

HPD hopes to cut the time it takes to serve and protect Houstonians

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By Jeff McShan / 11 News

HOUSTON -- When police officers race to crime scenes, they immediately begin looking for suspects.

Video



Cutting the time it takes to serve and protect
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If no arrests are made, the officers gather all the information, which includes interviewing witnesses. They also file a report. These reports usually end up at HPD Headquarters where they are eventually assigned to detectives.

With so many cases filed every day, assigning them to detectives doesn't happen quickly.

But two years ago, Assistant Chiefs Tim Ottmeyer and Mike Thaler came up with a plan.

In southwest Houston's 17 District, a small crew of patrol officers was trained to become "Investigation First Responders."

HPD says the program was so successful that by July 2009, they plan to implement it across the city.

Investigation First Responder Ronnie Cortez showed 11 News how the program worked.

During a domestic violence call, he arrived at the scene and after questioning the couple, decided that they didn't need a detective needed to investigate this case. This means the detectives will now have more time for more serious problems.

"Basically, we take the load off the divisions. In turn, we make contact with the citizens and give them better service," said Cortez.

HPD is now interviewing officers throughout the city to become the city's next team of Investigation First Responders.