Crime Stoppers Texas



Course #22911

December 2019

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**ABSTRACT**

This guide discusses the Crime Stoppers organizations in Texas. It is designed to assist the instructor in developing an appropriate lesson plan to teach the course learning objectives. The learning objectives are the minimum required content of understanding the basic operations of Crime Stoppers organizations in Texas, including an understanding of campus programs, anonymous tips, reward payments, statutes related to Crime Stoppers and how organizations work with law enforcement, community volunteers and the media.

**Note to Trainers:** It is the responsibility of the coordinator to ensure this curriculum and its materials are kept up to date. Refer to curriculum and legal resources for changes in subject matter or laws relating to this topic on the Office of the Governor’s Texas Crime Stoppers website at <https://gov.texas.gov/>.

**Target Population:** Cadets attending the Basic Peace Officer Academy working towards their license to become a peace officer in the state of Texas as well as others interested in this topic area.

**Student Pre-Requisites:** None

**Instructor Pre-Requisites:**

* TCOLE Instructor or Subject Matter Expert
* **ALSO,** it is recommended to include the Crime Stoppers’ law enforcement coordinator of a local Crime Stoppers organization as a co-presenter. Contact information to assist in finding a co-presenter:
	+ Texas Crime Stoppers, Criminal Justice Division of the Office of the Governor at (512) 463-1919 or txcrimestoppers@gov.texas.gov.

**Length of Course:** 1 hour

**Method of Instruction:**

* Lecture
* Discussion
* Videos

**Assessment:** Assessment is required for completion of this course to ensure the student has a thorough comprehension of all learning objectives. Training providers are responsible for assessing and documenting student mastery of all objectives in this course.

**Crime Stoppers Texas**

**Unit Goal 1.0**

**History of Crime Stoppers**

A crime becomes increasingly difficult to solve when the criminal case is not solved within a reasonable length of time; leads diminish, the trail gets cold, and evidence can be unobtainable. People may witness all or part of a crime without an awareness of what they have seen. Consequently, they may unknowingly possess key information that could aid law enforcement in solving a crime. If citizens have information on a crime, they may not contact law enforcement agencies out of fear that providing information on a crime may expose themselves or their families to retaliation.

The Crime Stoppers program provides a method of overcoming these limitations by involving citizens in solving crimes. Citizens can come forward to provide tip information and remain anonymous. Citizens are assured that their identity is protected by law (Chapter 414, Texas Government Code) and that any information relayed to law enforcement may be utilized in the apprehension of criminals. To be effective, community Crime Stoppers programs must work closely with local law enforcement, establish relationships with media providers (i.e. social media, news outlets, etc.), and build strategic coalition partnerships with area groups and businesses to increase public outreach and awareness.

**1.1 Examine the Creation of Crime Stoppers**

Crime Stoppers was first established in Albuquerque, New Mexico in July 1976 by Detective Greg MacAleese of the Albuquerque Police Department’s Violent Crimes Squad. MacAleese was assigned to a case of a man named Michael Carmen, a gas station attendant who was killed during the process of a robbery. Six weeks after the murder, the police department had limited leads and no suspects. Det. MacAleese realized that fear and apathy were the primary reasons for lack of leads and public involvement in this case. To overcome these problems, MacAleese designed a system for the public to anonymously provide details of crimes to a non-police number. He also recommended a fund be established with non-tax dollars that could pay nominal rewards if tip information lead to the arrest and grand jury indictment of a felon. To avoid any abuse, MacAleese insisted the program should have a civilian board of directors to oversee the program and the reward fund. This system focused on stimulating community involvement and participation of law enforcement and the media.

In working the murder case of Michael Carmen, Det. MacAleese unknowingly set out on a journey that would begin a grassroots movement bringing citizens, law enforcement agencies, and the media together in a fight against crime in their communities. As a result, the first Crime Stoppers organization was created in Albuquerque in 1976. Two years later in 1978, the first Texas Crime Stoppers organization was formed in El Paso.

