

**James W. Johnson**  
Chief of Police



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**“INTEGRITY...FAIRNESS...SERVICE”**

**SPECIAL ORDER # 01-09**

**DATE:** March 1, 2009

**TO:** All Police Department Personnel. To be Announced at Roll Call and a Copy Posted on the Bulletin Board for 30 Days.

**RE:** Crime Tips Text Messaging

**EFFECTIVE:** Immediately

**BACKGROUND:** Metro Crime Stoppers is a non-profit organization that assists law enforcement agencies in solving crimes. This is accomplished by open communication between the public and law enforcement. The public is able to provide information to the police through Metro Crime Stoppers, remaining anonymous and receiving cash rewards.

Metro Crime Stoppers has collaborated with Anderson Software to purchase and implement a software package called TipSoft SMS. This technology allows citizens to use text messaging to relay information on criminal activity.

**PURPOSE:** To establish procedures for accepting and routing crime tips that are received through text messaging.

**RELATIONSHIP TO DEPARTMENTAL VALUES:** Using text messaging to receive crime tips supports the Department's value of **SERVICE** by providing citizens with an additional method of contacting the police department with vital information on criminal activity. This preserves our commitment to public safety and service for the citizens of Baltimore County.

**POLICY:** Baltimore County will continue to work with Metro Crime Stoppers of Maryland by receiving crime tips via text messaging. These messages will be reviewed for importance and validity and forwarded to the appropriate investigative unit for follow-up.

**PROCEDURES:**

**Metro Crime Stoppers:**

- 1) Receives tips from the public on criminal activity.
- 2) Forwards these tips to the liaisons/contact persons from each of the seven participating law enforcement agencies of Maryland.
- 3) Follows up with the agency on validity of tips and pays cash rewards for information.

## **SPECIAL ORDER #01-09 (Continuation)**

### **Communications Team:**

- 1) Receives tips from Metro Crime Stoppers.
- 2) Reviews the information and determines the following:
  - a) The location of the crime/criminal activity.
  - b) If any suspect information is provided.
- 3) Determines the nature of the information (e.g., vice/narcotics complaint, crime of violence, homicide, etc.), and if it involves Baltimore County.
- 4) During non-business hours (i.e., evenings and weekends) notifies and forwards the tip information to the appropriate unit for follow-up (e.g., precinct level IST, Violent Crimes Unit, Homicide, etc.).

**NOTE:** The method of receiving crime tips through text messaging does not deviate from the current procedures of receiving information and making regular notifications (e.g., call-outs for the Tactical Unit, Hostage Negotiations, etc.).
- 5) Reviews crime tips for incidents occurring outside Baltimore County to determine the possible value of information to our agency.
- 6) Maintains a log of incoming tips and forwards a disposition list to the Media Relations Section.

### **Media Relations Section:**

- 1) Receives tips from Metro Crime Stoppers.
- 2) Maintains a log of all incoming tips.
- 3) Receives periodic updates from the Communications Team on the disposition of the crime tips.
- 4) During normal business hours, ensures that the appropriate units are notified in reference to specific crimes.
- 5) Contacts Metro Crime Stoppers and advises on crime tips which lead to arrest and/or indictment.
- 6) Has the primary responsibility of follow up and liaison with Metro Crime Stoppers.

**EXCEPTION:** When the Media Relations Liaison is unavailable (e.g., leave, vacation, training, etc.), the Communications Team will be contacted and assume the responsibility of receiving and disseminating tips during normal business hours.

**IMPLEMENTATION:** A copy of this Special Order will be given to all sworn/non-sworn members of the Department.

By order of,

James W. Johnson  
*Chief of Police*