



**COPS**

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING SERVICES  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Problem-Oriented Guides for Police  
Problem-Specific Guides Series  
**No. 29**

# Cruising

by Ronald W. Glensor  
Kenneth J. Peak





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# **Cruising**

Ronald W. Glensor  
Kenneth J. Peak

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## About the Problem-Specific Guides Series

The *Problem-Specific Guides* summarize knowledge about how police can reduce the harm caused by specific crime and disorder problems. They are guides to prevention and to improving the overall response to incidents, not to investigating offenses or handling specific incidents. The guides are written for police—of whatever rank or assignment—who must address the specific problem the guides cover. The guides will be most useful to officers who

- **Understand basic problem-oriented policing principles and methods.** The guides are not primers in problem-oriented policing. They deal only briefly with the initial decision to focus on a particular problem, methods to analyze the problem, and means to assess the results of a problem-oriented policing project. They are designed to help police decide how best to analyze and address a problem they have already identified. (An assessment guide has been produced as a companion to this series and the COPS Office has also published an introductory guide to problem analysis. For those who want to learn more about the principles and methods of problem-oriented policing, the assessment and analysis guides, along with other recommended readings, are listed at the back of this guide.)
  - **Can look at a problem in depth.** Depending on the complexity of the problem, you should be prepared to spend perhaps weeks, or even months, analyzing and responding to it. Carefully studying a problem before responding helps you design the right strategy, one that is most likely to work in your community. You should not blindly adopt the responses others have used; you must decide whether they are appropriate to your local situation. What is true in one place may not be true
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elsewhere; what works in one place may not work everywhere.

- **Are willing to consider new ways of doing police business.** The guides describe responses that other police departments have used or that researchers have tested. While not all of these responses will be appropriate to your particular problem, they should help give a broader view of the kinds of things you could do. You may think you cannot implement some of these responses in your jurisdiction, but perhaps you can. In many places, when police have discovered a more effective response, they have succeeded in having laws and policies changed, improving the response to the problem.
  - **Understand the value and the limits of research knowledge.** For some types of problems, a lot of useful research is available to the police; for other problems, little is available. Accordingly, some guides in this series summarize existing research whereas other guides illustrate the need for more research on that particular problem. Regardless, research has not provided definitive answers to all the questions you might have about the problem. The research may help get you started in designing your own responses, but it cannot tell you exactly what to do. This will depend greatly on the particular nature of your local problem. In the interest of keeping the guides readable, not every piece of relevant research has been cited, nor has every point been attributed to its sources. To have done so would have overwhelmed and distracted the reader. The references listed at the end of each guide are those drawn on most heavily; they are not a complete bibliography of research on the subject.
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- **Are willing to work with other community agencies to find effective solutions to the problem.** The police alone cannot implement many of the responses discussed in the guides. They must frequently implement them in partnership with other responsible private and public entities. An effective problem-solver must know how to forge genuine partnerships with others and be prepared to invest considerable effort in making these partnerships work.

These guides have drawn on research findings and police practices in the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the Netherlands, and Scandinavia. Even though laws, customs and police practices vary from country to country, it is apparent that the police everywhere experience common problems. In a world that is becoming increasingly interconnected, it is important that police be aware of research and successful practices beyond the borders of their own countries.

The COPS Office and the authors encourage you to provide feedback on this guide and to report on your own agency's experiences dealing with a similar problem. Your agency may have effectively addressed a problem using responses not considered in these guides and your experiences and knowledge could benefit others. This information will be used to update the guides. If you wish to provide feedback and share your experiences it should be sent via e-mail to [cops\\_pubs@usdoj.gov](mailto:cops_pubs@usdoj.gov).