**1.2 Summarize the process of Establishing Crime Stoppers in Texas Law**

In 1981, the 67th Texas Legislature passed House Bill (H.B.) 1681, creating the Texas Crime Stoppers Council within the Criminal Justice Division of the Governor’s Office to promote the establishment of local Crime Stoppers organizations throughout the state.

In the intervening years, the Legislature has passed further legislation more firmly entrenching Crime Stoppers in state law. The Texas Crime Stoppers Council is a legally established body whose members are appointed by the Texas governor. The governor also appoints the director of Texas Crime Stoppers and the Texas Crime Stoppers staff remains organized within the Office of the Governor. State law also now contains legal protections for the anonymity of tipsters and allows probation fees and other funds to be used to fund local organizations and pay rewards.

The Texas Crime Stoppers staff has a statewide hotline (operated and managed by the Department of Public Safety), provides assistance to organizations in achieving and maintaining certification, and manages Crime Stoppers Assistance Fund grants. The state team also provides technical assistance to local programs, and coordinates annual conferences and training events.

Today there are approximately 150 certified Crime Stoppers organizations across the state of Texas that continue to grow and thrive with the support of contributing citizens, local law enforcement agencies, and the media. There are also statewide and national non-profit organizations and associations that support Crime Stoppers organizations.

**1.3 Recall The first “Crime of the Week”:**

On July 24, 1976, 19-year old Michael Carmen worked as a gas station attendant in the Northeast Heights area of Albuquerque, New Mexico. Just after midnight, two men robbed the gas station of $36 in cash and four cartons of cigarettes, then senselessly shot Michael Carmen with a 20-gauge shotgun at point blank range and left him to die. Due to the senselessness of the crime, MacAleese vowed to the family that the department would find the criminal and bring the family justice for their son’s death.

To spark some leads, Det. MacAleese approached a local TV station about doing a re-enactment of the crime, and publicizing a $1,000 reward for information leading to the arrest of the criminal. After the re-enactment was aired on the local news station, it produced immediate results and the case was solved within 24 hours of its airing.

The tragic murder of Michael Carmen started the most effective anti-crime program, Crime Stoppers, which is now an international program run by community volunteers with the support of law enforcement and the media.

*Local news story on Greg MacAleese with a discussion on the creation of the first crime of the week.* [**https://youtu.be/NEksR3wztVo**](https://youtu.be/NEksR3wztVo)

**Unit Goal 2.0:**

**Crime Stoppers Program Organization**

Most local Crime Stoppers programs are non-profit 501(c)(3) organization governed by a civilian board of directors that broadly represents the community. (Public crime stoppers organizations are allowable under law, but are more rare – the Texas Department of Criminal Justice operates one in state prisons.) Each organization works closely with local law enforcement agencies and the media. A designated law enforcement officer is assigned as coordinator for Crime Stoppers. The coordinator works closely with the board and is responsible for managing the program’s tipline, communicating with informants, and acting as the liaison between the organization and the law enforcement agency. Both the board of directors and the coordinator work closely with the media by publicizing organization activities, including crimes of the week.

**2.1:** **Identify the** **Board of Directors**

For a Crime Stoppers organization to remain successful, it takes the dedication and involvement of community volunteers. The board of directors oversees the general program operations and administers funds received either through public donations or grants. The board responsibilities include but are not limited to the following:

1. Set policy to create and control the program;
2. Raise funds to pay rewards and cover administrative costs;
3. Determine the amount and method of reward payments;
4. Act as trustee of all funds including grants and funds contributed by citizens, businesses, and service groups;
5. Conduct program awareness presentations to community groups and organizations;
6. Work closely with the designated law enforcement coordinator;
7. Pay travel expenses for law enforcement coordinator to attend required Crime Stoppers training.

