

ST. PETERSBURG POLICE DEPARTMENT

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Subject: **LICENSE PLATE RECOGNITION SYSTEM (LPRS)**

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Accreditation Standards: 41.3.9

Cross Reference: §316.0778, F.S.S.

Replaces: Chief's Memo 18-039, License Plate Recognition System (LPRS) (December 15, 2018)
New Policy

This Order provides Department personnel with guidelines and principles for the use of the License Plate Recognition System (LPRS). It consists of the following sections:

- I. Policy
- II. Purpose
- III. Definitions
- IV. Procedures

I. POLICY

A. LPRs shall be used for police purposes as approved by the relative chain of command and consistent with the Department's community policing philosophy and respect for the constitutional rights of all persons.

B. Personnel shall deploy any LPR only with approval of the Chief of Police, or designee, as supported by a written operational plan.

II. PURPOSE

A. The purpose of this Order is to provide Department personnel with guidelines and procedures for the collection, access, use, dissemination, retention, and purging of License Plate Recognition System (LPRS) information to ensure that the information is used for legitimate law enforcement purposes.

B. The License Plate Recognition System (LPRS), hereafter referred to as the System, provides a mechanism to increase the Department's effectiveness in locating and detecting stolen vehicles and wanted persons.

C. The LPRS provides authorized users with tag alerts and an electronic notification that includes an image of the vehicle, the tag and the unconfirmed tag alert.

III. DEFINITIONS

A. Car Detector Mobile System – A vehicle mounted LPR System.

B. Hot Tag – License plate associated with vehicles of interest from an associated database such as the National Criminal Information Center (NCIC), the Florida Criminal Information Center (FCIC) or from a local source including agency generated hot lists.

C. Law Enforcement Archival and Reporting Network (LEARN) Database – The Law Enforcement Archival and Reporting Network (LEARN) is a database maintained by Vigilant Solutions. This database stores tag detections and tag alerts by the License Plate Recognition Reader (LPRR) and allows for hot files to be uploaded by authorized users, including sharing partners.

D. License Plate Recognition Reader (LPRR) – A device attached to a vehicle that uses cameras and computer technology to compare digital images of license plates to lists of know plates of interest, also known as tag alerts, hereafter referred to as Mobile Reader.

E. License Plate Recognition System (LPRS) – The System uses image-processing technology to identify vehicles by their license plates. Using optical character recognition (OCR), the System's software transforms pixels of the digital image of a license plate. These images, known as tag detections, are then compared to various databases, such as NCIC, and agency created records, known as hot tags, for matches or tag alerts.

F. License Plate Recognition Trailer (LPRT) – A speed measurement trailer fitted with an License Plate Recognition Reader, hereafter referred to as Trailer.

G. System Administrator – The certified agency member tasked with administrating the License Plate Recognition System Program. The Information and Technology Services (ITS) Division serves as the System Administrator.

H. Tag Alert – An alert from the System that a scanned tag (tag detection) may be in the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) or other law enforcement database for a specific reason including, but not limited to, being related to a stolen car, wanted person, missing person, or terrorist-related activity. An alert on a tag that has been properly vetted by the user. This includes verifying what tag was read, what the tag was interpreted as, and confirming the accuracy of the tag alert.

I. Target Alert Service (TAS) – Is a program that monitors designated Readers and alerts the user to a Tag Alert. The TAS is used to access tag alert detected by a Reader monitored by the agency, such as a Trailer.

J. Tag Detection – A digital record of tag scanned by a Reader and recorded in the LEARN Database.

IV. PROCEDURES

A. The user who receives a tag alert shall confirm all aspects of the information prior to taking any law enforcement action. The tag detections and alerts are stored in a system maintained by Vigilant known as the LEARN Database. Tag detections are loaded into this system by commercial and government based LPR Systems. Authorized users can query searches for specific or partial tag numbers or search a specified geographic area for tag detections.

