I. PURPOSE

To establish guidelines for the deployment, maintenance, training and data storage associated with the usage of License Plate Recognition (LPR) systems by Harford County Sheriff’s Office (HCSO) personnel.

II. POLICY

With courage, honor and integrity we protect the rights and dignity of all citizens. In partnership with our communities we strive to preserve the peace, and provide for a safe environment for all.

The objective of the LPR program is to increase the safety on Harford County roadways while reducing the impact of economic losses caused by auto theft and other vehicle related crimes. The HCSO is committed to increasing the detection of stolen vehicles, vehicles with revoked or suspended registrations, uninsured vehicles, vehicles operated by drivers with suspended or revoked licenses, other vehicle-related crimes that impact the safety of citizens and finding wanted and missing persons.
Harford County Sheriff’s Office
Policy #MAN5600: License Plate Recognition (LPR) Program

5600.1 Overview
5600.1.1 The identification of stolen vehicles, stolen license plates and wanted and missing persons are the primary focuses of the LPR program.
5600.1.2 LPR technology uses specialized cameras and computers to capture large numbers of license plate photographs and compares them to a list of plates of interest. The plates of interest are referred to as a “hot list”.
5600.1.3 LPR systems can identify a target plate within seconds of contact, allowing law enforcement personnel to identify target vehicles that may otherwise be overlooked.
5600.1.4 LPR systems also record every license plate they scan and record the location, date and time of each license plate read.
5600.1.5 The technology is available in mobile systems mounted on police vehicles, which are designed to allow officers to patrol at normal speeds, while the system reads license plates they come in contact with and alerts them if there is a match to a “hot list”.
5600.1.6 The Maryland Coordination and Analysis Center (MCAC) will house the LPR System Operations Center, which is the central clearinghouse for all license plates scanned by LPR systems.
5600.1.7 The Operations Center is a data collection and reporting tool maintained by MCAC personnel designated by the MCAC Director.
5600.1.8 All LPR system data will be maintained on the Operations Center server at MCAC.
5600.1.9 The Operations Center provides a database, inquiry tool, history tracking and reporting for the entire LPR program, which manages and provides a storage and search structure for the license plate information being collected in the field.
5600.1.10 The Operations Center acts as a secure intra-net site, allowing only personnel with password protected access to some or all of the license plate data collected.
5600.1.11 The Operations Center receives all scanned reads collected by fixed and mobile LPR systems deployed throughout the State and organizes the data into a central database, which supports the reporting and query functions.
5600.1.12 Authorized MCAC personnel have the ability to:
5600.1.12.1 Look for a license plate or partial license plate in the history and view the image and location of matches;
5600.1.12.2 View maps with the location of plate reads and alarms;
5600.1.12.3 View statistical reports on reads and alarms; and
5600.1.12.4 View reads and alarms for a specific geographic area and time frame.

5600.2 Installation and Maintenance
5600.2.1 Mobile LPR systems shall be installed in HCSO vehicles as determined by the Sheriff or his designee.
5600.2.2 The Electronic Services Unit (ESU) shall be responsible for the installation and maintenance of LPR systems equipment in HCSO vehicles.  
5600.2.3 The ESU shall be responsible for maintaining a detailed inventory record and conducting an annual inventory of all LPR system equipment.  
5600.2.4 Requests for maintenance of LPR systems shall be documented on the HCSO Vehicle Maintenance Record (SO-034) and forwarded to the ESU.  
5600.2.5 Any damage to the LPR system shall be immediately reported to the member’s supervisor.  
5600.2.6 LPR system equipment shall be cleaned and maintained according to manufacturer’s recommendations.  

5600.3 Division Commander Responsibilities  
5600.3.1 Division Commanders of personnel who are assigned mobile LPR systems shall:  
5600.3.1.1 Be responsible for overseeing the LPR systems assigned to personnel under their command and ensuring compliance with Agency policy.  
5600.3.1.2 Select appropriate personnel to utilize LPR systems;  
5600.3.1.3 Ensure LPR systems are properly deployed and maintained;  
5600.3.1.4 Maintain an adequate number of properly trained personnel;  
5600.3.1.5 Ensure all personnel utilizing or maintaining LPR systems are properly trained prior to using the system;  
5600.3.1.6 Designate a supervisor as the Unit/Precinct LPR program supervisor;  
5600.3.1.7 Ensure all required LPR program logs and records are properly maintained according to policy;  
5600.3.1.8 Ensure all significant incidents, arrests, and quarterly reports that are related to LPR usage are properly documented and this information is forwarded to the Police Services Bureau Commander; and  
5600.3.1.9 Ensure that all mobile LPR system equipment is inspected each month and documented on the Monthly Personnel & Vehicle Inspection (SO-139).  

