

Rules and Procedures

Rule 308

April 24, 1996

Rule 308 - CRIME STOPPERS PROGRAM

Sec. 1 Purpose: To delineate the procedures under which the Crime Stoppers Program operates and the responsibilities of both the Crime Stoppers Unit and Detectives who are assigned a case which contains information received from a Crime Stoppers Tip.

Sec. 2 Definitions:

A. Boston Police Foundation – a non-profit organization comprised of local business leaders dedicated to funding and promoting innovative programs for the Boston Police Department;

B. Boston Police Crime Stoppers Program – a sponsored initiative of the Boston Police Foundation;

C. Crime Stoppers Board – those civilian members of the Boston Police Foundation committed solely to the Crime Stoppers Program;

D. Crime Stoppers Unit – the operational arm of the Crime Stoppers Program, located within the Boston Police Department and staffed by Boston Police employees;

E. Police Coordinator – the sworn Boston Police Superior Officer charged with commanding the Boston Police Crime Stoppers Unit;

F. Tipster – an individual who remains anonymous but who provides confidential information on a crime to the Crime Stoppers Program either by mail or through the telephone tip line;

G. Funneling – where an informant is known to a detective, the informant provides specific information to that detective about a crime and then the detective instructs the informant to call Crime Stoppers to collect an award;

H. Immediate Family Member – a person's spouse, child, parent or sibling.

Sec. 3 General Considerations:

A. The Boston Police Crime Stoppers Program is an endeavor of the Boston Police Foundation. It is a partnership relying on cooperation between the Boston Police Department, local news media and the citizens of Boston. The goal of Crime Stoppers is to assist the Boston Police Department in solving crimes of violence against the person (felonies) by utilizing media highlighting and an anonymous telephone tip line. Awards are paid to tipsters whose

information results in the arrest and indictment of an offender. Awards in the cash amount of not less than \$100 nor more than \$1,000 are paid by the Boston Police Foundation.

B. The role of the Boston Police Department's Crime Stoppers Unit is to receive anonymous information on unsolved crimes and pass this information to the appropriate Unit/District for investigation.

C. It is of the utmost importance that Department personnel protect the anonymity of the tipster and respect the confidentiality of information received through the program. Anonymous calls to Crime Stoppers eliminates the caller being subpoenaed to court as there is no record of their identity.

D. The Crime Stoppers Program is NOT an Informant Fund. Information found to be "FUNNELED" to Crime Stoppers will be considered a violation not only of this rule but of the spirit of the program in keeping with the anonymity concerns. Individuals found to have been "funneled" are not eligible for a cash award. Department personnel found to have "funneled" known informants to Crime Stoppers shall be subject to Department discipline.

E. Crime Stoppers generally pays awards only on productive tips received by telephone (1-800-494-TIPS) or by mail. If an individual anonymously contacts a detective and wishes to remain anonymous, but still be paid for information on a crime, the detective may refer the individual to Crime Stoppers at 1-800-494-TIPS, as long as he does not have specific knowledge of what the actual crime information the individual is going to provide. As an alternative, if circumstances dictate, the detective may explain the Department's policy on Confidential Informants.

F. Individuals wanting to provide information in person to Crime Stoppers are NOT to be directed to the Crime Stoppers Unit. They shall be advised to contact Crime Stoppers by telephone at 1-800-494-TIPS.

G. In situations where an individual has attempted, but was unable to notify Crime Stoppers by phone or by message left on the answering machine, and the information is of such urgency that notification must be made to police immediately, eligibility for an award may be considered, provided:

1. the individual attempted to contact the Crime Stoppers Unit first; and
2. the detective receiving the information notifies the Crime Stoppers Unit by telephone or mail of the following:
 - a. an individual who wishes to be considered for a Crime Stoppers award has provided information on a crime;
 - b. details regarding the individual's unsuccessful attempts to contact Crime Stoppers; and

c. the investigation commenced or was furthered as a result of the information.

H. In all but exceptional circumstances (at the discretion of the Crime Stoppers Board) individuals who provide Department personnel with specific information on a crime, without first attempting to contact the Crime Stoppers Unit, are not eligible for a Crime Stoppers award.

