1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the use of and response to the ShotSpotter Gunshot Detection and Alert System.

2. POLICY

It shall be the policy of the Atlanta Police Department to properly utilize ShotSpotter to enhance the Department’s ability to respond to and investigate violent crimes involving illegal gunfire.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 The Chief of Police shall designate a ShotSpotter Program Manager.

3.2 Division and section commanders shall ensure that all sworn employees, dispatchers, crime lab and crime scene technicians are familiar with and in compliance with this policy.

3.3 Supervisors shall monitor the collection and preservation of evidence processed by their subordinates in accordance with this directive.

3.4 The responding officer shall protect the crime scene until a criminal investigator responds to the scene and takes over the investigation. If an investigator does not take over the investigation, the responding officer shall take all necessary steps to investigate the crime scene.

4. ACTION

4.1 Initial Assessment and Dispatching

4.1.1 Communications shall monitor and dispatch the ShotSpotter Alert from the Alarm Board Station and/or Communications Supervisor Console. The Alarm Board Monitor shall immediately enter a call in the CAD system and assign ShotSpotter calls as a Signal 25s, Priority 2 and follow procedure pursuant to APD.SOP.6010 “Communications,” including the below information. The Communications Zone Dispatcher shall provide the responding officer(s) with, at a minimum, the following information:

1. Specific detailed location of the incident;

2. Severity of the incident (single shooter firing a single round, single shooter firing multiple rounds, multiple shooters, suspect movement); and
3. Provide information of additional calls of the incident by citizens

4.1.2 The Alarm Board Monitor shall indicate in the Remarks field “Shots Fired – ShotSpotter.”

4.1.3 Officers in vehicles outfitted with Mobile Data Terminals (MDTs) or officers who have the ShotSpotter application on their phone, who receive ShotSpotter alerts within their assigned zone, may respond accordingly and notify a dispatcher of their intentions.

4.1.4 Upon confirmation of an actual shooting, the dispatcher shall coordinate the response of the additional units and medical aid if needed. Two officers shall respond to all ShotSpotter calls.

4.2 Field Unit Response

4.2.1 Responding officers shall treat ShotSpotter incidents as crimes in progress and shall take a safe and strategic approach to the incident, anticipating that the perpetrator may still be armed and dangerous and on-scene.

4.2.2 The Video Integration Unit (VIC) shall review any corresponding video from the video surveillance system that has visibility of the crime scene and shall inform the responding officer(s) of any lookouts or safety-related information.

The VIC Unit will generate a weekly report detailing the number of ShotSpotter calls and the corresponding case numbers where the VIC Unit cameras were able to provide assistance to responding officers.

4.2.3 Responding officers shall exit their vehicle and canvass the precise location identified via the ShotSpotter system for victims, evidence and/or potential witnesses. Officers shall canvas the immediate area and check on the well-being of nearby residents. When available, officers shall leave door hangers on doors of residences in the immediate area.

4.2.4 Responding officers and/or supervisors shall notify the Gun Assault Squad if a victim injured by a firearm discharge is located. Officers will notify other investigative units as needed.

4.2.5 Responding officers shall complete an incident report whenever he/she responds to a ShotSpotter (25s) call where any suspects, victims or other pertinent information is found. The officer will indicate in the narrative that they ‘…responded to a ShotSpotter call.’ The incident report will also include all required information as referenced in APD.SOP.3060 “Reports and Report Writing” to include any presence of video evidence, shell casings, victims, suspects/arrestees and EMS.

When the assigned responding officer arrives on a ShotSpotter call and determines there is no damage to property, no evidence of a weapon discharge, and no victims, witnesses or other involved parties can be located, the responding officer will inform dispatch the call is Code 24 – no victims, witnesses, evidence or damage to property could be located. The dispatcher will note in the remarks on the call that “no victims, witnesses, evidence or damage to property could be located.”

4.3 Evidence Collection at Scene

4.3.1 The Crime Scene Investigation Unit shall respond to the scene when requested by an on-scene officer or supervisor. Technicians shall respond and collect evidence in accordance with
APD.SOP.3081 “Crime Scene Investigation.” If shell casings are recovered at the scene, technicians will indicate on the evidence envelope and in any applicable tracking reports that the casings or any other evidence was recovered on a ShotSpotter call. In addition to the Atlanta Police case number, the ShotSpotter incident number (000-0000) shall be referenced on the evidence envelope.

4.3.2 When the Crime Scene Investigation Unit is not called to the scene, the responding officer(s) will collect evidence in accordance with APD.SOP.3081 “Crime Scene Investigation.” If shell casings are recovered at the scene, officers will indicate on the evidence envelope that the casings were recovered on a ShotSpotter call. In addition to the Atlanta Police case number, the ShotSpotter incident number (000-0000) shall be referenced on the evidence envelope.

4.4 Investigative Follow-up

4.4.1 Investigators shall be given access to the ShotSpotter acoustic surveillance data through the Investigative Portal.

4.4.2 Investigators must be trained to access, extract incident data, and evaluate and present incident data in preparation for prosecution.

4.4.3 Investigators shall be given access to audio recordings associated with a shooting incident to assist in the recreation of the crime scene. Data provided will assist the investigator in determining a timeline of rounds discharged and the likely number of shooters.

4.4.4 For the purpose of prosecution, investigators shall know the process for acquiring detailed forensic reports of an incident and the securing of expert witnesses relative to acoustical surveillance.

4.4.5 Crime lab technicians shall enter recovered shell casings into the National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN). TCAU and any involved investigative units shall be notified of any NIBIN hits.

4.5 Crime Analysis Utilization

4.5.1 The Tactical Crime Analysis Unit (TCAU) shall use crime data and calls for service data to assist the Department in identifying appropriate locations to deploy Shotspotter devices.

4.5.2 TCAU shall be provided access to accumulated Shotspotter acoustic surveillance data so that potential gunfire related trends may be identified.

4.5.3 TCAU shall provide a weekly ShotSpotter report to the Command Staff and a monthly report to the ShotSpotter Program Manager.

4.6 Program Management

4.6.1 The Program Manager shall maintain a thorough and general knowledge of the ShotSpotter system operation.

4.6.2 The Program Manager shall act as a liaison with the various operational units of the organization that have access and utilize ShotSpotter.
4.6.3 Acoustic surveillance data retention is the responsibility of ShotSpotter and shall be retained for a period of seven years.

4.6.4 Police personnel shall not provide to the public the location or description of the ShotSpotter sensors.

5. DEFINITIONS

5.1 **ShotSpotter Technology:** The ShotSpotter Gunshot Detection and Alert System is a reliable and accurate means for law enforcement agencies to have greater and faster awareness of illegal gunfire and explosion incidents occurring within their jurisdictions.

The technology and combination of real-time alerts and accumulated data with accurate incident locations significantly changes how law enforcement officers respond and investigate these incidents. Shotspotter increases the reporting and awareness of these incidents, provides precise location information for each incident within seconds of the discharge(s). Fast, accurate audio information captured with an acoustic surveillance system can provide invaluable situational intelligence that can illustrate the severity of an incident which is critical to determine the appropriate level of field response. It will also better prepare first responders so they can safely manage a gunfire or explosives event which can include the dispatching of medical, emergency personnel, investigative units, crime scene investigators and additional support units.

6. CANCELLATIONS

APD.SOP.3134 “Response to ShotSpotter Notifications,” effective June 1, 2018

7. REFERENCES

APD.SOP.3060 “Reports and Report Writing”

APD.SOP.3081 “Crime Scene Investigation”

APD.SOP.4040 “Communications”