



Fire and Police Commission

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FPC Informational Memorandum: 911 Call for Shots Fired **Assignment Priority Classification**

Issue:

The Milwaukee Police Department Assignment Classification Manual provides instructions to MPD personnel for prioritizing calls for service. Assignments are classified as Priority E, Priority 1, Priority 2, Priority 3, and Priority 4. A primary purpose of the system is to send squads to the most urgent situations first. The urgency of assignments is classified by dispatchers with an assessment of various factors, including immediate threats of imminent danger to life and/or timeliness of when the offense occurred. The Assignment Classification Manual describes the majority of the types of calls received from the public, and directs MPD personnel to classify a call according to the information received over the telephone. The manual is a comprehensive guide that encompasses most of the common calls for police service and allows some discretionary interpretation depending upon the circumstances.

A citizen complaint was received concerning the prioritization of a report of gunshots fired into a home. The Assignment Classification Manual was reviewed by the FPC to determine whether the prioritization for incidents involving shots fired requires modification.

Findings:

In this instance, gunshots were fired into a citizen's home and the actor fled the scene. The citizen immediately called 911 and indicated that there were no injuries and the shooter was no longer on the scene. Upon learning that the shooter was no longer on the scene, the dispatcher downgraded the original assignment classification from Priority 1 to Priority 3. Downgrading to Priority 3 was in compliance with the Assignment Classification Manual, due to the information received that the suspect was no longer on the scene. A squad responded to the location approximately one hour later.

A citizen filed a complaint with the Fire and Police Commission expressing concern that a call for police service regarding shots fired into a home, even with no suspect on the scene, should receive a higher prioritization and more rapid police response. Given the efforts to reduce gun violence in the City of Milwaukee, the FPC places high emphasis on arresting individuals involved in gun offenses. A rapid response to the scene of a shots fired incident, even if the

actors are no longer on the scene, is conducive to reducing gun violence. A rapid response may allow identification of witnesses, persons involved, or vehicles involved. The likelihood of obtaining such information rapidly diminishes over time, as witnesses leave the scene and other evidence may become unavailable.

Upon investigation and review, the MPD Assignment Classification Manual, Standard Operating Instructions (SOI), for shots fired that just occurred but with no suspect on the scene, will be classified at a minimum as a Priority 2 assignment upon publication of this memorandum. This will provide a more rapid police response and increase the likelihood of arresting the suspects and confiscating firearms used in the offense.

Dispatchers will continue to have the discretion to classify such an assignment a Priority 1, if imminent danger is sensed based upon his/her training, experience, and/or judgment.

(09/17/10)