# COLUMBIA POLICE DEPARTMENT

*"Policing Excellence through Community Partnerships"*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| ***Directive Type:*** General Order | ***Effective Date:*** ***02/08/2023*** | ***General Order Number:*** ***02.07*** |
| ***Subject:*** ***ShotSpotter Gunshot Detection and Alert System*** | | |
| ***Amends/Supersedes: None*** | ***Chief of Police:*** | |
| ***Distribution:*** All Personnel | ***Review Date:*** *July 1* | ***# of Pages: 6*** |

## 1.0 PURPOSE

The Columbia Police Department (CPD) utilizes gunshot detection technology, ShotSpotter Gunshot Detection and Alert System (SST), to enhance its response to gunfire incidents in designated geographical areas. This program enhances the department's ability to quickly respond to, and investigate violent crime and other incidents involving gunfire. The system will also aid with response times, allowing for victims, suspects, witnesses and/or evidence to a crime to be quickly identified. The purpose of the system is to reduce violent crime and incidents of indiscriminate gunfire in designated coverage areas of Columbia, South Carolina.

The combination of real time alerts and accumulated data with accurate incident locations significantly changes how law enforcement officers respond and investigate gunfire incidents. This technology allows officers to quickly determine the severity of the incident, which helps determine the appropriate level of field response, including the dispatching of emergency medical personnel, investigative units, crime scene investigators and additional support units. ShotSpotter (SST) incidents may be replayed to hear the actual audio component of the incident, aid in the collection of evidence at crime scenes and assist in the investigation and prosecution of crimes. ShotSpotter guarantees detection of 80% of gunfire within the coverage area of 82 feet (25 meters) of the incident. ShotSpotter requires three (3) to four (4) sensors to "hear" an incident before an alert is generated. The red "dot" indicator displayed on the map is also guaranteed to be accurate within 82 feet (25 meters) radius.

The availability of current and historical gunfire incident location information allows these incidents to be addressed on both a short-term tactical/operational and a long-term strategic/proactive basis.

## 2.0 DEFINITIONS

ShotSpotter Technology: The ShotSpotter Gunshot Detection and Alert System (SST) is a reliable and accurate means for law enforcement agencies to have greater and faster awareness of illegal gunfire and explosion incidents occurring within their jurisdictions.

The technology and combination of real-time alerts and accumulated data with accurate incident locations significantly changes how law enforcement officers respond and investigate these incidents. ShotSpotter increases the reporting and awareness of these incidents, provides precise location information for each incident within seconds of the discharge(s). Fast, accurate audio information captured with an acoustic surveillance system can provide invaluable situational intelligence that can illustrate the severity of an incident which is critical to determine the appropriate level of field response. It will also better prepare first responders so they can safely manage a gunfire or explosives event which can include the dispatching of medical, emergency personnel, investigative units, crime scene investigators and additional support units.

Gunshot Detection System: Technology that detects outdoor audible gunfire within the coverage area through the use of acoustic sensors capable of pinpointing the accurate location of a gunfire event.

Gunshot Detection: An event of suspected gunfire.

ShotSpotter Flex Alerts Console: A mobile password protected console available to authorized CPD personnel that provides a visual map representation and address of a gunfire alert.

## 3.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

The Chief of Police will designate a ShotSpotter Program Manager.

Bureau and Regional Commanders shall ensure that all authorized sworn employees and crime scene technicians are familiar with and are in compliance with this policy.

The Columbia Richland Communications Center will monitor and dispatch the ShotSpotter Alert after receiving the alert on their console. Patrol Officers will monitor the ShotSpotter Alert once notification of the alert is received through the app and will notify dispatch of the alert. The Communications Center Dispatcher will immediately enter a call in the CAD system and assign ShotSpotter calls as a 10-75SS (dispatch initiated) or 10-75RISS (officer initiated). The response code designation will be in pursuant to "Police Emergency Vehicle Operation and Motor Vehicle Pursuit Policy, Chapter 01, Section 03.

The Communications Dispatcher will provide the responding officer(s), at a minimum, the following information:

1. Specific detailed location of the incident;
2. Severity of the incident (single shooter firing a single round, single shooter firing multiple rounds, multiple shooters, suspect movement); and
3. Provide information of additional calls of the incident by citizens.

Supervisors shall monitor the collection and preservation of evidence processed by subordinates in accordance with this directive as well as other applicable polices.

If determined that a crime has occurred, the responding officer(s) shall protect the crime scene until an investigator responds to the scene and assumes the investigation. If an investigator does not respond to the scene then the responding officer(s) shall take all necessary steps to investigate and document the crime scene.

The Crime Scene Investigation Unit will respond, when available, to the scene of ShotSpotter incidents when requested by an on-scene officer, investigator or supervisor.