B. System Management and Access Guidelines

1. System Guidelines

a. The Readers, the LEARN Database, and all of the systems related functions shall be used for official purposes only by sworn or civilian members of SPPD who have been properly trained in the use of the equipment and related programs.

b. Access to the System is managed by the System Administrator.

1) Levels of access are controlled based on operational needs of the agency.

2) The System Administrator, or designee, manages the System Accounts and filters access to program features on an as needed basis.

3) Accounts are granted for official use only.

c. A tag alert by a Reader or from the LEARN Database does not establish probable cause for an arrest or stop in and of itself.

1) When a user discovers a tag alert it is their responsibility to confirm that it is valid and is associated with the correct vehicle prior to taking any law enforcement action.

2. System Management

a. Device assignment and asset deployment is managed by the Command Staff, or designee.

b. System access to the LEARN Database is provided by ITS.

c. Subsequent data analysis and hot sheet entry is provided by the Intelligence-Led Policing Unit.

d. Records shall be retained in a manner consistent with §316.0778, F.S.S. and the Florida Department of States Records Retention Schedule. Specifically, license plate recognition data shall be retained until obsolete, superseded, or administrative value is lost, but no longer than three (3) anniversary years, unless required to be retained under another record series.

3. System Intended Usage

a. The provisions of this Order provide support to authorized uses of Reader information.

b. Authorized use may include the following based on operational needs of the Department and at the discretion of the Command Staff:

1) Alert authorized users that a particular license plate on a "hot list" is in close proximity to an Reader to dramatically reduce the recovery time of stolen vehicles and/or assist in locating dangerous and wanted subjects.

2) Identify plates associated with potential witnesses and/or victims or violent crime.

3) Identify plates linked to stolen motor vehicles or stolen tags.

4) Provide situational awareness for law enforcement related public safety or otherwise relevant to their authorized duties.

5) Support the Department's response to critical incidents and special events.

6) Support enforcement operations such high crime area patrols, gang investigations, DUI initiatives, enforcement details, directed patrols, or any other official investigative action.

4. Mobile Reader

a. The Mobile Reader utilizes a camera to document tag alerts and proprietary software to compare detections to tag alerts via the LEARN Database.

1) The user will be trained in the specific use of the equipment and software prior to using the System. Training will include use of the System, the LEARN Database, and how to properly confirm tag alert.

2) Absent a system failure, the Mobile Reader will be activated and monitored by the System User at all times while in service. The Mobile Reader shall be identified in the TAS Client and LEARN Database by the user's name.

b. Mobile Reader Tag Alert Protocol

1) A tag alert detected by the Mobile Reader will alert the system user as well as any user logged on to the TAS Client Server of the tag alert. The TAS Client will be monitored by authorized personnel, select members of the Emergency Communications Center, and any other authorized member who has been granted access by Command Staff, or designee.

2) Members who receive a tag alert via the Mobile Reader must confirm the tag alert prior to taking law enforcement action.

3) Confirmation includes visually verifying the tag detection with the tag alert; this includes verifying that the tag characters that were translated match the tag alert characters. The tag alert will be compared against what vehicle was captured during the tag detection to include a match of the make, model and state of the tag. The tag alert itself will then be verified within whatever system it was generated in (i.e. NCIC). Once these steps have been taken and the alert has been verified, the tag alert can be considered a valid alert.

4) Once the tag alert has been verified, the Mobile Reader user will advise the Emergency Communication Center of the confirmed tag alert and appropriate resources may be directed to the last known location and direction of travel of the vehicle in question based on the location of the System.

5) The level of response by law enforcement personnel will be commensurate with the type of tag alert detected.