**2.2: Identify Law Enforcement Coordinators**

Local law enforcement agencies designate an officer to work as the coordinator for the Crime Stoppers organization. This coordinator is a key member of the organization who oversees the day-to-day tip management operations, works closely with the board providing updates on tipline cases, and works closely with the media representing the organization.

In order to work effectively with local law enforcement agencies, Crime Stoppers organizations create a memorandum of agreement between the law enforcement agency and the Crime Stoppers program outlining the respective organization responsibilities to each other. This allows for individual organizations to have a policy in place regarding the agreed upon expectations. In working with the Crime Stoppers organization, the law enforcement agency has an obligation to promote the program both internally and externally. This creates greater program awareness within agencies and encourages investigators to utilize the program.

An effective law enforcement coordinator’s responsibilities include but are not limited to the following:

1. Take tips via the Crime Stoppers hotline, online tips, and/or via mobile app tips;
2. Screen calls, verify the information, and forward the information to the appropriate agency to investigate;
3. Follow up with investigators to determine an investigation’s status and determine if additional information is needed from the tipster;
4. Maintain tip files by keeping them updated, accurate, and secure;
5. Maintain statistics for the program, including the number of calls, number of cases solved, amount of stolen property recovered, and narcotics seized resulting from successful tips; (a template is provided by the state office);
6. Maintain good working relationship with the local media;
7. Appear with members of the Crime Stoppers board of directors at public speaking functions promoting the program and its successes; and
8. Attend monthly Crime Stoppers board meetings to present current tips, cases of interest, and assist board members in determining reward amounts.

**2.3: Explain** **the** **Media’s Role in the Crime Stopper program**

The media’s role in Crime Stoppers is to promote public awareness and education about the Crime Stoppers program. The media may work closely with the coordinator and designated board member to help raise public awareness of various aspects of Crime Stoppers, including but not limited to:

1. Cover local crimes and publicize the available Crimes Stoppers reward;
2. Generally publicize the local Crime Stoppers tip line, the availability of rewards, and that tips can be anonymous;
3. Cover the “Crime of the Week” – a specific crime highlighted throughout the week;
4. Share volunteer opportunities to help run local organizations; and
5. Showcase Public Service Announcements publicizing Crime Stoppers.

**Unit Goal 3.0:**

**Campus Crime Stoppers Programs**

Campus Crime Stoppers provides student tipsters a way to share information anonymously to school administrators and local law enforcement regarding administrative school violations, matters of public or individual safety, and potential or past crimes. Student tipsters can receive monetary rewards if the tip information proves instrumental in solving crimes or addressing issues where a reward is offered. Campus Crime Stoppers programs promote school spirit, pride, and responsibility while allowing students to take action against victimization and crime in the schools.

**3.1 Explore the Types of Campus Programs**

There are 3 ways a campus program is established and operated in Texas, as follows:

1. **Charter Campus Crime Stoppers programs** operate as a distinct, but subsidiary part of a local Crime Stoppers Corporation (“parent corporation”) that is certified by the Texas Crime Stoppers Council. The charter campus program is comprised of and operated by a volunteer student board representing a cross-section of the campus. Written charter agreements are entered with the school district describing the roles and responsibilities of the parent corporation’s board of directors and the school district in operating a charter Campus Crime Stoppers program. All parties agree to protect tipster identity and maintain all Crime Stoppers records separate from school records.

A program administrator works with the student board to arrive at decisions (such as reward payment amounts) or accomplish tasks by acting as an assistant and guide. This person may be a school resource officer (SRO) or a member of the campus faculty or staff. The operation of the Charter Campus Crime Stoppers program is the sole responsibility of the student board with the discretion and assistance of the parent corporation.

1. **Campus Crime Stoppers School Safety programs** are not really distinct programs, but are operated as part of an existing local Crime Stoppers corporation certified by the Texas Crime Stoppers Council. The Corporation’s board of directors determines the amount of rewards and method of payment of rewards and provides their communication system to receive calls and text messages and if available, their website where students can send web tips.

