

# Crime Solvers Tip411 Anonymous Tip System

## 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 the Tip411 system to receive and manage anonymous crime tips submitted via mobile app, text message, or web form.

## 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 Tip411 system. Tipsters are issued a unique anonymous ID and guaranteed anonymity. Crime Solvers does not need the tipster's name or other personal information, just information about the crime. If the tipster'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 tipster is instructed to be at a public place at a certain time, where identification is verified using the anonymous ID. 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 within the Tip411 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
- (e) Tip411 Mobile App and Web Links

## 343.4 TIP411 ANONYMOUS TIP SYSTEM

- (a) All anonymous tips will be submitted and managed through the Tip411 platform, which supports:
  - 1. Mobile App Tips (iOS/Android)
  - 2. Text Message Tips (Send a text to 847411 starting with "SMCSO," add a space, and the your message).

## *Crime Solvers Tip411 Anonymous Tip System*

---

3. Web Form Tips via [www.firstsheriff.com](http://www.firstsheriff.com)
- (b) The Tip411 system ensures 100% anonymity by stripping identifying metadata before tips are delivered to the agency. Tipsters are issued a unique anonymous ID and may engage in two-way communication with agency personnel through the platform.
- (c) All tips are received and managed through the Tip411 Dashboard, accessible to authorized personnel. Crime Analysts will:
  1. Monitor incoming tips in real time
  2. Assign tips to the appropriate Division or Investigator
  3. Document tip type, location, and relevant details
  4. Export tips as PDFs for dissemination if needed

Any issues with passwords, logins, etc. should be directed to the Systems Administrator.

### **343.5 WEB PAGE TIPS (TIP411)**

Tipsters may submit anonymous tips via the Tip411 web form, accessible through the Sheriff's Office website. Tipsters may return to the site using their anonymous ID to check for follow-up questions or provide additional information.

### **343.6 TEXT AND APP-BASED TIPS**

- (a) Tips may be submitted via:
  1. Text Message: Send a text to 847411 starting with "SMCSO," add a space, and then your message.
  2. Mobile App: The Tip411 app allows for tip submission, push alerts, and optional geolocation (with user consent).

Tipsters may engage in two-way anonymous dialogue with Crime Analysts through the app or text interface. The Tip411 system ensures complete anonymity by removing all identifying information before the tip is received by the Sheriff's Office.

### **343.7 TIP MANAGEMENT AND ASSIGNMENT**

- (a) All tips received via Tip411 will be managed through the Tip411 Dashboard. Crime Analysts will:
  1. Review and categorize each tip
  2. Assign or reference a Tip Report Number
  3. Forward the tip to the appropriate Investigator or Division Commander for assignment

During major incidents (e.g., shootings, homicides), the Incident Commander should designate a qualified individual, if available, to monitor incoming Tip411 messages and engage with tipsters as appropriate.

### *Crime Solvers Tip411 Anonymous Tip System*

---

#### **343.8 TIP FOLLOW UP**

The Crime Solvers Coordinator Analyst will forward tips directly to the assigned investigator if the case is already under their purview. If not, the Analyst will route the tip to the appropriate Division Commander or designee for review. Upon review, the Division Commander or designee will determine whether the tip warrants assignment for follow-up and will assign it accordingly. The Analyst must also be notified of the outcome (e.g., arrest, closure) to ensure the Tip411 management system is updated.

All assigned crime tips will be addressed within a reasonable period of time. If a tip results in an active investigation, it will be managed and completed in accordance with the established timeframes for open cases. The assigned investigator is responsible for notifying the assigned Analyst of the outcome for tracking and statistical purposes.

#### **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, the assigned investigator will coordinate directly with the Public Information Officer (PIO). The investigator will provide the related Offense Report and any relevant case details that are not detrimental to the ongoing investigation. Cases will then be chosen by the Coordinator using 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 TIP411 SYSTEM REVIEW**

The Crime Solvers Coordinator will complete an annual statistical review of the Tip411 system. A report will be generated and forwarded to the Sheriff via the chain of command.

#### **343.11 TRAINING (TIP411)**

All Division Commanders, Duty Officers, Investigators, Station Clerks, Analysts, and the CID Administrative Coordinator will be trained in the use of the Tip411 System. All training will be coordinated through the Training Coordinator.