

CASE STUDY:

SAN FRANCISCO POLICE DEPARTMENT AND A RETAILER RECOVER STOLEN MERCHANDISE USING GPS TRACKING AND DISPATCH-READY INTELLIGENCE

How GPS Tracking and Dispatch-Ready Intelligence Supported an SFPD Investigation from Theft Through Recovery

Overview

Organized Retail Crime (ORC) rings can move quickly across a city, making stolen merchandise difficult to recover once suspects scatter. In a large-scale ORC investigation, 3Si’s GPS tracking technology and DirectToDispatch™ supported the San Francisco Police Department (SFPD). Dispatch-ready intelligence helped officers locate stolen merchandise and apprehend several suspects.

SFPD released [a video documenting the case](#), showing how coordinated collaboration between police, retailers, and dispatch-ready intelligence supported a safe, successful resolution.

Category	Detail
Agency	San Francisco Police Department (SFPD)
Challenge	An organized retail crime incident involving multiple suspects moving stolen merchandise across the city
Solution	3Si GPS tracking technology protecting stolen merchandise, supported by DirectToDispatch™
Results	Suspects apprehended, stolen merchandise recovered, and evidence collected to support the investigation

Challenge

For retailers, organized retail crime creates a specific problem: once stolen merchandise leaves the store, visibility disappears. Coordinated theft groups often involve multiple individuals working across multiple locations, moving merchandise toward resale channels before it can be recovered. Unlike opportunistic shoplifting, these cases require tracking stolen goods well beyond the original point of theft, where evidence and recovery opportunities are otherwise lost.

That challenge played out directly in San Francisco, where merchandise protected by 3Si GPS tracking technology was stolen from a local retailer. As the suspects moved throughout the city, SFPD needed a way to maintain situational awareness across multiple locations without requiring a dedicated new investigative unit.



Solution

To maintain visibility after the merchandise left the store, the retailer relied on two connected technologies: 3Si GPS tracking and DirectToDispatch™.

GPS tracking devices placed on the merchandise provided continuous location updates as the merchandise moved, maintaining visibility beyond the point of theft. After the retailer's security team verified the incident, that location intelligence was shared through DirectToDispatch™ with SFPD dispatch. Raw tracking data was transformed into verified, dispatch-ready intelligence that law enforcement could use to support the investigation.

3Si's DirectToDispatch™ (DTD) is the secure, trusted priority pathway designed for law enforcement dispatch to access. Utilizing a private-sector interface called the DTD Gateway, verified security intelligence is sent directly to law enforcement for verified threat-to-property and life events.

Technology in Practice

Once the incident was verified, GPS tracking technology protecting the stolen merchandise began relaying location intelligence, and investigators never lost sight of it. 3Si's tracking support center reached SFPD's communications team directly with real-time updates, including tracker locations and suspect images, through DirectToDispatch™. SFPD then used its area camera network to visually confirm the suspects as patrol units coordinated in real time to close in from multiple directions.

Verified location updates kept dispatch and responding officers informed of the merchandise's location throughout the investigation, rather than only at the moment of theft. As the suspects moved throughout San Francisco, officers synchronized their response across multiple locations. The coordinated response resulted in a vehicle stop, the recovery of the stolen merchandise, the apprehension of the suspects, and the collection of evidence supporting the organized retail crime investigation.

SFPD released a video documenting the case, edited for public distribution. The full version, available on Vimeo, includes references to 3Si technology and shows how verified GPS intelligence supported the investigation from theft through recovery.

Related media: [SFPD case footage, full version](#)



Results & Benefits

- Suspects apprehended and stolen merchandise recovered before redistribution
- Evidence collected to support the organized retail crime investigation
- Real-time location intelligence sustained situational awareness as suspects moved across multiple locations
- Verified, dispatch-ready intelligence delivered directly to SFPD dispatch, without requiring a dedicated new investigative unit
- Continuous visibility maintained on the merchandise after the theft, rather than losing the trail once it left the store
- Merchandise recovery supported through sustained tracking rather than a single point-in-time alert
- Closer collaboration between the retailer's security team and SFPD, built on verified intelligence rather than after-the-fact reporting

Why This Matters for Retailers

Once merchandise leaves the store, recovering it becomes significantly more difficult. Organized retail crime groups are often structured to move stolen items through distribution channels quickly, narrowing the window for retailers to reclaim stolen assets. 3Si GPS tracking technology helps maintain visibility beyond the point of theft, while DirectToDispatch™ provides a verified police dispatch pathway for sharing dispatch-ready location intelligence with law enforcement. Together, these technologies help retailers improve opportunities for asset recovery during active incidents.

Why This Matters for Law Enforcement

Investigations involving multiple suspects, multiple locations, and rapidly changing circumstances require timely, reliable information. 3Si GPS tracking technology provides continuous location intelligence as incidents unfold. DirectToDispatch™ delivers that verified, dispatch-ready intelligence to law enforcement, helping dispatch and responding officers prioritize resources, maintain situational awareness, and prepare before arrival.

The Value of Collaboration

Successful outcomes depend on effective collaboration between retailers and law enforcement. By combining 3Si GPS tracking technology with DirectToDispatch™, organizations can share verified, dispatch-ready intelligence that improves coordination, supports informed decision-making, and increases opportunities to recover stolen merchandise. This partnership helps retailers and responding agencies work toward the same goal: protecting property and the communities they serve.

Learn More

Collaboration, verified intelligence, and coordinated response can make a meaningful difference during organized retail crime incidents.

Learn how 3Si's GPS tracking technology and DirectToDispatch™ can support your organization.

[Book a demo.](#)



3Si.com | info@3Si.com | 800.523.1430 | © 2024 3Si. All Rights Reserved.

This document is proprietary and confidential. No part of this document may be disclosed in any manner without prior written consent of 3Si Security Systems