The specified school district agrees to participate in this comprehensive Crime Stoppers School Safety Program to solve and prevent criminal activity and to promote the school program via the public address system, Parent-Teacher Association meetings, and distribute promotional materials such as brochures and posters. These organizations can have student “boards” that advise and participate in the program, but the true board of directors of the organization is the larger local certified Crime Stoppers corporation.

1. I**ndependent 501 (c)(3) non-profit Campus Crime Stoppers Corporation:** Campus programs can also form an independent non-profit organization. In Texas, these programs run independently from any existing local Crime Stoppers organizations. They are essentially stand-alone, regular Crime Stoppers organizations that happen to operate on campuses. This type of program is consistent with Chapter 414, Texas Government Code, also known as the “Crime Stoppers Law”, which defines Crime Stoppers corporations, establishes the Texas Crime Stoppers Council, and affords certain records protection.

**3.2 Differentiate the Roles of Students and Adults**

Campus Crime Stoppers programs operate according to the needs and capabilities of the campuses they serve, and vary in to what degree of participation they have from students, school officials, law enforcement coordinators (typically a school resource officer), and adult volunteers from a sponsoring local Crime Stoppers organization. At some programs, students constitute a board and, much like regular Crime Stoppers organizations, vote on key items under the supervision of the coordinator. At others, the coordinator takes a more active role. There is no single formula for a campus program.

Student participation to help run the campus program is critical to program and individual success. It creates a sense of belonging, a sense of autonomy and power, helps students develop social and decision-making skills, builds their sense of competence, and motivates them to persist in supporting the program. It is common for student leaders on school campuses to be involved by serving on the campus board of directors. By becoming leaders in a Crime Stoppers program, students gain skills they will need in order to become successful adults, creating new relationships with adults and peers, gaining a better understanding of the community and its diversity, and beginning to view the world, and their ability to affect it, in a positive way. Student leadership can also provide benefits for adult volunteers in the program.

Adults benefit by feeling a stronger connection with youth in their community, a renewed energy for their work, improvement in morale stemming from students’ spirit of flexibility and playfulness, and an expanded resource base so that they no longer feel “responsible for everything”.

**Unit Goal 4.0: Crime Stoppers Organization Operations**

**4.1 Describe the Tip Taking Process**

A Crime Stoppers organization is not interested in a tipster’s name or who they are; they only want the information the tipster can provide about the crime. Protecting tipster anonymity is paramount. By guaranteeing anonymity, Crime Stoppers encourages citizens to submit information about crimes and fugitives in a safe environment without fear of retribution. By offering cash rewards for information leading to indictment or arrest, Crime Stoppers incentivizes otherwise reluctant citizens to provide information.

There are various ways a tipster can report information about a particular crime. The three methods below will ensure a tipster remains anonymous:

1. Call or text information to the local Crime Stoppers hotline;
2. Send a web tip via the local Crime Stoppers website;
3. Submit the tip through a Crime Stoppers mobile tip app.

The coordinator should avoid accepting in-person or face-to-face tips to ensure the tipster’s anonymity. Face-to-face interactions occur with informants. Crime Stoppers programs are built upon anonymous tipsters, not informants.

As a coordinator receives information, a code number is issued to the tipster. This code number ensures anonymity, helps track information through investigation, and is used in collecting rewards. The coordinator should obtain all the facts of the tip information: *Who, what, when, where, and how*. (Note: The tip information gathered does not belong to law enforcement, or school district files; Crime Stoppers owns all the tip records.) Once the tip information is gathered, it should be kept secure by the coordinator until it is disseminated to investigators or the proper agency. No identifying details should be included in the tip information that will reveal the identity or gender of the tipster.

Many programs use an app or other system that allows some back-and-forth between the coordinator and the tipster. When taking down information from a tipster, the tipster should be instructed how to follow-up, either by calling back or communicating through the mobile tip app. The coordinator will be communicating with the tipster and has discretion on instructing how and when the tipster should follow-up on his reward. The tipster should be informed to hold on to the tip number, because whoever has the tip number is the person who will get paid the reward.

