

PROVEN CRIME & RISK REDUCTION STRATEGIES

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Completed in partial fulfillment of National Institute of Justice (NIJ) award #2012 IJ CX 0038: *A Multi-jurisdictional Test of Risk Terrain Modeling and a Place-based Evaluation of Environmental Risk-Based Patrol Deployment Strategies*

Proven* Crime Reduction Strategies at Risky Places (via RTM), By Crime Type

Crime Type	Effective Action	Immediate Impact, During Sustained Engagement	Lasting (or Lagged) Impact, Post Engagement
PERSONAL			
Guns / Shootings	Business checks with manager contact		✓
	Dedicated police taskforce		✓
	Pedestrian checks	✓	
	Police presence / Directed patrol	✓	✓
	Residence checks	✓	
	Building checks		✓
Aggravated Assault	Pedestrian checks	✓	
	Police presence	✓	
	Residence checks	✓	
	Building checks		✓
Street Robbery	Pedestrian checks	✓	
	Police presence	✓	
	Residence checks	✓	
	Building checks		✓
	Directed patrol	✓	
	Educational flyer distribution		✓
PROPERTY			
Motor Vehicle Theft	Code Enforcement / property inspections		✓

*based on verifiable research evidence resulting from National Institute of Justice (NIJ) award #2012-IJ-CX-0038

Risk-Based Policing Vignettes (Case Study Examples)

Below are examples of risk reduction strategies developed and implemented by police departments. While police must tailor strategies to accommodate their local needs and resources, these vignettes are intended to suggest what is possible when using spatial intelligence provided by risk terrain modeling.

“All In”

Problem: Violent Crime

Jurisdiction: City, Urban

Key Risk Factors: Gas stations, Bodegas, Vacant Buildings

Origin: Risk-based policing initiative, part of Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN). IPIR presented for first time, discussed at task force meeting with variety of city and community stakeholders present.

>> Conversation quickly centered on “gas stations”, one of the highest risk factors identified by RTM. Police officers in the room had a hunch that gas stations were “bad”, particularly for robberies, carjackings, and assaults targeted at station attendants or customers fueling vehicles. A quick review of incident report narratives confirmed this *event context* in instances where ‘gas stations’ were mentioned.

>> A **community stakeholder** working with youth added to conversation. She explained: Many youth hangout after school around corner stores/bodegas where they can easily congregate and get food, drinks, and rolling paper for smoking at nearby vacant buildings. Bodegas close at 10pm, as required by city ordinance, but gas stations with food marts are exempted. These 24/7 gas stations provide space and “supplies” for youth to congregate late at night, creating a unique context for turf conflict, offending, or victimization. So, she explained, prioritize gas stations with food marts.

>> **Department of Public Works (DPW)** added to conversation, offering to prioritize DPW’s existing efforts to board-up vacant buildings and clean lots near bodegas and gas stations w/ food marts.

>> **Mayor’s Office** and **Department of Parks and Recreation** will enhance their advertising and recruitment campaigns for summer recreation activities and job opportunities at bodegas, gas stations and places nearby – to focus on where the youth are.

>> **Police (PD)** will deploy *directed patrols* and *meet-and-greets with managers* at risky facilities, at peak risky times; Patrol will make referrals to partnering community agencies/social workers when juveniles appear in need of outreach/support services. A new protocol for crime reporting will help with continued risk assessments: Officers will ask victims/witnesses about possible connections of crime incidents to known spatial risk factors (e.g. was victim on premise or coming from gas station before robbery?).

“Police-Only Strategy”

Problem: Violent Crime

Jurisdiction: City, Urban

Key Risk Factors: Gas stations, ATMs, Bodegas, Vacant Buildings, Schools, Non-Franchised Restaurants, Packaged Liquor Stores.

Origin: Developed & agreed to by police commanders following discussion of the IPIR.

Actions for Police

1. **Know the risk factors** that tend to attract violent behavior. **Pay extra attention** to places with these features:
 - Vacant buildings
 - Banks/ATMs
 - Gas stations
 - Grocery/Bodegas
 - Schools
 - Non-Franchise Restaurants
 - Packaged Liquor Stores.
2. Updated protocol for police reports: **Inquire about possible connections** of crime incidents to the known spatial risk factors. Record identified connections in police reports/event narratives. (E.g. was victim coming from ATM before the robbery?)
3. **Routine patrols:** In between calls for service, focus routine patrols in the target areas and around places with the risk factors (listed above).
4. **Directed patrols:** Every shift, conduct directed patrols (via car, bike, and/or foot) in the target areas AND nearby the risk factors (listed above). Give priority to blocks affected by all risk factors (see maps).
5. **Park-and-walk:** Every shift, conduct park-and-walks nearby the risk factors, with priority given to risk factors in crime hotspots and/or in high-risk clusters (see maps)
6. **Law enforcement:** Whenever possible, prioritize “traditional law enforcement activities” to places within target areas.

“Risk-Reduction Taskforce”

Problem: Gun Violence

Jurisdiction: City, Urban

Key Risk Factors: Sit-Down Restaurants, Drug Markets, Fast Food Take-out Restaurants, and Gas Stations.

Origin: Developed by police Director & commanders following discussion of the RTM results.

