

License Plate Recognition - LPR

Frequently Asked Questions - FAQs

About LPR:

License Plate Recognition (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 U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) to track movement of vehicles as they cross through the ports of entry along the southwest border between the U.S. and Mexico and the northern border between the U.S. 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 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 RQ transaction provides the capability to initiate a LIC query to NICB against the LPR file.

FAQs:

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 is 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 (LE) access to a central repository of LPR data from private mobile and stationary LPR machines. The companies collecting these reads include towing and repossession, parking lots, garages, and toll ways. LEAs may utilize this data 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 also send 'RQ's to destination 'VS' to query NVS' database containing nearly 5 million LPR reads per month.

In addition to allowing LE 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 LE capabilities.

Q. How do I run this transaction?

- A. To utilize this 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:

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

For more information, contact the Nlets Service Center at 800-528-4020 or service@nlets.org