Any videos, (in-car camera, body worn camera, neighborhood installed systems) related to a ShotSpotter call that could have visibility of the crime scene will be saved under the corresponding incident number and logged into evidence.

The Training Unit shall be responsible for training employees in the use of the ShotSpotter Gunshot Detection and Alert System with follow-up provided by the Field Training Officer.

The Crime Analysis Unit shall analyze crime and calls for service data to aid in determining ideal locations for ShotSpotter deployment.

**4.0 RESPONSE PROCEDURE**

A. When a ShotSpotter alert notification is received by either a dispatch console, mobile console (MDT) or smartphone (City issued) the initial receiving party will announce the notification on the main dispatch radio channel; responding units will identify themselves and the location from where they are responding.

B. The Columbia Richland Communications Center will update with a radio broadcast any pertinent information related to the notification for the benefit of responding units and those units not equipped with the ShotSpotter alert notification software.

C. Responding units will activate their in-car camera and approach the scene utilizing a tactical approach bearing in mind that the perpetrator(s) may still be armed and on-scene.

D. The decision to clear the air with the alert toner will be at the discretion of the responding officer, immediate supervisor or the Communications Center, dependent upon circumstances.

E. The officer should respond to the displayed dot; not necessarily the specific address listed on the ShotSpotter Alert.

F. The initial officer on the scene will assume command of the call until relieved by a supervisor.

G. Once officers establish there is no immediate threat at the scene a thorough search for victims will be conducted and appropriate medical aid rendered.

H. A thorough search for evidence shall be conducted. The search, at a minimum, shall begin with the coordinates provided by the ShotSpotter alert and a radius of 82 feet (25 meters) in all directions from the center point. The search shall also include an examination of the scene for projectile strikes, projectiles and other evidence related to the discharge of a firearm and related crimes. Officers shall be mindful that their in-car video footage may contain data pertinent to the investigation.

I. Officers on scene will actively seek witnesses, including canvassing nearby residences, and document their statements in an incident report. Officers will review the ShotSpotter audio files and other information provided on the ShotSpotter alert report. If needed, officers at the scene will confer with the Communications Center regarding the exact location of the identified firearm discharge location.

J. (a) An incident report will be completed on all ShotSpotter alerts. That report, at a minimum, shall include the following information:

1. Suspect information, including identification, if he/she was contacted or arrested.
2. Documentation of any evidence located and/or recovered.
3. Identity and location of witnesses.
4. The ShotSpotter ID number generated by ShotSpotter will be documented in the narrative of the report.

(b) When a CPD Officer responds to a ShotSpotter Alert Notification, that occurs within the CPD ShotSpotter perimeter zones, but it is determined to be outside of CPD's jurisdiction (e.g. patches of

Richland County jurisdiction that are surrounded by Columbia City jurisdiction), the following will apply:

1. If the CPD officer takes a "police action" in response to the outside jurisdiction alert ShotSpotter Alert (i.e. detain suspects, evidence preservation/collection, related traffic stops, or other actions that require documentation, a report must be completed in RMS to document these activities, and will include the Offense category "00-00-0000 Assisting Other Agency".

2. If no "police action" is taken by the responding CPD officer, the CPD officer will notify dispatch that the incident occurred outside of CPD's jurisdiction, and no incident report will be completed.

K. Officers shall distribute ShotSpotter door hangers to residences within line of sight of the confirmed incident location.

L. Each ShotSpotter alert notification and ShotSpotter ID number shall be documented in the ShotSpotter Worksheet by the Watch Commander to include the alerts that officers responded to that occurred outside city limits.

M. Officers may communicate directly with ShotSpotter technicians via the chat function and email, available in both the Alert and Investigative portals, to address problems or make inquiries regarding the program's performance and operation.

**5.0 INVESTIGATIONS**

A. Any officer/investigator assigned follow-up investigations of incidents where a ShotSpotter alert notification was received shall review the incident via the ShotSpotter Investigator Portal and utilize any historical data captured pertinent to the investigation.

1. Investigators will be given access to the ShotSpotter acoustic surveillance data through the Investigative Portal.
2. Investigators must be trained to access, extract incident date and evaluate and present incident data in preparation for prosecution.
3. Investigators will be given access to audio recordings associated with a shooting incident to assist in the recreation of the crime scene. Data provided will assist the investigator in determining a timeline of rounds discharged and the likely number of shooters.
4. For the purpose of prosecution, investigators shall know the process for acquiring detailed forensic reports of an incident and the securing of expert witnesses' relative to acoustical surveillance.

B. ShotSpotter sensors hold audio for a period of 72 hours. Generally, ShotSpotter only publishes eight (8) seconds of audio to the Investigator Portal. In situations where additional audio may be of value to the investigation, officers/investigators will contact ShotSpotter as soon as possible, within the 72 hour incident window, and request that the additional audio beyond the eight (8) seconds published be downloaded from the sensors. Officers/Investigators should be specific in their request to ShotSpotter and limit the timeframe relevant to the investigation. Additional audio received from ShotSpotter will not be available in the Investigator Portal and shall be archived to CD and/or DVD and submitted to the property room as evidence.