**4.2 Explain Reward Payments**

Rewards are offered to obtain needed information to solve a crime. Many creative options are available to pay rewards; however, the most important factor to consider is choosing a method that ensures the tipster’s anonymity.

In a properly conducted Crime Stoppers program, a tipster is paid for information, and not for anything else. Tip information normally leads law enforcement oﬃcials to an arrest and securing a formal charge against a suspect in a felony (or major) case. A tipster is not, and should not, be paid for the purpose of:

1. Physically seizing a suspect and bringing the suspect into law enforcement custody;
2. Giving testimony under oath in court to the satisfaction of the reward oﬀeror;
3. Securing or guaranteeing a conviction, nor
4. Acting as a law enforcement agent to become involved in criminal activities to secure additional information.

There are several methods that Crime Stoppers organizations choose to make reward payments to tipsters. The most common is to utilize a local bank, in which an agreement is made with the bank and it is given the code number and the reward money. The tipster can go to the bank’s drive-thru window, provide the tip number, then upon giving the correct tip number, the bank teller gives the reward money to the tipster; no questions asked and no identification is exchanged.

Local organizations use a variety of payment methods, but no matter which method is selected, it is the board of directors’ responsibility to decide how the payment is made to tipsters.

*Note: Many tipsters do not want a reward and are just thankful that they can relay information without having to reveal their identity.*

**Unit Goal 5.0: Crime Stoppers and the Law**

Crime Stoppers organizations are not just local non-profit programs. The anonymity at the heart of Crime Stoppers is enshrined in state law – Chapter 414 of the Texas Government Code. That chapter also created the Texas Crime Stoppers Council within the Office of the Governor, authorizes it to hire a director to administer program operations, and empowers it to oversee and certify local crime stoppers organizations.

**5.1: Identify the Texas Crime Stoppers Council and the Local Crime Stoppers Organizations**

The Texas Crime Stoppers Council members are appointed by the governor and are required to represent a variety of relevant viewpoints, including a law enforcement coordinator. The Council certifies local Crime Stoppers organizations every two years after finding that they satisfy a variety of requirements and further crime prevention purposes.

Certification comes with three primary benefits:

1. Certified organizations are eligible to receive funds from probation fees, which are used to pay rewards and cover operational expenses.
2. Certified organizations’ records are covered by legal confidentiality protections for their records from Public Information Act requests, legal discovery, or other disclosures (see below).
3. Officers, employees, and volunteers of certified organizations are covered by limited legal immunity.

**5.2: Review the Anonymity of the Tipster**

If citizens have information on a crime, they may not choose to contact law enforcement agencies out of fear that providing information on a crime may expose themselves or their families to retaliation. Therefore, anonymity is essential to Crime Stoppers operations, and has state law on its side to protect a tipsters’ anonymity.

**5.3: Compare Anonymity vs Confidentiality:**

People who call tip lines can do so anonymously in that they are not required to leave a name or otherwise verify their identity (see later units on Tip Line Operations). Even if they do leave a name or otherwise disclose information that could enable someone else to identify them, state law offers legal protections to keep their identity from being disclosed. Should a tipster identify themselves, coordinators should not record a tipster’s name or gender to ensure anonymity of the tipster.

Crime Stoppers tipsters are different from confidential informants or other protected sources in that their identity is generally not known to law enforcement sources. The identity of Crime Stoppers tipsters is protected under law, like confidential informants, but only Crime Stoppers tipsters are truly anonymous.

**Legal Protections:**  State law’s confidentiality protections are what make anonymity possible. State law explicitly protects tips or information in tips from being disclosed in several ways:

1. **Tips are considered “privileged information” under law and may not be released, under penalty of law:** Crime Stoppers organizations that receive tips may only pass those tips or information in them to a law enforcement agency or – in the case of tips related to schools – school districts (or open-enrollment charter schools).

