

	Administrative General Order	04.08 ShotSpotter	PAGE 1 OF 4
	SUBJECT		EFFECTIVE DATE
	Virginia Beach Police Department Written Directive Chapter 4 – ShotSpotter		07/15/2021
			ORIGINATOR/REVIEW
DISTRIBUTION	CALEA:		Chief's Staff
ALL			
BY THE AUTHORITY OF THE POLICE CHIEF:		PWN	

Purpose:

To provide guidance for appropriate monitoring and response to a ShotSpotter alert.

Policy:

The Virginia Beach Police Department (VBPD) will utilize ShotSpotter (SSPTR) gunshot location system technology to enhance its ability to address gun crime violence at specific locations in the city selected by ShotSpotter based on calls for service data. Department members utilizing SSPTR will investigate all SSPTR alerts following established standards of officer safety and investigative protocols set forth in this policy.

Definitions:

ShotSpotter Gunshot Location System (SSPTR) – Technology that detects and alerts law enforcement to outdoor audible gunfire within a specific coverage area using acoustic sensors which accurately pinpoint the location of the gunfire.

ShotSpotter Respond Application – A cloud-hosted, password-protected application available to VBPD personnel that provides a visual map representation and address of a gunfire alert.

ShotSpotter Real-Time Incident Review Center (IRC) – A 24/7 remote operating center staffed by professional reviewers who analyze audio data and recordings to confirm gunfire, and then create alerts.

ShotSpotter Insight – A web-based application that provides crime analysts, investigators, and command staff a single source for all historical gunshot activity along with the ability to uncover important details and patterns about shootings which can help solve gun crimes.

Policy/Guidelines for Use:

- A. Monitoring and Receiving a SSPTR Alert (SSA)
 - a. All officers who are signed-on to a Mobile Data Computer (MDC) are required to log-in to the ShotSpotter Respond Application at the beginning of their shift.
 - b. A gunshot alert can be communicated to officers in three different ways:
 - i. Emergency Communications & Citizen Services (ECCS)
 - 1. ECCS will generate a call for service and dispatch units to a SSA after the alert is received via the ShotSpotter Dispatch Application.
 - ii. SSPTR Respond Application
 - iii. Officers will receive alerts directly via the ShotSpotter Respond Application by logging-in from a MDC or desktop PC. Mobile Alerts
 - 1. Officers may receive alerts on a personal smart phone directly via the SSPTR Respond mobile app when logged into the application.

B. Responding to a SSA

- a. All SSAs shall be considered a Priority 2 call for service and will be dispatched immediately.
- b. When an officer receives an alert via the SSPTR Respond Application or SSPTR Respond mobile app prior to a call for service being created by ECCS, the officer will immediately notify ECCS of the following information:
 - i. They are “Responding to a SSA”
 - ii. The address of the alert
 - iii. Any other pertinent information received in the alert, e.g., multiple shooters, direction of travel, high-powered firearm, etc.
- c. If, by the time ECCS generates a call for service for an SSA and a unit has not notified ECCS of their response, ECCS will immediately dispatch the call for service as a Priority 2 call.
- d. At least two one-officer units, or one two-officer unit, must respond to the location of each SSA.
 - i. Prior to initiating a response to the alert location, officers shall review the following alert information provided by the SSPTR Respond Application or SSPTR Respond mobile app:
 1. Actual location of the shot(s) fired as indicated on the map
 2. Number of rounds heard
 3. Audio of the gunfire
 - a. Listening to the audio prior to arrival will provide tactical insight and a more appropriate response (i.e. multiple shooters, caliber, etc.)
- e. A supervisor shall respond to all alerts and may require more than two units to respond if additional information suggests a high volume of shots, multiple shooters, high-powered firearms, etc.
- f. Respond to the dot(s).
 - i. Responding officers should not rely solely on the numeric address provided. Instead, officers should respond to the dot indicated on the map as provided via the SSPTR Respond Application, SSPTR Respond mobile app, or location provided by ECCS.
 1. **Example:** A SSA in a park will provide officers with the address of the park, but the dot(s) on the map will provide officers with the location of the detected gunshot(s) inside the park (usually within 82 feet). It is imperative that officers respond to the area of the dot(s) and not just the address.
- g. Plainclothes Response
 - i. Officers working a plainclothes assignment shall not respond to SSAs as a primary unit
 - ii. If a plainclothes officer is in the vicinity of a SSA, and only after notifying ECCS, they may canvass the area in their vehicle(s) and inform incoming uniformed officers of any suspicious persons or identifiable suspect descriptions
 - iii. In such situations, plainclothes officers shall clearly communicate via radio channel of the responding uniformed officers their response, position, and intentions
 - iv. Plainclothes officers shall only take direct law enforcement action if there is an immediate threat to public safety. This response will be guided as described in General Order 11.09, Plainclothes Operations

