

Crime Solvers Tip Line

343.1 STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The St. Mary's County Crime Solvers is an organization composed of citizens who work in conjunction with local law enforcement agencies and the media. The Law Enforcement Coordinator for the program is the Public Information Officer. The role of the media consists of donating public service time on radio, television, and newspaper articles to publicize information about crime in the county.

The Crime Solvers program is an innovative approach to solving crimes and capturing wanted persons. The program exists nationwide, assisting law enforcement agencies as an aid in solving crimes with little or no solvability factors. The Sheriff's Office utilizes three different methods of receiving crime tips: phone tips, web page tips, and text tips.

343.2 REWARD OFFERED

The Crime Solvers Program offers up to a \$1,000.00 reward for information leading to an arrest or indictment from information received through the Crime Solvers tip line. When a person calls the Crime Solvers line, they are issued a number and guaranteed anonymity. Crime Solvers does not need the caller's name or other personal information, just information about the crime. If the caller's information turns out to be valuable, it is presented to the Crime Solvers Citizen Board of Directors. The Board determines the amount of reward. The caller is instructed to be at a public place at a certain time, where identification is verified by the assigned number. The person is paid the cash reward by a member of the citizen's Board of Directors, not the Sheriff's Office. The county government supplies no funds for this program. Any distribution of reward monies to tipsters will be reported to the Crime Solvers Coordinator for statistical tracking in the Command Central System.

343.3 CRIME TIP PROMOTION

The Crime Solvers Program is promoted through various means to include:

- (a) Media Press Release
- (b) Website Promotion
- (c) Public School Signs/Pamphlets
- (d) Variable Message Signs

343.4 CRIME SOLVERS PHONE TIP LINE

The Crime Solvers "Tip Line" phone is located at the Duty Officer (D.O.) post at Headquarters. The D.O. will answer all calls received on this line. The D.O. will complete a web based electronic tip sheet based on the phone call. The D.O. will research the CAD and attempt to locate a CCN for the tip. If a CCN is linked, the D.O. will forward the tip to the original deputy investigating the case as set forth below. If the tip has not been assigned to an officer for investigation, the D.O.

St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office

LE Policy Manual

Crime Solvers Tip Line

will assign to a deputy on his/her squad or forward it to the appropriate Division via the Command Central System as set forth below.

Upon entering the tip using the Command Central System, the Duty Officer will send the tip via email to the applicable investigating officer (if determined to be linked to a CCN), Crime Solvers Coordinator, Commander of the Criminal Investigations Division, and the supervisor of the unit in which the tip is related.

For example: A tip dealing with narcotics would be sent to the Crime Solvers Coordinator, Commander of the Criminal Investigations Division, and the Commander of the Vice Narcotics Division.

Any issues with passwords, logins, etc. should be directed to the Crime Solvers Coordinator.

The Crime Solvers Tip Line Phone is paid for by the St. Mary's County Crime Solvers, Inc. No collect calls, outgoing calls, long distance calls or personal calls are allowed on the Crime Solvers Tip Line. No Sheriff's Office employee will transfer any incoming personal calls to the Crime Solvers Tip Line for any reason.

343.5 CRIME SOLVERS WEB PAGE TIPS

Tipsters can fill out a completely anonymous web tip through Command Central System to give information to the police. The tipster may be contacted anonymously through the Command Central System to elicit more information. This requires the tipster to return to the web site to check for updated information. The web site can be found at www.firstsheriff.com or by visiting www.tipsubmit.com and selecting St. Mary's County.

343.6 CRIME SOLVERS TEXT TIPS

Tipsters can send short message service (SMS) tips from their cellular phones or personal digital assistant (PDA) by texting "TIP239 [plus your message]" to "CRIMES" (274637). After sending the message the user is given an anonymous alias identifier. The user can be engaged in a 2-way dialogue with the Sheriff's Office to elicit more information.

343.7 CRIME TIP MANAGEMENT

At the Duty Officer's computer terminal, the Command Central System will be an icon on the Desktop. When the system is up and running, a beeping sound will be made for each new tip received.

New tips can be located by clicking on the "retrieve new tips" button on bottom right of the screen.

The Duty Officer will open the tip and click "edit". This will allow the tip to be managed. The Duty Officer will read the tip and enter the type of offense from the drop down list and the city in which it is occurring.

The Duty Officer will review the tip and assign it a tip report number by clicking on the report # arrow next to the open field.

St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office

LE Policy Manual

Crime Solvers Tip Line

Based on the type of tip the Duty Officer will forward the tip to the appropriate Division Commander, Crime Solvers Coordinator, and Commander of the Criminal Investigations Division by utilizing the "Export" function with the "Actions" tab. This function can only be completed once the tip has a report number assigned and it has been saved. A PDF version of the tip will be created to allow for proper dissemination via email.

During a major incident or crime such as a shooting, homicide or other event garnering large public attention Division Commanders should consider dedicating a trained Command Central operator to monitor the computer to watch for incoming tips related to the incident. This trained Command Central operator in most cases should be the duty officer or station clerk. The purpose of this is to immediately engage a tipster in a two-way text dialogue to get more information.

343.8 TIP FOLLOW UP

It will be the responsibility of the Division Commander to assign the tip for follow up and to ensure the Crime Solvers Coordinator is notified of the outcome (arrest, etc.) for purposes of updating the Crime Tip Management.

All assigned crime tips will be followed up on in a reasonable period of time. Within 60 days of the Sheriff's Office receiving the tip the assigned case officer will complete the Tip Disposition Sheet. If the tip information is still being worked, the case officer may complete a brief update on the sheet indicating that the tip should remain open. The Tip Disposition Sheet will be returned to the Coordinator.

343.9 CRIME SOLVERS CASES FOR BROADCAST

All local law enforcement agencies are invited to solicit cases for broadcast through the local media. The schedule for airing such information varies according to airtime and public service announcement scheduling. To have information considered for broadcast a deputy sheriff will contact the Coordinator by Memorandum (SMCSO Form #35) and attach a copy of the related Offense Report. Information to be included will be any information not detrimental to the ongoing investigation. Cases will then be chosen by the Coordinator meeting the criteria set forth by the St. Mary's County Crime Solvers By-Laws. A Crime Solvers Press Release will then be prepared for dissemination to the media.

343.10 SYSTEM REVIEW

The Crime Solvers Coordinator will complete an annual statistical review of the Command Central System. A report will be generated and forwarded to the Sheriff via the chain of command.

343.11 TRAINING

All Division Commanders, Duty Officers, Investigators, Station Clerks, Analysts, and the CID Administrative Coordinator will be trained in the use of the Command Central System. All training will be coordinated through the Special Operations Division Commander.