C. ShotSpotter audio files may be saved in MP3 format to a compact disc or DVD. When this is done, the investigator shall review the original MP3 recording within ShotSpotter. Upon archiving a copy of the MP3 to compact disc or DVD, the investigator shall review the archived MP3 copy to verify that it transferred accurately and completely. The disc shall be entered into evidence and maintained in the property room. The officer shall complete a supplemental report documenting the acquisition of the audio files and their submission to the property room as evidence.

D. Commanders of special units detailed with investigating and deterring crimes involving gunfire shall implement a practice of periodically reviewing ShotSpotter historical data to identify patterns of gunfire activity and, where applicable, develop an appropriate response.

E. A detailed forensic report shall be requested from SST, Inc. in all incidents of victims being shot, including police officer involved shootings where ShotSpotter data was captured.

F. To request a detailed forensic report of a ShotSpotter incident, the officer shall click on the relevant incident within the Investigator Portal and select the "Click to chat with SST about this incident" icon on the bottom left. Upon clicking this icon, a window will open which will require the officer to fill in the requesting officer's name and contact information. In the "problem description" window the officer will add a description such as "request a detailed forensic report on this incident as the incident resulted in a homicide". The forensic request can then be sent as a "secure email" to SST.

G. Officers not receiving a detailed forensic report from SST within two weeks of requesting the report shall contact SST to follow up on the status of the report completion.

H. When receiving a detailed forensic report from SST, officers shall save the report to CD or DVD and place the disc into the property room as evidence. A supplemental report shall be completed documenting the request, and the acquisition of the report from SST and subsequent submission of the report to the property room.

## 6.0 EVIDENCE COLLECTION

Officers will diligently search for evidence within 82 feet (25 meters) of the confirmed gunfire report. This evidence includes, but is not limited to:

- Shell casings
- Discarded weapons
- Bullet fragments
- Bodily fluids
- Blood

If no victim(s) are located and the only evidence discovered is ballistic evidence (e.g. shell casings, spent bullets or fragments) or discarded firearms officers will process the scene themselves. This includes, at a minimum, documenting the scene with photographs, collecting evidence and depositing the evidence in the property room. Officers will wear disposable gloves when handling evidence and will use paper bags to collect the evidence. Officers will draw a preliminary report number for the ballistic evidence and pictures, and will use "ShotSpotter" in the narrative section of the report. Property room personnel will segregate the ShotSpotter ballistic evidence for future collection and processing by the Crime Scene Unit (CSU). CSU technicians will process the scene pursuant to the guidelines in "*Collection and Preservation of Evidence, Chapter 05 Section 07*" in situations when a victim has been hit by gunfire, or at the direction of the on-scene supervisor.

## 7.0 RETENTION/DISTRIBUTION/CONFIDENTIALITY

ShotSpotter is responsible for the storage of all audio recording and related information and will retain the information for a period of seven (7) years. ShotSpotter incident reports and audio recordings shall not be released to the public, media or other outside entity without the authorization of the Chief of Police or his/her designee. In order to maintain the safety and integrity of the system, police personnel shall not disclose the location or description of the ShotSpotter sensors or coverage areas.

## 8.0 CRIME ANALYSIS

When reviewing gunfire related statistical data collected from the ShotSpotter coverage area, the Columbia Police Department's Crime Analyst shall employ practices that accurately measure the performance and effectiveness of the system.

The Crime Analysis Unit will use crime data, calls for service data and ShotSpotter acoustic surveillance data so that potential gunfire related trends may be identified.

## 9.0 PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

The Technology Services Police Inspector, or a designee, shall coordinate communication with ShotSpotter, Inc. with regard to the system's performance and contractual obligations of both the City of Columbia and the vendor.

The Operations Major shall designate the Watch Commanders to oversee the implementation of the ShotSpotter system within the Patrol Division. That designee shall manage the daily use of ShotSpotter to assure the technology is effectively utilized and accurately reported. That designee shall also coordinate with the Technology Services Police Inspector to address any concerns with regard to the system's performance.

## 10.0 SHOTSPOTTER WATCH COMMANDER WORKSHEETS

All ShotSpotter Alert Notifications will be documented on an internal ShotSpotter Worksheet [available on the CPD internal shared drive (T:)], which the Watch Commander will forward daily, along with the Watch Commander Operational Report, to the "COC CPD Watch Commander Ops" email distribution group in Outlook.

**NOTHING HEREIN SHALL PRECLUDE THE CHIEF OR DESIGNEE FROM AUTHORIZING EXCEPTIONS TO THIS ORDER, AS NECESSARY ON A CASE-BY-CASE BASIS.**