

Robert O. McCullough
Chief of Police

Baltimore County Police Department
Headquarters
700 E. Joppa Road
Towson, MD 21286
(410) 887-2214
Fax (410) 887-8887



"INTEGRITY...FAIRNESS...SERVICE"

SPECIAL ORDER # 2023-03

DATE: July 10, 2023

TO: All Police Department Personnel. To be Announced at Roll Call and a Copy Posted on the Department's Intranet Site.

RE: Gunshot Detection Technology - ShotSpotter.

EFFECTIVE: Immediately.

BACKGROUND: Gunshot detection technology enables police departments to be aware of outdoor firearms discharges in the absence of witnesses and/or reports to the 9-1-1 Communications Center. ShotSpotter, Inc. has been selected to provide gunshot detection technology services to Baltimore County. ShotSpotter's system uses multiple sensors in a geographic area to detect the sound of firearms discharges and determine where each discharge occurred. The system can accurately determine the location of a discharge within three to five feet.

Once a possible discharge has been detected by an array of the system's sensors, an alert is sent to a ShotSpotter Incident Review Center (IRC). At the IRC, a ShotSpotter employee reviews the activation to evaluate the detected noise. Upon confirmation by the IRC employee that the detected noise was possibly gunfire, an audible and visual alert will be sent to Department members logged into the system's Respond Application. The alert sent by ShotSpotter will use color coding to indicate the IRC's degree of certainty that the detected noise was gunfire and contain a "Respond to the Dot" location (i.e., Dot). The IRC verification process will be conducted and an alert will be generated within a guaranteed less than 60 seconds of the event. In most incidents, it can be generated within fewer than 25 seconds. Members should be aware that no alert will be sent unless the IRC is at least 80 percent confident that the detected noise was gunfire.

The Dot identifies where the system's technology has determined the discharge occurred. The Dot includes a radius of 25 meters (i.e., 82 feet) which should be used in locating possible victims, witnesses, evidence, etc. Members responding to a ShotSpotter alert should focus on and respond to the Dot, not the closest address or intersection associated with the alert. Due to the precise location, the high probability of gunfire, and the short period between the system detecting gunfire and the users receiving an alert, members are reminded of the importance of taking a safe and strategic approach in their response.

The ShotSpotter system includes the ShotSpotter Respond Application and ShotSpotter Insight. The Respond Application allows users to receive notifications of alerts via their mobile data computer (MDC) and/or mobile devices. The Respond Application does not save any data to the devices used to receive the alerts. This ensures that the devices are not subject to subpoena. The application has a Live Chat feature that allows Department members to communicate directly with ShotSpotter employees at the IRC. The IRC may also be able to determine additional information about a discharge (e.g., if multiple rounds have been discharged, if the shooter or shooters are moving, if multiple weapons are involved, etc.).

SPECIAL ORDER #2023-03 (Continuation)

In the field, the Respond Application can also be used to replay audio recordings associated with an alert (i.e., one second prior and one second after a discharge). ShotSpotter Insight allows members to review historical ShotSpotter data. The system can be used to run custom reports, replay audio recordings associated with activations, acquire detailed forensic reports prepared by ShotSpotter, etc.

PURPOSE: To establish procedures addressing Department members' use of the ShotSpotter system and response to its activations.

RELATIONSHIP TO DEPARTMENTAL VALUES: This program demonstrates the Department's commitment to **SERVICE** by ensuring its members have all the resources possible to assist them in completing their investigations.

POLICY: Department members will follow the procedures contained in this document while using the ShotSpotter system technology and responding to its activations.

PROCEDURES:

GENERAL

- ShotSpotter alerts can be considered contributing factors to the totality of the circumstances of an incident in developing probable cause or reasonable articulable suspicion.
- A ShotSpotter alert, by itself, does not:
 1. Give responding members the legal authority to enter private property (e.g., residence, curtilage, etc.); or
 2. Establish probable cause or reasonable articulable suspicion.

