

## Frequently Asked Questions TipSoft SMS

### **Q – What does SMS stand for?**

**A –** Short Message Service. Text messages sent via cell phone are considered SMS messages.

### **Q – What exactly is TipSoft SMS?**

**A –** It is our new secure & anonymous Tip via Text Message product.

### **Q – Is this product secure enough for Crime Stoppers use?**

**A –** Yes, we feel that it is.

We've gone to great lengths to apply an encrypted alias ID to the originating number.

See our separate Security Summary document for more details.

### **Q – So just what does this SMS stuff make possible?**

**A –** Tipsters will now be able to submit an anonymous tip to you via text message from their cell phone. You will also be able to reply back to them without knowing their true identity or having access to the source phone number. You communicate with them via one of several means... none of which involve you actually having to use your cell phone.

### **Q – How do we communicate with the tipster via text message?**

**A –** We provide four ways for you to receive and reply to these text messages.

- 1 – By using our new TipSoft v5 Online, SMS will be seamlessly integrated into it.
- 2 – By using our standalone TipSoft SMS software
- 3 – By using our secure web application thru your PC's browser
- 4 – Remotely, via our PDA browser based application

### **Q – Is there a limit to the amount of text per message?**

**A –** Yes, in Canada it's 140 characters, while the US carriers allow 160.

### **Q – What are the various components of a text message used in the tip submission process?**

**A –** There are three main parts to a text message.

*The Short Code* – This is the actual number the tip is sent to rather than a phone number.

We use the same short code through all of N America.

It is a vanity code which we hope the public will find memorable.

It is CRIMES (274637) The public can just select the letters "CRIMES" and it will input 274637.

*The Keyword* – Keywords are always used with shared short codes to provide the proper routing. We use them to know which agency the tip should be directed to. When a keyword is needed, it is always entered as the first word in the body of the message. A tipster only needs to include the keyword on our SMS tips the very first time they submit a tip. After that, our system is intelligent enough to know where to route all subsequent traffic from that device.

*The Message Body* – contains the keyword initially, and then the actual text of the message.

### **Q – So how does the process actually work? What are the steps, etc?**

**A –** Ok, let's assume your agency ID is 100...

- 1 – The tipster sends in the first message, which is formatted with a keyword.

They will text "TIP100 plus their message" to CRIMES (274637)

Our server responds with a confirmation and their unique code number

**2** – The message is then viewable in any of the above 4 ways for you to view tips  
A copy of the message may also be sent to any email addresses for redundancy

**3** – You may reply by simply typing in your response and clicking a button

**4** – The tipster may respond back to your msg simply by replying.

No keyword or agency id or any other identifier is ever needed for any subsequent replies to you.

Newly initiated messages by the tipster that are not straight replies to you may simply be sent to CRIMES, with no keyword being needed.

**Q – How does this all interface with our TipSoft software?**

**A** – Well, it will not interface at all with TipSoft v4.

However, it seamlessly integrates 100% with our all new TipSoft v5 Online.

SMS tips will come right into v5 just like any other tip received from a call center or via webtip.

Follow-Ups will be auto-threaded right into the original message with a new date/time stamp. The record in TipSoft will be flagged as updated and quick filters will alert you to the new information needing to be reviewed or possibly replied to.

**Q – Can we receive SMS tips if we don't use your full TipSoft tip management application?**

**A** – Sure you can. You can still receive and reply to them via our TipSoft SMS standalone software, via the web and by using our special PDA application.

**Q – What about tips received after hours and over weekends?**

**A** – You have a couple options there and we agree it's a concern and all tips need to be seen in a timely manner regardless of when received.

**1** – You can be setup to receive an email notice any time a new tip is received.

You can then review the message from a PC or PDA regardless of your location.

**2** – You could have a dedicated Call Center monitor your msgs as well. The four major

Crime Stoppers call centers in N America already offer to monitor WebTips rcvd after hours at no cost to their regular clients and they plan to do the same for SMS tips. They will receive an email copy of each tip and if it was indeed really urgent they would take action on it just as if it came in via telephone. If not urgent, they simply delete the msg from their system and you will receive it the next time you get into your SMS software.

**Q – Is this like a new digital text message 911 reporting system?**

**A** – **NO.** This should never be promoted for use in emergencies or on very urgent matters.

There are far too many things that could happen which could delay or even prevent delivery of the message and depending on when it is submitted it could be a while before it is even seen. This is a very complicated process that normally gets the message from phone to application in a few seconds, and vice-versa, but since it involves multiple servers, the public internet, an aggregator and many individual carriers there are many potential ways things can go wrong and delivery not go as expected. These things are out of our control and should be rare but they are inherent risks none the less. So again, use this as a new tool to allow cell phone users to submit tips via text message but never promote it or rely on it to be any type of emergency reporting tool.

**Q – So explain a little more about how we can communicate back with the tipster.**

**A –** You have full ability to communicate back with them via text message as much as needed. We call this Two-Way Dialog and we have already found how very important this is with our WebTips. Ideally you should do as much communicating with them as possible as soon as possible after receiving the tip since they are likely in a good position to carry on secure comms with you at that time. There is some inherent danger to the tipster if you were to initiate a message to them, unsolicited, after too much time has gone by. You never know who may be in their presence or who may have access to their phone to intercept or inadvertently see your message. A simple query like, “free to chat?” or something pre-determined by you and the tipster that would indicate whether it’s a good time to converse, or not, would be a better way to initiate comms after much time had gone by.

**Q – I hear that special jargon is sometimes used in text messages. How will we decipher it?**

**A –** Yes, texters often abbreviate words and phrases with a language of their own. Like LOL for “Laughing Out Loud” or BRB for “Be Right Back”. It’s not that difficult to pick up on and we’ll be publishing a cheat sheet with the most popular abbreviations they use. We are also looking into a way to embed a glossary that can be quickly referred to on the fly in TipSoft v5 Online.

**Q – Will there be any Help available for assistance on how to use this system?**

**A –** Yes. We currently have a very brief video running at smscrimetips.com that shows the initial tip submission process from an end user’s perspective. We will have a detailed online training video available soon at smscrimetips.com. We will also be offering interactive online training webinars for groups of users in the near future.

**Q – What is required for us to become operational on SMS?**

**A –** Just let us know you are ready to move forward. We will enable SMS on your account. Then we send you detailed instructions on how to install and/or access the various means to receive and reply to your text message tips. It can all be done in a matter of minutes. When v5 deploys it becomes even easier for you since it’s all just part of the same program you are working in already. We currently anticipate deploying v5 on March 10, 2008. You need to also insure that you have the proper infrastructure in place to manage and monitor these tips 24/7.

**We hope this FAQ answers most of your questions and helps you to better understand what this new SMS text message tips initiative is all about.**

**Please direct any further questions to...**

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