR "hit" cannot be verified through NCIC, the vehicle is not to be stopped based solely on the LPR. If the Officer cannot read the digital image sufficiently to verify the license plate number and state, an officer may be dispatched to intercept the vehicle, however the intercepting officer must first verify the "hit" through NCIC prior to stopping the vehicle.

After verifying the "hit" through NCIC, the officer will then intercept the vehicle.

8. Case Documentation;

A printed record for the incident report / case investigation of the LPR "hit" that includes time, date, location, plate number, and infrared image of the rear of the vehicle shall be included in the case. Data is downloadable for a 31-day period before it is dumped automatically and un-retrievable.

9. Parking Lots:

In the event of a "Hit," the following steps will be taken:

Visual Verification - The officer receiving the notification first visually verifies the Hot List entry (Plate number and state) matches the digital image.

If No Match - If for any reason they do not match, the "Hit" will be rejected.

If Match - If they do match, the "Hit" will be accepted and the officer will verify the hit through NCIC if applicable.

Notification - When verifying the "Hit," the officer will notify the Dispatcher the verification request is the result of an LPR "Hit.

Locating the vehicle and occupants – After verifying the "Hit" through NCIC if applicable, the officer will then attempt to re-locate the vehicle and/or the occupants in the parking facility, if applicable.

Empty vehicle - In the event the officer locates the suspect vehicle and it is unoccupied, the officer will advise the Dispatcher of the exact location. Officers should maintain visual contact of the suspect vehicle from a safe vantage point. The use of stop sticks is strongly encouraged in these situations.

Occupied Vehicle - After the warrant is confirmed through NCIC and the officer locates the vehicle and it is occupied, the officer will contact the Dispatcher and advise his/her exact location and request additional units to respond. The type of warrant will determine the type of contact officers will make with the vehicle and/or occupants. If the warrant is a felony violation, the officer will conduct a felony stop as per procedure. All vehicle and foot traffic will be cut off to the affected area until the scene has been secured.

If No NCIC Response - If, for any reason, the LPR "Hit" cannot be verified through NCIC, no action will be taken.

END OF ORDER