A Crime Stoppers officer or volunteer, a law enforcement officer, or school district employee may only release tip information to a non-authorized recipient if a) they have received the permission of the tipster; or b) if they have received authorization to disclose the information from the chief executive of the Crime Stoppers organization that originally received the tip, and the chief executive has reasonably determined that failing to disclose the identity of a person who submitted the tip creates a probability of imminent physical injury to another. Without such authorization, disclosure of the tip or the identity of the tipster is a crime: a Class A misdemeanor or, if done for monetary benefit, a third degree felony, and whoever releases the information is ineligible for state employment for five years. To repeat, a law enforcement agency may not independently decide to release tip information – that authority relies solely in the hands of the chief executive of the originating Crime Stoppers organization.
2. **Tips are not subject to Public Information Act requests:** Crime Stoppers organizations, law enforcement agencies, or school districts are not required to release tips or the identities of tipsters to reporters or others who file Public Information Act requests.
3. **Tips are not subject to legal discovery:** State law specifically prevents lawyers of defendants related to a tip or other matters from filing discovery on Crime Stoppers organizations, law enforcement agencies, or schools. This is a level of protection that is different from detective notes or other records, which must in many cases be turned over to defense lawyers.

The only exception to this protection is if a defense lawyer petitions a judge, saying the tip could exonerate their client. State law then provides that the judge may review the tip and – if it does exonerate the client – *the judge then strips out the identifying information of the tipster and releases the rest*.

*The bottom line is that tipsters are guaranteed their anonymity by state law – no one can be forced to reveal their identity and if someone does reveal the tipster’s identity, it is a criminal offense* (with the exception of an authorized release discussed above). This can be useful to officers trying to gather information about a crime from individuals who may not wish to speak to them “on the record” – officers may suggest that they call the Crime Stoppers tip line, where their anonymity is guaranteed and they can disclose information without fear. Note: Confidential or otherwise compensated informants may not be directed to Crime Stoppers tip lines. (See below under “Funneling”.)

**5.4: Misuse of Information**

Included in state law’s confidentiality protections for anonymity are a prohibition on the misuse of information. If a member or employee of a Crime Stoppers organization, law enforcement agency, school district, or open-enrollment charter school (state law treats open-enrollment charter schools and public school districts equally) intentionally or knowingly discloses the identity of a tipster or the content of a tip for purposes or in a manner not authorized by state law, that misuse of information is the same offense as publicly disclosing the tip:

* A Class A misdemeanor generally; or
* A third-degree felony if done to obtain monetary gain or another benefit.
* Anyone convicted of this offense is also barred from state employment for five years.

**5.5: Discuss Probable Cause and Tips**

A common question is that, if someone can make an anonymous tip, how can that information be used in an arrest or search warrant?

* A 2014 U.S. Supreme Court case acknowledged that an anonymous, uncorroborated tip can be used as the basis for a stop and/or search for weapons if the tip has a sufficient level of detail to give rise to a reasonable suspicion of criminal activity. [*Navarette v California*]
* “Probable cause” is a higher standard than reasonable suspicion, and is used for arrest or search warrants. Anonymous tips do not generally offer enough basis for probable cause, so Crime Stoppers tips must generally be corroborated or verified through other sources when obtaining a warrant, and indeed to preserve anonymity under the law, must generally not be included in the submitted evidence at all.

Thus, the real value in Crime Stoppers tips is to provide leads for investigations or to alert law enforcement or school authorities to a dangerous condition or crisis.

**5.6: Distinguish Civil Liability**

State law offers civil liability for:

* Tipsters for damages resulting from the submission of a tip; and
* Persons (including law enforcement officers and Crime Stoppers volunteers) for damages resulting from receiving, forwarding, or acting on a tip in the performance of the person’s duties or functions.

However, civil liability is not available for any actions that are:

1. Intentional or wilfully or wantonly negligent;
2. Done with conscious indifference or reckless disregard for the safety of others; or
3. Done to further the commission of a criminal act.

