



**CITY OF MADISON POLICE DEPARTMENT
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE**



Investigation of Incidents Involving Shots Fired

Eff. Date 11/24/2025

Purpose

To provide guidelines and expectations for the Madison Police Department (MPD) response to incidents of possible shots fired.

Incidents involving possible shots fired will be treated as a confirmed shots fired incident if any of the following are present:

- A. A confirmed person struck by a bullet or otherwise injured as a result of an intentional firearm discharge by another.
- B. Recovery of shell casings or other physical evidence confirming the discharge of a firearm.
- C. Property damage resulting from a bullet strike.
- D. A single complainant reporting shots fired who is contacted and determined to be credible; this can include shots heard by an officer.
- E. Multiple complainants reporting shots fired who are not available for contact, but the circumstances of the incident and reports demonstrate that a firearm was discharged.
- F. A person struck by a bullet or otherwise injured as a result of an accidental firearm discharge (self or another).
- G. A person injured from an intentional, self-inflicted firearm discharge.

Incidents reported as shots fired but not meeting the above criteria or otherwise demonstrating the confirmed discharge of a firearm should be investigated as appropriate. Confirmed shots fired incidents will be investigated in accordance with this procedure.

Initial Response

- Respond to the area in a safe manner and check for injuries, property damage, or other evidence of recent possible gun fire. Render aid to any injured parties and request Madison Fire Department (MFD) paramedics if needed.
- Attempt contact with all witnesses/complainants. Fully document all appropriate witness/complainant information (names, addresses, phone numbers, etc.).
- Collect any physical evidence – including shell casings – and process in accordance with MPD evidence collection procedures. If shell casings are recovered, document the location where they were recovered, as well as the caliber(s) and brand(s).
- For cases involving property damage, injury, or evidence of targeted shooting, request a Forensic Services Unit (FSU) Investigator as needed to photograph damage or otherwise process scene.
- Contact a supervisor and the Office in Charge (OIC) to inform them of the incident; all shots fired incidents should be included in the daily OIC notes/shift summary.
- In cases involving injury, refer to the Major Case and Notification of Commanding Officers standard operating procedures (SOPs).
- In cases involving injury, property damage, or evidence of targeted shooting, a supervisor will respond to the scene and complete an overview/summary report.
- A report must be completed on all shots fired incidents prior to the end of shift. Categorize the incident as involving a firearm discharge: select the appropriate Incident Type (generally Weapons Offense – Shots Fired, unless a different incident type is more appropriate) and select “Weapons – Shots Fired” as a Modus Operandi in the Mobile Field Report. Route report to Criminal Intelligence Section (CIS).

Investigative Follow Up

- All reports of shots fired incidents will be completed prior to the end of shift and routed to the Violent Crime Unit (VCU) for initial review/assignment.
- VCU will ensure that the appropriate District command staff (Detective Lieutenant) is notified of the incident. VCU will generally have responsibility for assignment and investigative follow-up for shots fired incidents involving injury, intentional targeting of a person (if no injury), or damage to buildings/vehicles. Districts will generally have responsibility for assignment and investigative follow-up for shots fired incidents involving suicide, clearly accidental discharges with no criminal charges, and incidents lacking evidence of an intended target. The Investigative Services Lieutenant who oversees VCU will coordinate with the appropriate District on deviations from this or assignment of other shots fired cases.
- FSU will triage all casings to determine appropriate candidates to enter into the National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN) system in a timely manner. In major cases, FSU and case detectives will work together to determine if further analysis needs to be completed on the casings prior to testing.
- All recovered firearms will be reviewed by FSU for consideration of test firing for entry into the NIBIN system. Firearms will be swabbed prior to test firing. FSU and case detectives will work together to determine if further analysis needs to be completed on the firearm prior to test firing.
- CIS will track all shots fired incidents.

Original SOP: 01/25/2018

(Revised: 05/02/2018, 01/15/2020, 01/03/2022, 11/24/2025)

(Reviewed only: 02/05/2024)