MEMBER PROHIBITIONS

- Using the ShotSpotter Respond Application or ShotSpotter Insight without being trained.
- Using the ShotSpotter system absent a valid law enforcement purpose.
- Requesting audio recordings from ShotSpotter beyond the one second prior and one second after the discharge of a firearm.

EXCEPTION: Additional audio recordings beyond the one second prior and one second after the discharge may only be requested when extraordinary circumstances exist and approval of the request has been given by the Baltimore County Attorney or an Assistant Baltimore County Attorney and the Baltimore County State's Attorney's Office.

NOTE: ShotSpotter's contractual policy is to vigorously refuse the release of any additional audio due to privacy concerns, and they will use all available legal means to enforce this policy.

- Distributing system data outside the Department, absent a legitimate law enforcement purpose.
- Providing the public with the exact location or a description of the ShotSpotter sensors.

MEMBERS

- Who have been trained will log into the ShotSpotter Respond Application if any part of their assigned duties will occur within a coverage area of the system.

NOTE: Other trained members may log into the ShotSpotter Application at their discretion.
- Who are the closest available unit shall:
 1. Self-dispatch and respond to the Dot upon receiving an alert notification via the ShotSpotter Respond Application; and
 2. Make verbal radio notifications to the 9-1-1 Communications Center dispatcher that they are responding to an alert received via the application.

SPECIAL ORDER #2023-03 (Continuation)

- Who are unavailable to respond or are not the closest unit shall make verbal radio notification to the 9-1-1 Communications Center dispatcher upon receiving an alert if no other unit has self-dispatched/alerted the 9-1-1 Communications Center dispatcher so that the closest available unit may be promptly notified and dispatched.
- Use the information provided as part of the ShotSpotter alert (e.g., the audio of the detected noise, the alert's color code, the location of the alert, etc.) to determine the appropriate vehicle response mode to the location.
- Take a safe and strategic approach to the general area of the alert and the Dot location, bearing in mind that the suspect or suspects may still be armed and at the scene, other law enforcement officers may be en route or at the scene, etc.
NOTE: ShotSpotter alerts are generated upon confirmation that a sound detected by the system is probably gunfire (i.e., with 80 percent or higher certainty). They will be generated within a guaranteed less than 60 seconds of the event but can be generated within fewer than 25 seconds for most incidents.
- Immediately take actions to preserve human life (e.g., of victims, witnesses, law enforcement personnel, etc.), upon arrival on scene.
NOTE: The apprehension of suspects and recovery of evidence will always be a secondary objective.
- Should always focus their attention on the Dot and not the closest address or intersection appearing on the alert or call for service.
NOTE: The Dot location provides the location of the detected gunshot within a range of three to five feet.
- Shall secure as much of the 25-meter (i.e., 82 feet) area around the Dot as possible upon arrival.
- Diligently search the 25-meter area around the Dot for victims, evidence, and witnesses.
NOTE: Members are encouraged to canvass beyond the 25-meter radius, when possible.
- May be assigned to return to a Dot previously investigated if the initial response occurred in conditions that made searching difficult (e.g., low light, poor weather, etc.).
- Make a notification to ShotSpotter via the Live Chat feature within 24 hours of discovering:
 1. A firearm discharge that occurred within a coverage area of the system that did not generate an alert; or
 2. An alert that did not yield evidence of a discharge.**NOTE:** The primary investigating member will make these notifications after obtaining approval from their supervisor.
- May utilize ShotSpotter Insight to detect firearm discharges outside a coverage area.
- May use ShotSpotter Insight to access and download detailed historical data related to ShotSpotter alerts.
NOTE: Available historical data includes system activations that were sent to the IRC but did not result in an alert being sent.
- Document within the Department's records management system (i.e., PremierOne) any investigative information they discover via ShotSpotter Insight.
- May utilize ShotSpotter Insight to generate Investigative Lead Summaries to assist in investigating firearm discharges.
NOTE: Investigative Lead Summaries serve as an aid to the Department's investigation.
- May request ShotSpotter prepare Detailed Forensic Reports for trial that help to reveal and clarify the:
 1. Number of rounds fired;
 2. Possible number of shooters involved; and
 3. Possible direction and speed of a shooter-in-motion incident.**NOTES:**
 1. Members must have their supervisor's approval before requesting a Detailed Forensic Report.
 2. Requests for Detailed Forensic Reports will be submitted via ShotSpotter Insight.
- Treat Detailed Forensic Reports provided by ShotSpotter as evidence and submit them to the Evidence Management Unit.