**5.7: Describe Schools and Special Provisions Under Law**

As previously discussed, Crime Stoppers organizations are in middle schools and high schools across the state. When working with campus programs, school districts are given special consideration under state law to receive and act on Crime Stoppers tips:

* School district employees are the only people besides law enforcement who are able to receive tips directly from Crime Stoppers organizations.
* Crime Stoppers tip lines may receive tips regarding non-criminal activity if they are about conduct or threatened conduct that would disrupt the efficient and effective operations of a school.
* Crime Stoppers organizations may only forward tips to school district employees (not a law enforcement agency) regarding school-related non-criminal behavior that does not constitute a danger to public safety or an individual. (A law enforcement officer employed by a school district – such as a school resource officer – counts as a “school district employee” and may receive tips on such non-criminal behavior related to school operations.)
* School districts may not use anonymous tips as evidence in an expulsion or disciplinary hearing.

These provisions are intended to help campus Crime Stoppers tip lines forward relevant tips for action to school officials even if they don’t constitute a crime.

**5.8: Define Funneling**

“Funneling” is a term referring to the situation where an informant who has already given law enforcement officials information is funneled or sent to Crime Stoppers for a reward. The informant may not have known the reward was offered or available. Sometimes a detective gets the information first; keeps it; then has the known informant call Crime Stoppers and pretend that the information is given for the first time. There are variations of this tactic.

Funneling is not an acceptable way of receiving a Crime Stoppers tip. Depending upon the circumstances, such an incident could be considered as:

1. Violation of departmental policy that subjects the law enforcement officer to administrative discipline;
2. A fraud perpetrated against a non-profit, charitable corporation (Crime Stoppers) in order to cause it to part with reward money;
3. Perjury if it is discovered that the informant’s identity was known to the officer and the informant was not really an anonymous Crime Stoppers informant, and the officer testified falsely in court or made untrue allegations in an affidavit for a warrant, or
4. Grounds for attacking all the officer’s and informant’s cases for credibility.

**Unit Goal 6: Recent Legislation**

New laws were passed by the Legislature in 2019 that substantially updated the chapter relating to Crime Stoppers.

**6.1: Classify recent legislative changes with previously discussed topics**

The changes included:

1. Increasing confidentiality protections for Crime Stoppers records, including protecting them from courtroom discovery;
2. Allowing school employees to receive and act on tips directly, rather than just through law enforcement;
3. Allowing Crime Stoppers organizations to take tips on non-criminal matters relating to school safety or operations;
4. Allowing Crime Stoppers organizations’ chief executive to authorize the release of an anonymous tip if they determine that failing to release the tip creates a probability of imminent physical injury to a person.

Officers, prosecutors, school officials, or even Crime Stoppers organizations may not yet be aware of these legislative changes, so be on the look-out for conflicting understandings of state law.

**References**

* [Chapter 414, Texas Government Code](https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/Docs/GV/htm/GV.414.htm)
* Texas Administrative Code (TAC) [*1 TAC* §3.9000](https://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac%24ext.ViewTAC?tac_view=5&ti=1&pt=1&ch=3&sch=H&rl=Y)
* Texas Code of Criminal Procedure, Articles [51.11](https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/Docs/CR/htm/CR.51.htm#51.11), [37.073](https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/Docs/CR/htm/CR.37.htm#37.073), and [102.013](https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/Docs/CR/htm/CR.102.htm#102.013); and [Chapter 42A](https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/Docs/CR/htm/CR.42A.htm).
* Texas Local Government Code, §[351.901](https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/Docs/LG/htm/LG.351.htm#351.901) and §[363.151](https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/Docs/LG/htm/LG.363.htm#363.151)
* <https://www.themacaleesefiles.com/the-murder-that-made-history/>
* *Operational Resource Manual*, Texas Crime Stoppers, January 2014.

**Resources**

* Texas Crime Stoppers website, <https://gov.texas.gov/organization/crime-stoppers>