5. Trailers

a. The Command Staff, or designee, will coordinate the placement of Trailers.

b. The Trailers will be moved by members of the Department who have received training. This training includes trailering techniques, location assessment, and use of the onboard computer to designate the location of the trailer within the TAS Client.

c. Once a Trailer has been deployed, its location shall be updated on CARS and with the Emergency Communications Center. It is the responsibility of the user who deploys the Trailer to ensure that its location is clearly denoted in the TAS Client, on CARS and with the Emergency Communications Center.

d. The location of a Trailer shall be recorded by the Trailer number, the exact location of the Trailer and the direction of travel that it is monitoring. An example would be: Trailer #1 – Gandy Boulevard and 4th Street North – Southbound Lanes.

e. Access to the TAS Client will be granted to personnel who have received training.

f. When a TAS Client User receives a tag alert, they will confirm the validity of the alert by contacting the Emergency Communication Center, prior to taking any law enforcement action. Once the alert is verified, the user may direct appropriate support to affect a stop.

g. Any repairs to the Trailers will be handled by Fleet Services or by an approved vendor.

h. Trailer Tag Alert Protocol

1) A Tag Alert detected by a Trailer will advise any user logged on to the TAS Client Server of the alert. The TAS Client may be monitored by authorized users, authorized users of the Emergency Communications Center, and any other authorized user who has been granted access by Command Staff, or designee.

2) Users who receive a tag alert via the TAS Client must confirm the tag alert prior to taking law enforcement action. Confirmation includes visually verifying the tag detection with the tag alert this includes verifying that the tag alert characters that were translated match the tag alert characters. The tag alert will be compared against what vehicle was captured during the tag detection to include a match of the make, model and state of the tag. The tag alert itself will then be verified within whatever system it was generated in (i.e. NCIC). Once these steps have been taken and the alert has been verified the tag alert can be considered a confirmed tag alert.

3) Once the tag alert has been confirmed, the Emergency Communication Center may direct appropriate resources to the last known location and direction of travel of the vehicle in question based on the location of the Trailer.

4) The level of response by law enforcement personnel will be commensurate with the type of tag alert detected.

6. LEARN Database

a. The LEARN database contains records of any and all tag detections provided by commercial and government partners who use the system. This information is historical by nature but could be actionable based on when a tag detection was scanned.

b. Access to the LEARN Database shall be granted by the Command Staff, or designee. The level of access is determined based on operational needs. This includes what features may be accessed by the user.

c. LEARN Database Access Levels and Use

1) Reader User – An authorized user will have a user profile within the LEARN Database that grants them access to view Hot Tag Hits, NCIC/FCIC Hits, and Stolen Vehicle Hits. They will utilize a proprietary program from LEARN designed for the Reader. They will also have access to the TAS Client.

2) Emergency Communication Center Staff – Designated positions within the Emergency Communications Center will have access to the TAS Client for purposes of monitoring the Systems employed by the agency and any other partners as deemed necessary by Command Staff. This access and its related filters can be edited based on operational needs at the discretion of Command Staff. The TAS Client and e-mail alerts are monitored at all times.

3) The Supervisor, Emergency Communication Center will have access to the LEARN database to enter a real-time priority Hot Tag alert.

4) Intelligence Analysts – All members of the Intelligence-Led Policing Unit have full access to the LEARN Database and any of its related features. This includes the ability to upload hot tags.

5) Uniform Services Bureau – Designated Officers will have access to the LEARN Database and the TAS Client.

6) Investigative Services Bureau – Authorized members of ISB are provided access to the LEARN Database and the TAS Client.

7. Hot Tag Management

a. Authorized users may enter tag numbers into the LEARN Database as a "Hot Tag". This feature allows the creation of Tag Alerts for the Hot Tag for a variety of purposes.

1) The Intelligence-Led Policing Unit manages the entry and retention of Hot Tags in the LEARN Database.

a) Personnel requesting a Hot Tag upload will obtain Supervisory approval and then forward the request to the appropriate Intelligence Analyst.

b) All members of the Intelligence-Led Policing Unit will receive training for the LEARN Database prior to making entries.

c) Only license tags related to felony cases will be used for Hot Tags. Exceptions will be determined on a case by case basis with Supervisory approval.

2) A Hot Tag has a ninety (90) day standard expiration. Upon expiration the Hot Tag is reviewed by the Intelligence-Led Policing Unit for an extension.

3) The Intelligence-Led Policing Unit removes the Hot Tag from the LEARN Database once the Hot Tag's investigative purpose is achieved.

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