Risk Reduction Taskforce

- 1. Begins with Intel from Risk Terrain Modeling (RTM) Analysis:** Highest risk places had 58 times greater likelihood of Gun Violence than other locations. Highest risk places covered about 5% of the jurisdiction and accounted for nearly 30% of crimes.
- 2. RTM Informs a Crime/Risk Reduction Strategy:** To reflect RTM findings, PD elected to focus on 4 factors that attracted gun violence: drug markets, sit-down restaurants, fast food take-outs, and gas stations. PD selected target areas where many of these risky features were located AND where crime counts were spiking. Then, the PD designed intervention strategies to reflect this: When not on a call-for-service, officers were instructed to patrol the high-risk places. Proactive enforcement was carefully targeted at drug markets within the target areas. And, for 4 hours each day during the 3-month intervention, a taskforce comprised of 3 officers, under the supervision of a Lieutenant, visited businesses located within the target areas. Upon visiting the business, officers were required to meet with the on-duty manager and have them sign a sheet, to ensure that proper contact was established.
- 3. Data is Collected to Assess Impact:** The task force's intervention activities successfully reduced gun violence, with a particularly great impact at the highest-risk portions of the target area. This risk reduction strategy addressed both “form” and “function”: (1) Regarding form, the use of a dedicated taskforce worked well; (2) Regarding function, the intervention activities performed by the task force were effective.
- 4. Ultimately, significant crime reductions can be achieved** when a taskforce consistently and thoughtfully implements intervention activities at high-risk places.

“Disorder Calls for Service”

Problem: Motor Vehicle Theft

Jurisdiction: City, Urban

Key Risk Factors: Disorder Calls-for-Service (i.e. Disorderly Conduct, Drunk/Intoxicated Person, Loitering, Noise Complaint, Panhandling, and Trespassing).

Origin: Developed by police commanders following discussion of the RTM results.

Risk Reduction Taskforce

1. **Begins with Intel from Risk Terrain Modeling (RTM) Analysis:** Highest risk places had approximately 147 times greater likelihood of Motor Vehicle Theft than other locations. Highest risk places covered about 4% of the jurisdiction and accounted for nearly 43% of crimes.
2. **RTM Informs a Crime/Risk Reduction Strategy:** To reflect RTM findings, the PD elected to focus on places with high frequencies of “Disorder-Related Calls-for-Service (CFS)”. This was the top risk factor in the model with a Relative Risk Value more than twice as large as the next highest risk factor (5.61 vs. 2.75). This focus on disorder CFS was prioritized at the highest risk places. The PD designed a number of strategies, involving officers from a number of different units, to address disorder via proactive enforcement and community engagement. These strategies included Code Enforcement property inspections in the target area, Community Service Officer Neighborhood Cleanups, Proactive Traffic Enforcement, Community Meetings, and the deployment of License Plate Recognition devices for the purpose of identifying stolen Motor Vehicles in the target area.

The PD instituted an innovative application of proactive policing against social disorder offenses (and CFS) that included more than just “law enforcement” actions. In this regard, a summons was issued in only 10 of the 139 instances of police dealings with these types of offenders. No arrests occurred. The majority of incidents were handled via non-punitive actions (verbal warnings, etc.).

3. **Data is Collected to Assess Impact:** The PD’s intervention activities successfully reduced Motor Vehicle Theft, with a particularly great impact at the highest-risk portions of the target area. This risk reduction strategy leveraged the activity of a number of resources to jointly target a category of risk factors that officials deemed the most important.
4. Ultimately, **significant crime reductions are achieved** when resources are focused on disorderly behaviors at the highest-risk places.

Tips for Implementing Risk-Based Interventions

1. Have clearly defined target areas that are distinctly identified as high-risk.
2. Risk factors in the target area should be clearly identified so the intervention activities can focus on these risks. Let the risk terrain tables and maps inform strategies that tell police what to do when they get to the target areas, not just where to go.
3. Develop strategies for both action and analysis. Risk is dynamic. The very presence of police in an area changes the risk calculation for both motivated offenders and potential victims. Utilize analysts to consider opportunities for tactical applications of intervention strategies – e.g., at specific times or particular places within the target areas. Pull intel from a variety of sources to interpret the relevance of risk factors at risky places and at certain times. Consider the possibility that different policing actions can have the best effects in some places, but not others, depending on the nuances of these places and their situational contexts.
4. Actions that are done in a target area should clearly relate to the intervention strategy directed at specific risk factors.
5. Expect that risk factors may become less risky over time. The risk from landscape features should abate over time as a result of the intervention. For this to be measurable, a clear accounting of what the intervention actions did to reduce risk should be articulated as part of the implementation plan. Routinely reassess the meaningfulness of target areas, risk factors, and intervention strategies – they may need to change along with the dynamic nature of illegal behavior and crime patterns that are responding to the intervention activities.
6. Let the risk terrain tables and maps inform the intervention, and the intervention results inform subsequent analyses, to better the “next round” of intervention activities. Spatial or temporal lags might result in longer term impacts to lower risk places earlier in the intervention period, while higher risk places may need more time to respond to the point where long-term effects are measurable.
7. Plan interventions so that you can measure outcomes reliably. This is important because you’ll want to be able to repeat the effect next time you respond to a similar problem. That should be the essence of problem-oriented policing and risk management. If crime counts reduced and you can attribute it directly to your intervention activities, then you not only get the credit for success, but you know what to do next time the problem occurs. If your intervention strategy did not have the desired result, then you have a foundation for improving it next time. Once you get it right, you can repeat it.