C. Investigating a SSA

a. Search the Area:

- i. Once on-scene, officers must exit their patrol vehicles and physically check a 100-foot radius from the area indicated by the dot(s) on the SSPTR Respond Application or SSPTR Respond mobile app map.
 1. Notify ECCS of the actual address where shots were fired
 2. Use caution and render aid to any victims
 3. Make any necessary arrests
 4. Actively search for and recover any evidence (casings, firearms, etc.)
 - a. If shell casings are located, request FSU to respond for collection for timely entry into the NIBN system
 - b. If FSU is unavailable, officers shall properly collect them as specified in the Evidence Collection and Handling Field Guide

b. Community Contacts

- i. When applicable, officers will attempt to contact residents of at least two addresses on each side of a SSA. A supervisor shall respond to the scene to ensure the canvass is completed appropriately. When contact with residents is made, officers will:
 1. Advise the resident police are investigating a SSA
 2. Inquire about any injuries or damage to property because of gunfire
 3. Inquire about suspect information
 4. For residents who are not home or do not come to the door, officers will leave a Gunfire Incident Canvass door hanger at the residence, filling out the date, time, and CAD/IBR number sections on the form
- ii. Officers will document the addresses visited during the canvass within their IBR and/or CADS case comments.
- iii. Depending upon the time of day and/or nature of the scene, it may not be advisable to conduct the community canvass at that time. Shift supervisors shall conduct a pass-down for the incoming shift so that a proper canvass may be conducted at a later time.
 1. A follow-up canvass for shell casings and/or community contacts will be documented on a Ground Truth Report.

c. Ground Truth Reports

- i. Prior to clearing a call for service related to a SSA, officers shall complete a ground truth report to provide detailed information for further analysis
- ii. This report will be completed within Microsoft Forms via Teams site
- iii. The following fields must be completed within the report:
 1. SSPTR case ID
 2. # of casings found
 3. Caliber of casing
 4. Correlating 911 call (y/n)
 5. Related to another call for service (y/n)
 6. # of arrests related to SSPTR alert
 7. # of guns recovered on scene
 8. Report number (either CAD case or IBR #)
 9. Offense report (y/n)
 10. Survey completed (y/n)
 11. Victims shot

12. Victims not shot
13. Buildings shot
14. Vehicles shot
15. Comments
16. Officer code

D. Use of SSPTR in Investigations

- a. Officers and Detectives may download an Investigative Lead Summary from the SSPTR mobile app, SSPTR Respond Application, or SSPTR Insight Application.
 - i. To comply with rules of discovery, officers downloading these reports will save the report as part of the investigative case file.
 - ii. A Detailed Forensic Report (DFR) will be requested from SSPTR for any incident which results in criminal charges and/or is being prosecuted by the OCA
- b. Detectives and Analysts have the availability to research alerts through the SSPTR Insight Application which maintains alert data since a coverage area went live.

E. Reporting Errors

- a. Any officer or supervisor who responds to a gun crime event occurring within a coverage area or near the perimeter of a coverage area that did not generate a SSA should report the issue to ShotSpotter Support via email at support@shotspotter.com as soon as it is safe to do so, but within 24 hours. Officers and Supervisors shall also copy the NIBIN group email at ybpdnibin@vbgov.com .
 - i. Please include the following information
 1. Date of incident
 2. Time of incident
 3. Location of incident
 4. Verification that the incident occurred outdoors
 5. Verification that the incident occurred within or near the coverage area