5600.4 Mobile LPR Systems/General Operation  
5600.4.1 LPR equipment provides access to stolen and wanted files and is also used in furtherance of criminal investigations.  
5600.4.2 Use of the LPR systems and access to its data requires a legitimate law enforcement purpose.  
5600.4.3 No member may use or authorize the use of the equipment or database records for any other reason.  
5600.4.4 Any deficiencies shall be immediately brought to the attention of the appropriate Division Commander by the inspecting supervisor.  
5600.4.5 The mobile data computer (MDC) in the vehicle will act as a video monitoring center.  
5600.4.6 The MCAC Program Administrator or designee shall ensure “hot lists” are updated at the beginning of each shift.  
5600.4.7 The updated “hot list” shall be transmitted to the LPR systems through an encrypted VPN.
5600.4.8 All scanned LPR data shall be transmitted to MCAC through an encrypted VPN and purged automatically from the video monitoring center after thirty (30) days.

5600.4.9 All data scanned by the LPR system is transmitted to the MDC inside the vehicle and checked against the daily “hot list”.

5600.5 Positive “Hit” Verification

5600.5.1 When an alarm is received alerting personnel of a positive “hit”, a digital image of the license plate will be displayed on the MDC screen for review.

5600.5.2 A positive “hit” alone DOES NOT establish probable cause.

5600.5.3 The information received from license plates that are recognized as positive “hits” is dated and may be up to twenty four (24) hours old.

5600.5.4 The “hit” MUST be confirmed prior to taking any enforcement action.

5600.5.5 The LPR system does not interface with real time METERS and NCIC data.

5600.5.6 Personnel must verify all positive “hits” through METERS and NCIC and follow Agency policies and procedures.

5600.5.7 Prior to taking enforcement action, personnel shall provide the information via radio to Dispatch, who will immediately attempt to confirm the “hit”.

5600.5.8 Personnel who receive an alarm of a positive “hit” on a scanned license plate shall compare the digital image of the license plate to the NCIC information to verify the “hit”.

5600.5.9 The deputy, after receiving notification of a positive “hit”, shall determine the appropriate response.

5600.5.10 Verified positive “hits” shall be accepted by activating the “accept” alarm key on the video monitoring screen.

5600.5.11 When an alarm does not result in a verified positive “hit”, personnel shall activate the “reject” alarm key.

5600.5.12 The LPR system is ONLY to be used as an investigative tool and confirmation is essential prior to a stop.

5600.6 Custom Manual Inputs

5600.6.1 Personnel assigned mobile LPR systems shall be responsible for the following:

5600.6.1.1 Ensuring that custom manual inputs have a legitimate law enforcement purpose. This option should only be used in cases where crimes (e.g. stolen vehicles, radio item broadcasts, etc.) are reported.

5600.6.1.2 Ensuring that manual inputs are approved by the duty officer before entry into the MCAC Operations Center.

5600.6.1.3 Requesting that the MCAC LPR Program Administrator manually enter the information into the Operations Center once approved by the duty officer.

5600.6.1.3.1 The request for entry into the MCAC Operations Center can be made by the initiating deputy or the duty officer.

5600.6.1.3.2 The request shall be documented with an entry in the CAD system.
5600.6.1.3.3 The custom manual inputs shall be automatically purged by MCAC every thirty (30) days, so it shall be the responsibility of the initiating deputy to update his/her inputs to extend for an additional thirty (30) days if needed.

5600.7 Emergency Operations
5600.7.1 During the course of normal law enforcement duties, incidents may occur that require immediate assistance.
5600.7.2 The LPR system can be a valuable tool in these situations, such as alerts, bank robberies or other violent crimes and can help bring the incident to a safe and successful conclusion.
5600.7.3 All license plate information related to AMBER, Silver and Blue alerts, shall be immediately entered into the Operations Center LPR server by the MCAC LPR Program Administrator or designee.
5600.7.4 The “hot list” shall be updated with the alert information provided by the Maryland State Police.
5600.7.5 The MCAC LPR Program Administrator or designee shall ensure the timely transfer to all LPR systems.
5600.7.6 In the event of a critical situation with vehicle registration information, the deployment of an LPR system can maximize the coverage area to search for any vehicle involved.
5600.7.8 LPR equipped vehicles should be directed to patrol areas which are likely to increase the chance of encountering the vehicle.
5600.7.9 A supervisor may contact the MCAC LPR Program Administrator or designee and request the Operation Center’s LPR server be searched to determine if any mobile or fixed LPR systems had previously encountered the target plate.

5600.8 Reporting
5600.8.1 The Unit/Precinct LPR supervisor shall be responsible for the following:
5600.8.1.1 Maintaining a separate file for each LPR system assigned to the Unit/Precinct.
5600.8.1.2 Consolidating all LPR statistics and arrest narratives into one quarterly report.