

License Plate Recognition (LPR) FAQ

The City of Colleyville recognizes the importance of an individual's right to privacy. The use of LPR technology is intended to enhance public safety while maximizing the privacy of individuals traversing our City. The Colleyville Police Department has compiled the following list of questions asked of department personnel regarding LPRs. In an effort to provide maximum transparency, the department prepared answers to each question and made this Q & A available to the public. Specific questions about this FAQ should be directed to Sgt. Nelson at 817-503-1238.

- How many LPRs does Colleyville have and where are they located?

Colleyville has fixed LPRs in 3 locations along a 3 mile strip of State Highway 26. They are at SH26 and Brown Trail, SH26 and Hall Johnson, and SH26 and John McCain. Colleyville also has a mobile speed/LPR trailer that is deployed as part of crime reduction strategies based on recent crime trends/patterns.

- What is the desired outcome of implementing LPRs in the City of Colleyville?

99% of the criminals that commit crimes in our city come from the outside and almost all of them use vehicles as their primary means of transportation. Many criminals utilize stolen vehicles to commit their crimes. Navigating our neighborhoods and side streets in Colleyville can be confusing to outsiders, so criminals typically stick to major thoroughfares when choosing victims. We want to keep our city as safe as possible, and in doing so, provide our police department with the tools they need to be most efficient in catching criminals who commit crimes in our city. Furthermore, we are transparent and have publicly communicated about LPRs being installed in the city as we believe their very existence is a crime deterrent. Criminals are opportunists and if they believe there is a greater chance of being caught committing crimes in Colleyville, they will go elsewhere.

- What data is included in a license plate capture? Can Officers see my medical history, social security number, or other personal data?

License plate captures include a color image of the vehicle, an infrared image of the license plate, the license plate read as interpreted by the system, a time and date stamp, GPS coordinates of the vehicle making the license plate capture, as well as information on the operator and the camera making the capture. There is no personally identifiable information contained in a license plate capture. In fact, only with permissible purpose under the Federal Driver's Privacy Protection Act (DPPA) may an officer connect a license plate to an individual by accessing other systems. License plate reader data, by itself, is completely anonymous.

- Is License Plate Recognition (LPR) considered tracking? Is a warrant needed?

LPR is unlike GPS devices, RFID, or other technologies that may be used to track. LPR is not ubiquitous, and only captures point in time information. And the point in time information is on a vehicle, not an individual. Individual drivers are already protected under the Federal Driver's Privacy Protection Act (DPPA). In the event that a vehicle becomes of interest in an investigation, it is still up to the officer to place a driver with the vehicle at the time of the crime. LPR data is an investigative lead only.

- **Is License Plate Recognition (LPR) data sold or shared outside of law enforcement?**

No. All law enforcement data is viewed as such and held securely on the Vigilant Solutions hosted server with access only to credentialed law enforcement. Vigilant is merely a steward of data for law enforcement agencies using its hosted solution. The data remains the property of the agency, and the agency controls its sharing permissions with other law enforcement agencies through MOU agreements.

- **How secure is the Vigilant Solutions hosted server?**

The Vigilant Solutions hosted server houses over 1.4 billion license plate reads, and grows at roughly 50 million reads each month, as of September 2013. This server and the services for hosting are managed by Verio, a wholly owned subsidiary of NTT Communications, and a Microsoft Gold Certified Partner. Certified ISO 9001:2008 and compliant with SAS70 Type II, Verio is recognized as a world leader in hosted data and many Federal agencies and Fortune 500 companies use the services of Verio. The data center itself is located just outside of Washington, DC, where Verio is headquartered. The data center itself features redundant power sources, redundant fiber connectivity, redundant disk arrays, environmental monitoring, secure access control, physical escorts for onsite visitors, multiple diesel fuel backup generators, active fire prevention and suppression, and onsite system administrators and engineers. Due to sensitivities around LPR data, the entire network is secured by a Cisco router with firewall firmware compliant with PCI, HIPAA, and SOX IT governance requirements. The Cisco firmware is also configured with Intrusion Protection Services offering deep packet inspection of all inbound traffic.

- **Who has access to the Vigilant Solutions hosted server?**

Only credentialed law enforcement officers with a valid Originating Agency Identifier (ORI) number issued by the Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS) Division of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) may access the data on the hosted server.

- **Who has access to Colleyville's LPR data and how is it regulated?**

Access to Colleyville's LPR system is regulated by a restrictive policy within the Police Department. Only sworn law enforcement officers can access the system and currently there are only 11 individuals in the department with this access. 5 are Detectives and 6 are supervisors or members of the command staff (which includes the Assistant Chief and Chief). Officers with access are restricted to using the system only for official law enforcement purposes (similar to policies governing TCIC/NCIC and criminal history information). Every action in the system is logged and is audited by the Chief of Police regularly. Every search requires the user to put in a case number or call for service number as well as documenting the authorized purpose for the search.

- **How is the system used by Colleyville Police Officers?**

As stated above, the LPR system can only be used for authorized law enforcement purposes. For example, the system can be used to identify stolen vehicles, wanted persons, missing/endangered persons, and for law enforcement investigations.