SPECIAL ORDER #2023-03 (Continuation)

PRIMARY UNITS ON SHOTSPOTTER ALERTS

- Ensure all evidence discovered is collected and all witnesses have been identified.
- Shall notify the 9-1-1 Communication Center dispatcher and ShotSpotter when witness statements and/or personal observations determine that an alert was not triggered by the discharge of a firearm but by another confirmed source (e.g., fireworks, construction equipment, etc.).
NOTE: Notifications to ShotSpotter will be made via the Live Chat feature.
- May use the Respond Application and/or ShotSpotter Insight to replay any audio recordings associated with the firearms discharge to recreate the crime scene, including the timeline of rounds discharged, and determine the likely number of offenders upon confirming a shooting incident.
- Select “Yes” from the *ShotSpotter Related* dropdown on the *Elements of the Incident (EOI)* tab when an incident report is completed.
- Ensure the situation found code “A67 ShotSpotter Unfounded” is used to code the call when a ShotSpotter alert does not result in the completion of an incident report.

SUPERVISORS

- Ensure a minimum of two officers are assigned to respond when a member:
 1. Self-dispatches to an alert notification received via the ShotSpotter Respond Application; or
 2. Is dispatched by the 9-1-1 Communications Center to a call for service that also resulted in a ShotSpotter alert.
- Respond to the scene of all ShotSpotter alerts.
EXCEPTION: Confirmed false alerts.
- Ensure the area surrounding the Dot location is appropriately searched for victims, witnesses, evidence, etc.
- Notify their shift commander when an initial response was conducted in conditions that made searching difficult and a follow-up search is required.
- Ensure follow-up searches are completed as directed by a shift commander.
- Ensure follow-up searches are documented using the original central complaint (CC) number, when a report was completed.
NOTE: A new CC number will be used to document a follow-up search if evidence, witnesses, victims, suspects, etc., are located during a follow-up search and a report was not previously completed.

SHIFT COMMANDERS

- Determine if a follow-up search is required when an initial response was conducted in conditions that made searching difficult.
- Notify the appropriate oncoming shift commander when a follow-up search is required.
- Ensure follow-up searches requested by other shift commanders are completed.
- May request members assigned outside their command to respond to a ShotSpotter alert if no members assigned to their command are available.
NOTE: Requesting shift commanders will ensure that as much detail as possible about the alert is relayed to the assisting members to allow them to make a safe and strategic approach to the location if the assisting members are not ShotSpotter trained.

9-1-1 POLICE LIAISON

- Shall monitor the ShotSpotter Respond Application.
- Will be assigned the Real Time Crime Center (RTCC) role in the Respond Application, which will require them to physically acknowledge an alert and have the ability to add notes, if appropriate.
- Shall monitor radio communications to ensure officers have acknowledged the alerts received and are responding to the location.

SPECIAL ORDER #2023-03 (Continuation)

- Requests the 9-1-1 Communications Center dispatcher notify the appropriate officers if they believe a ShotSpotter alert has been received and officers are not en route to the location.
- Ensures all ShotSpotter alerts are responded to in a timely fashion.
- Uses the Ground Truth feature of the Respond Application to note the central complaint (CC) number associated with each alert.

IMPLEMENTATION: This Special Order will be distributed electronically to all Department members. Shift/Unit supervisors will be responsible for referencing this Special Order.

By order of,

Robert O. McCullough
Chief of Police