License Plate Reader (LPR)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

About LPR

License Plate Recognition (LPR) [or, License Plate Reader (LPR)] is an image processing technology that utilizes fixed or mobile cameras and optical character recognition (OCR) to identify license plates.

License Plate Readers (LPR) were initially installed by the United States Customs and Border Protection (CBP) to develop and track movement of vehicles as they cross through the ports of entry along the southwest border between the United States and Mexico and the northern border between the United States and Canada.

Nlets Connection to NICB

Because of the benefits of providing investigative information regarding stolen vehicles and insurance fraud, CBP provides LPR data to the National Insurance Crime Bureau (NICB). Thanks to a tremendous effort on the part of NICB, in coordination with CBP, this valuable investigative data is now available to Nlets users.

By using the existing 'RQ' message transaction key to destination 'NA,' Nlets users can receive a detailed list of when and where a vehicle has crossed over U.S. borders within the last 12 months. The Nlets connection to NICB is provided through the Illinois state switch. The RQ transaction provides the capability to initiate a LIC query to NICB against the LPR file.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. How is an LPR query generated to NICB?

A. The submitter would use the 'RQ' transaction to send in the license plate of interest with NA as the state designator for NICB.

***IMPORTANT NOTE: *The 'RQ' does allow for a 10-character license plate, but the LPR records only capture 8 characters; therefore, if a 9 or 10 'RQ' is received, a search will be conducted only on the first 8 characters.*

Q. What will the response look like to an Nlets user?

A. NICB will construct a 'RR' message consisting of the following information:

```
NICB RESPONSE FOR LIC/FT20688 MSG 001 OF 001
CROSSING LOCATION: INBOUND
ADDRESS: USCS-107 INTERSTATE SOUTH
CITY: DERBY
LINE: INTERSTATE
STATE: VT ZIP: 05830
CROSSING DT/TIME: 09/30/2002 14.31.29
LIC PLATE: FT20688
STATE: PQ COUNTRY: C
```

```
** NOTICE **
THE NICB PROVIDES THE INFORMATION CONTAINED HEREIN SOLELY AS AN
INVESTIGATORY AID. SINCE THESE RECORDS ARE NOT VALIDATED, THE NICB
DOES NOT GUARANTEE OR WARRANT THEIR LEGITIMACY. PLEASE USE SECONDARY
VERIFICATION BEFORE YOU TAKE ANY ENFORCEMENT ACTION.
```

Q. What fields will be included in the LPR response?

A. The following fields are included in the LPR response:

```
Address of the Crossing Location:
Inbound/Outbound Indicator
Crossing Date/Time:
(Military time will be displayed in hour/minute/second format)
LIC Plate #:
LIC State:
Country Code:
```

Q. Does every border crossing have inbound and outbound readers?

A. *No*—based on priorities established by CPB, not all border crossings have readers. Nlets can provide spreadsheets that contain Northern and Southwest border crossing locations, which includes the number of inbound and outbound lanes that have readers along with the hours of operation.

Q. Do the LPR readers recognize plates from all 50 states?

A. *No*—the LPR software is programmed to read plates from those states that represent the largest percentage of crossings at a specific location. Nlets can provide a spreadsheet that indicates what state plates are read and the syntax for each state.

Q. Do the LPR readers recognize Mexican and Canadian plates?

A. *Yes*—if the LPR is programmed to read plates from Mexico and Canada.

Q. How long is the LPR data maintained by NICB?

A. LPR data in maintained for 12 months. At the 13th month, the 1st month's data is dropped from the file.

Q. How will multiple hits be handled?

A. Each RR message will contain seven (7) LPR hits. If there are more than 7 hits, then you will receive multiple messages stating message `1 of X`. There is no limit on the number of hits that may possibly be received.

Nlets Connection to NVS

NVS working with Locator Technologies, has partnered with an LPR company to provide Law Enforcement Agencies (LEA) access to a Central Repository of LPR data from private mobile and stationary LPR machines. The companies collecting these reads include towing and repossession companies, parking lots, garages, and toll way systems. LEAs may utilize this information at no cost to augment and/or initiate criminal investigations.

The National Vehicle Service (NVS) also supports the Nlets 'RQ' message key to query their LPR database. Nlets users, in addition to being able to query the CBP Crossing LPR database via destination 'NA,' can now also send 'RQ's to destination 'VS' to query NVS' database containing nearly 5 million LPR reads per month.

In addition to allowing LEAs access to the database, NVS proactively searches the database against the stolen vehicle file provided by the FBI. Knowing the location of a stolen vehicle prior to or shortly after its theft will greatly enhance LEA's capabilities.

Q. How do I run this transaction?

A. To utilize this new Nlets functionality, enter 'VS' in the State Field of the 'RQ' function, as well as the plate number and license year (standard Nlets 'RQ' query). A positive response to your query will be similar to the following sample:

```
RR.VANVS005V
08:59 03/29/2010 44914
08:59 03/29/2010 00604 VANVS006V
*JSPI00MX00
TXT
Vehicle license plate number 619WCX was captured by mobile license
plate recognition on March 21, 2010 near the intersection of W Forest
Brook Dr AND Woodside Rd, Casselberry FL.

To access the complete LPR data record including other additional
historical LPR scans, vehicle images and satellite map overlays,
please proceed to the following Internet Website: http://nvls-
lpr.com/nvls

** CAVEAT **
This is lead information ONLY to assist with your investigation and
should NOT be used for non-law enforcement purposes.  Should you
require additional assistance with this RESPONSE, please contact
National Vehicle Service at 866-687-1102.
```

If there is no match for your plate, then your response will indicate that there is no match for your plate.

Contact the Nlets Network Operations Center
at **800-528-4020** for more information.