The LPR system is not used for revenue generating enforcement activities such as insurance violations, expired tags, expired drivers licenses, speeding, etc. Furthermore, Officers are prohibited from using it for all non-law enforcement purposes.

- How long is the data kept in the LPR database?

The Colleyville Police Department follows the guidance of the Texas Department of Public Safety and has a 3 year retention period for the data.

Colleyville LPR Success Stories

- **Burglary of a Residence** – Officers responded to a burglary of a residence. The crime was captured on the Ring Doorbell of a neighbor, but it wasn't clear enough to provide a license plate of the suspect vehicle. Detectives searched the LPR database for a similar vehicle around the time of the crime and were able identify the suspect vehicle in the area approximately 5 minutes before the crime. Detectives were able to locate the suspect at a hotel in Hurst and arrest her for Burglary of a Habitation.
- **Organized Retail Theft Suspects Arrested** – CPD Detectives were investigating an organized retail theft group from Louisiana that was operating in our area. They were responsible for more than \$100k in losses from retailers. Lewisville PD attempted to apprehend the suspects previously and they lost them in a high speed pursuit. Detectives received a notification via the LPR system that the suspect vehicle entered our city on SH26. Officers responded and with the assistance of Hurst PD, they were able to take them into custody after they hit a grocery store in Hurst just outside Colleyville's city limits. The suspects had 21 stolen unopened bottles of wine and champagne in their vehicle. 2 of the 3 suspects had active felony warrants on them.
- **Missing Endangered Elderly Resident** – Officers responded to a call for assistance from a resident who reported his elderly wife had not returned from a hair appointment in Southlake. She was in the early stages of Alzheimer's but had never had issues before. She was not answering her phone and they could not locate her. Detectives searched the LPR database and found that she was last seen heading South on SH26 away from her appointment in Southlake. This critical information steered the investigation in a different direction and with the help of surrounding agencies to the south, we were able to locate her in Dallas and safely return her home to her family.
- **Pack Thefts and Burglary of a Motor Vehicle** – Officers responded to multiple thefts of packages in several neighborhoods around Colleyville. They also had a report that the same suspect entered a vehicle and stole a knife. The victims all provided a similar vehicle and suspect description. Officer located the suspect a couple of hours later in a neighborhood and he fled from them. He was driving so fast that Officers were unable obtain a license plate on the vehicle. The suspect fled down SH26 and Detectives searched the LPR database and were able to identify the suspect vehicle and license plate.
- **Armed Robbery** – Officers responded to an armed robbery at a local cell phone business. The business provided an obscured photo of the suspect vehicle. Detectives were able to search the LPR database for similar vehicles around the time of the robbery and were able to identify the suspect vehicle in the area a few minutes before the robbery occurred. Without the use of LPR, we would have had no workable leads on this case. Due to the information provided by the LPR

system, Detectives were able to identify suspects and obtain arrest warrants for Aggravated Robbery.

- **Armed Robbery** – Officers responded to another armed robbery at a local cell phone business (same as above). The business was able to provide a verbal description of the suspect vehicle to responding officers. Detectives searched the LPR database and were able to identify the suspect vehicle and license plate in the area minutes before the armed robbery occurred. The LPR provided valuable intelligence and leads that helped solve this case.
- **Possible Burglary Suspect Arrested in Stolen Vehicle** – Officers received a hit notification at approximately 3:30am from the LPR system that a stolen vehicle had passed one of the city's fixed LPR locations. Officers were able to locate the vehicle and confirm the vehicle was stolen out of Plano. Officers conducted a felony stop on the vehicle and arrested a male suspect for Unauthorized Use of a Motor Vehicle. Officers searched the vehicle and found a black backpack that contained black gloves, a flashlight, binoculars, burglary tools, stolen mail, a driver's license from someone out of Garland, and multiple gift cards. The vehicle had a bullet hole in the front passenger windshield and the rear passenger window was broken out. According to publicly available sources, the suspect that was arrested has previously served time in the Texas Department of Corrections and has previous arrests for a parole violation, theft (\$1500-\$20k), multiple narcotics offenses (delivery and possession), aggravated assault with a deadly weapon, unlawful carrying of a weapon, and driving stolen vehicles. Stopping this vehicle likely prevented a burglary or other crime in our city.
- **Burglary of a Business** – Officers received an alarm at the AT&T store at approximately 2:15am. When Officers arrived, they found forced entry was made to the business. Upon review of surveillance video from the store, Officers noted a black or dark colored Infiniti sedan was involved in the burglary. Detectives searched the LPR system for similar vehicles and found the vehicle was scanned on our LPR system entering the city around 2:05am just before the crime. Detectives subsequently found the vehicle in the Dallas area and notified Dallas PD of its location. Dallas PD attempted to stop the vehicle for a traffic violation and the driver rammed a marked DPD unit in an attempt to escape. The driver of the vehicle was arrested by Dallas PD.
- Colleyville Officers have also arrested multiple felons, recovered multiple stolen vehicles and stolen license plates. It is believed many of these were in the city with the intent to commit crimes. These apprehensions likely prevented them from committing crimes in the city.