

# Reported shootings spike in Columbia

*No fatalities have resulted from the increase.*

By [Jared Grafman](#) Aug. 27, 2010

The Columbia Police Department has been investigating multiple shots-fired incidents in Columbia this past month. Officers responded to two shots-fired incidents Sunday, Aug. 22, according to CPD news releases.

The first incident happened around 1 a.m. near Galactic Fun Zone on Grindstone Parkway, and the second incident took place around 7:15 p.m. when officers were dispatched to W. Worley Street and McBaine Avenue.

“Since Aug. 1, we have had six confirmed shots-fired incidents,” CPD spokeswoman Jill Wieneke said. “In most of those incidents, we were not able to identify victims or suspects.”

There are no direct connections between the incidents, Wieneke said. There have been no fatalities, though two incidents involved a victim who had been shot.

“It definitely seems like shots-fired incidents are increasing,” Wieneke said. “We had multiple drive-by shootings in June and July where thankfully no one was hit, but we had people driving by and shooting at other people in cars, shooting at houses.”

The shootings seem to be connected but the motives behind them are unknown, Wieneke said. She said the frequency of shots-fired incidents around Columbia worries the CPD.

“Essentially, we feel like our luck is eventually going to run out,” Wieneke said. “It can only happen so many times before someone is going to get hit and might not even be an intended target. That’s a really big concern.”

Patrol Officer John Dye is part of the CPD Forensic Evidence Team, which collects evidence from crime scenes.

“If we’ve already got a scene discovered, the forensic evidence team will go out and talk to the primary officer on the scene and find out the details they know so far,” Dye said. “Then we start a systematic walkthrough so we can either locate additional evidence or locate evidence period.”

The Forensic Evidence Team will take notes and then photograph the entire scene, Dye said. It will also use special evidence techniques, such as collecting fingerprints if necessary. The team will also collect other evidence at the scene, such as shell casings at shooting scenes and bullets if possible.

“Like if (bullets) go through a window or a wall into a house then we’ll try and get permission to go into that building and see if we can’t find where the bullet actually went,” Dye said.

Wieneke said in the two instances since Aug. 1 where victims were shot, one victim was shot in the hip and the other was shot in the leg.

“Four of the situations were where we got phone calls from people that basically said ‘Hey, I heard gunshots, here’s where I heard them,’” Wieneke said. “We couldn’t find anybody who was willing to say ‘Hey, here’s what’s going on’ or ‘Here is what precipitated this.’”

CPD has difficulty solving shots-fired incidents because witnesses are not willing to step forward.

“If we could at least identify suspects, if there were people willing to come forward, even anonymously, and say ‘Hey I know here’s who is doing this,’ chances are we know who those people are, and we can look into old reports and say ‘OK, now we know what the angle is here,’” Wieneke said. “That gives us something to go off, but it’s really difficult when you don’t even have a victim.”

Victimless shots-fired incidents cause just as much concern as confrontations where there is a casualty.

“When buildings are getting hit and windows are getting blown out, there’s not really a whole lot of thought put into what the target is,” Wieneke said. “I mean, who knows who’s going to get hit? It’s difficult to know what to do when you can’t even identify what the source of the problem is.”