Data-Informed Crime Prevention at Convenience Stores in Atlantic City

Public Safety | Problem-Oriented | Hot Spots
Risk Terrain Modeling | Risky Places
Police Deployment | Violence | Robbery

Informed by risk terrain modeling and hot spot analysis, police commanders implemented a place-based intervention focused around convenience stores. Target areas throughout the city were reprioritized each month to create a dynamic deployment strategy that efficiently allocated resources to the most vulnerable places. Risk reduction actions, such as business checks, were favored over law enforcement against people. Within four months, robberies significantly decreased by 63 percent.

Atlantic City, NJ
Problem-Oriented Policing Initiative

×   Convenience Stores
☐   FEBRUARY Priority Target Areas
☐   Police Districts

0   0.5   1 Miles

RUTGERS
Center on Public Security

1. Introduction

Atlantic City had a robbery problem that needed a citywide response -- quickly. ACPD used spatial analysis to identify where officers should devote resources, and what to do when they arrived at priority places.

2. How It Happened

Risk Terrain Modeling was used to diagnose robbery patterns. Convenience stores (plus 1-block away) became target areas. ACPD collaborated with the local mercantile association.

3. Intervention Activities

The intervention strategy was a data-informed staggering of business checks at selected convenience stores located in the highest-risk places each month. This lasted 4 months.
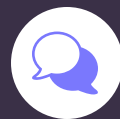
4. Results

On average, 67 different convenience stores were visited each month (range: 34-79), with approximately 279 total sign-ins per month, or about three per shift.

Pre-intervention: 79 robberies in the target areas. Post-intervention: 29. This 63% reduction is statistically significant.

Optimal police presence yielded crime deterrence. Rapid crime suppression is possible with tactics focused on targeting high risk locations and not necessarily the people located there.

5. It Works!

Police can improve operational impacts via data-informed engagements with community stakeholders (e.g. store managers). Crime reduction can be achieved in-line with community expectations.