



BASIC CRIME STOPPERS COURSE

TIP TAKING & REWARDS

TIP TAKING: TIP LINE OPERATIONS



- **Who will answer the phone**
Coordinator / Sponsor / Answering Service
- **Telephone Type**
Land line / Mobile
- **Train Call Takers**
Written guide / Special crime report form / Anonymity

TIP TAKING: TIP LINE OPERATIONS



- **Anonymity**
 - Guaranteeing the anonymity of tip line calls is the **NUMBER ONE PRIORITY** of any Crime Stoppers organization.
 - Not a policy – it's the law
 - Misdemeanor A (Felony 3 if for \$\$\$)
 - Don't give the caller a choice

TIP TAKING: TIP LINE OPERATIONS



Anonymity vs. Confidentiality

Anonymity = *Nameless*

Confidentiality = *Private*

Tipsters must remain *nameless*

Tip *information* must remain *private*

**Don't give the caller a choice.
You cannot release information you don't possess.**

TIP TAKING: TIP LINE OPERATIONS



- Have a Code Number system
- Have instructions for tipster call-back procedures
 - Five-day window
 - Specific date/time
 - Code identification

TIP TAKING: TIP LINE OPERATIONS



What happens when I am not there?

Who answers the telephone?

- They **MUST**:
 - Understand the Crime Stoppers concept
 - Know the basics of telephone interview techniques
 - Be familiar with the tip sheet and what to do with it

TIP TAKING: TIP LINE OPERATIONS



Who calls Crime Stoppers?

- People with information who:
 - Want anonymity
 - Want a reward
 - Fear reprisal
 - Would remain uninvolved if not for anonymity
 - Don't know who to call

TIP TAKING: TIP LINE OPERATIONS



What to do when the telephone rings?

- How to answer
 - Call taker's attitude impacts tipster's reaction
 - Explain the anonymity promise and reward system
 - Ask the basics: Who, What, When, Where, and How

TIP TAKING: TIP LINE OPERATIONS



- Tipster's knowledge: Personal or Hearsay
- Was the crime featured on TV, Radio, Newspaper?
 - If so, *when*?
- Review and confirm information with tipster
- Give tipster something to do

TIP TAKING: TIP LINE OPERATIONS



- Assign a code number
- Discuss call-back procedure
- Lost code retrieval

TIP TAKING: OTHER METHODS



- Website
- Apps
- SMS
- Transferred Tips

TIP TAKING: OPERATIONS



Should you accept in-person tips?

- Face-to-face tips should be avoided
- The Crime Stoppers and informer's "privilege" is not absolute
- Although rare, a court can order the disclosure of an "informant's" identity

TIP TAKING: OPERATIONS



If it is **NOT** an emergency:

- Suggest the tip-line, website, text-a-tip, etc.
- Explain that face-to-face is an informant, not an anonymous tipster

TIP TAKING: OPERATIONS



If it **IS** an emergency:

- Accept the information
- Instruct to use standard follow-up procedures; no more face-to-face
- Explain that face-to-face is an informant, not an anonymous tipster

TIP TAKING: TIP SHEETS



- A guide to help you obtain all the facts: *Who, What, When, Where, and How*
- Crime Stoppers owns all the tip records
- Do **NOT** belong in law enforcement or school district files, desks, cabinets, etc.
- **NOT** public information

TIP TAKING: TIP SHEETS



- Computer- or paper-based
- Keep tip sheets secure
- Develop a written policy
Creating / Disseminating / Processing / Retention
- Disseminate to investigators or proper agency
- Retrieve

TIP TAKING: TIP SHEETS



- Include all details/information provided by the tipster* (except as follows)
- **NEVER** reveal any information that could identify the tipster
 - Never use gender (he said, she said, etc.)
 - Do not link tipster with the information given or with suspect(s)

TIP TAKING: TIP SHEET DISSEMINATION



To whom should I deliver the tip?

- Anyone who is authorized to and willing to investigate or act on the information
- Ensure that the recipient understands Crime Stoppers policy and procedure

TIP TAKING: INVESTIGATORS



Investigators and Officers

- Resenting Crime Stoppers
- Funneling
- Promising rewards
- Exigent circumstances

TIP TAKING: INVESTIGATORS



Investigators and Officers

- Send personnel to CS training
- Conduct in-service CS training
- Invite to CS Board meetings

TIP TAKING: PROBABLE CAUSE



- Is an anonymous tip probable cause?
- Can an anonymous tip be used to establish probable cause?
- Campus Crime Stoppers vs. Community Crime Stoppers

TIP TAKING: CORROBORATING TIPS



- Officer's expertise
- Sensory
- Furtive conduct or flight
- Reputation of suspect and/or area
- Previous related conviction(s) or arrest(s)
- Law enforcement records
- Information from victim or witness

TIP TAKING: REWARDS



- Follow a rewards schedule
- Board members vote on amount of rewards
- Reward funds:
 - Fundraisers
 - Probation fees (certified organizations)
 - Court generated
 - Shared with other city or area Crime Stoppers
 - 20% may be used for operations

TIP TAKING: REWARDS



- Donations
 - Elected officials (*use caution*)
 - Civic groups
 - Corporations
 - Individuals
- Grants
- Third party funding
 - City / County (Tx LGC § 351.901)

TIP TAKING: REWARD PAYMENTS



- Drive thru bank
- School library / Reserved book
- Locker
- Inmates
- ?????

Methods come and go, use what works best for your organization while maintaining tipster anonymity, safety, and organization integrity.