I. Department personnel shall not, at any time, advise individuals they are eligible for a cash award. Determining the eligibility and the amount of an award is the sole responsibility of the Crime Stoppers Board. All inquiries regarding eligibility shall be directed to the Crime Stoppers Unit.

Sec. 4 Crime Stoppers Unit Responsibilities:

A. On receipt of a telephone call to the Crime Stoppers tipline (1-800-494-TIPS), members of the Crime Stoppers Unit shall:

1. if the caller is interested in receiving an award for the information or is likely to call back with further information, provide the caller with a code number;
2. assess the information and do as much pre-investigation as possible, such as matching the information with a reported crime and checking with Unit/District detectives;
3. if the information is suitable for further investigation, generate a Crime Stoppers Tip Summary;
4. forward the Crime Stoppers Tip Summary to the appropriate Unit/District Commander for further investigation whereupon the assigned investigator shall be responsible for corroborating the information received;
5. if the nature of the information requires immediate action, notify the appropriate Unit/District Commander directly and forward a Crime Stoppers Tip Summary at the earliest opportunity;
6. on the return of the Crime Stoppers Tip Summary, if a crime has been solved, prepare a report to be presented by the Police Coordinator to the Crime Stoppers Board Award Committee.

B. The Crime Stoppers Board Award Committee meets on a monthly basis and reviews all cases submitted for award consideration since the time of the last meeting. The committee determines if an award should be paid and if so, the amount of the award. Determinations on eligibility and on the amount of any award by the Crime Stoppers Board Award Committee are final. The Crime Stoppers Unit will be advised of the Committee's decisions.

C. If an award has been authorized, a member of the Crime Stoppers Unit shall, when the Tipster calls back, advise the tipster of the amount of the cash award and explain the process for obtaining it.

Sec. 5 Individuals Not Eligible for Crime Stoppers Cash Awards:

A. Under the operating procedures of Crime Stoppers, callers never have to reveal their identity. However, the TIPSTER is NOT eligible for an award, if the Crime Stoppers Police Coordinator becomes aware of information which identifies a tipster as falling into any of the following categories:

1. any law enforcement officer or a member of their immediate family;
2. employees of the Boston Police Department and members of their immediate family;
3. a member of the Boston Police Foundation's Crime Stoppers Board;
4. a suspect or accomplice of the crime;
5. the victim of the crime or a member of their immediate family;
6. funneled informants.

Sec. 6 Confidentiality:

A. Once information has been received by Crime Stoppers, there is no guarantee as to which detective(s) will be assigned to investigate. Department personnel in receipt of anonymous information shall:

1. treat the source of the information as strictly confidential;
2. always be concerned about protecting the anonymity of the tipster;
3. not photocopy a Crime Stoppers Tip Summary;
4. not mention Crime Stoppers in any police reports (always make reference to "Acting on information received");
5. not advise the suspect that the information came through Crime Stoppers;
6. not show the Crime Stoppers Tip Summary to the suspect (to protect the anonymity of the TIPSTER and not put them at risk);

7. not attach any Crime Stoppers Tip Summaries to police reports, search warrants or other court documents;

8. if an arrest is made, attach a copy of the 1.1 report and booking sheet with photo to the Crime Stoppers Tip Summary and forward it to the Crime Stoppers Unit through the Unit/District Commander;

9. if no arrest is made as a result of the tip, make a notation as to the outcome of the investigation on the Crime Stoppers Tip Summary and return it to the Crime Stoppers Unit through the Unit/District Commander (a supplementary report is not required).

B. Should any Department personnel receive a subpoena to attend court as a result of an arrest based on Crime Stoppers information, that person shall, as soon as possible and well in advance of the court date, notify the district attorney in charge of the case that the information was obtained through Crime Stoppers.

C. All requests to see the Crime Stoppers Tip Summary, whether by a district attorney or a defense attorney, shall be directed to the Office of the Legal Advisor. Only the Legal Advisor can approve the release of a copy of the Tip Summary in response to such a request.