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For more information about problem-oriented policing, visit the Center for Problem-Oriented Policing online at [www.popcenter.org](http://www.popcenter.org) or via the COPS website at [www.cops.usdoj.gov](http://www.cops.usdoj.gov). This website offers free online access to:

- the *Problem-Specific Guides* series,
- the companion *Response Guides* and *Problem-Solving Tools* series,
- instructional information about problem-oriented policing and related topics,
- an interactive training exercise,
- online access to important police research and practices, and
- on-line problem analysis module.





## Acknowledgments

The *Problem-Oriented Guides for Police* are very much a collaborative effort. While each guide has a primary author, other project team members, COPS Office staff and anonymous peer reviewers contributed to each guide by proposing text, recommending research and offering suggestions on matters of format and style.

The principal project team developing the guide series comprised Herman Goldstein, professor emeritus, University of Wisconsin Law School; Ronald V. Clarke, professor of criminal justice, Rutgers University; John E. Eck, professor of criminal justice, University of Cincinnati; Michael S. Scott, clinical assistant professor, University of Wisconsin Law School; Rana Sampson, police consultant, San Diego; and Deborah Lamm Weisel, director of police research, North Carolina State University.

Karin Schmerler, Rita Varano and Nancy Leach oversaw the project for the COPS Office. Suzanne Fregly edited the guide. Research for the guides was conducted at the Criminal Justice Library at Rutgers University under the direction of Phyllis Schultze.

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## The Problem of Cruising

This guide begins by describing the problem of cruising, and reviewing factors that contribute to it. It then identifies a series of questions to help you analyze your local cruising problem. Finally, it reviews responses to the problem, and what is known about them from evaluative research and police practice.

† For example, northern Nevada's weeklong "Hot August Nights" event generated \$132 million for the cities of Reno and Sparks, with more than 800,000 people attending (RRC Associates 2003).

You should note that while both cruising and street racing involve vehicles, some primary differences exist between them. Cruising is a pastime largely confined to downtown areas; sanctioned cruising can also provide an economic boost to the community.<sup>†</sup> Conversely, street racing is typically an underground affair, causing many related problems.

The simplest definition of cruising is "unnecessary repetitive driving."<sup>1</sup> Attempts to legally define cruising have been more difficult, however, as people have successfully challenged anti-cruising ordinances in court on constitutional grounds.

Since at least the 1950s, people have cruised for a variety of reasons: to show off their own car, to see other people's cars, to find racing competitors, to impress members of the opposite sex, and to socialize.<sup>2</sup> Reinvigorated and glamorized by popular films such as *American Graffiti*, cruising remains an enormously popular rite of passage for many young people.<sup>3</sup> Today's cruisers drive a variety of vehicles: classic cars, pickup trucks, mini-trucks, muscle cars, lowriders (whose chassis narrowly clear the ground), and even motorcycles. Cruisers are particularly prevalent on Friday and Saturday nights, and they can number in the thousands.



*Nattalie Hoch*



**Among the most common cruisers are the owners of classic, restored and custom cars, who most often view the activity as an opportunity to showcase their automobiles.**

But cruising is not purely harmless fun. It creates problems for the police, nonparticipating motorists, some businesses, and the community at large. Among them are

- conflicts between cruisers (including gang-related violence),
- littering,
- noise (from vehicle engines, screeching tires, car stereos, and exuberant fans),
- traffic congestion (including obstruction of emergency vehicles),
- traffic crashes, and
- vandalism and unintentional property damage.

While cruising creates business for some merchants, it impedes business for others.

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In some jurisdictions, cruisers have divided up along racial, ethnic, and subcultural lines: blacks, Hispanics, punkers and heavy metal groups, the cowboy/western set, and so forth. Sometimes these divisions lead to group conflicts and violence, causing injury to participants and innocent bystanders and heightening fear in the wider community.<sup>4</sup> In some jurisdictions, cruising has taken on a "rock concert" environment in which disorder, violence, and police enforcement are integral to the experience, and even expected and desired by the participants.

<sup>†</sup> See the Problem-Specific Guide titled *Loud Car Stereos*.

<sup>††</sup> See the Problem-Specific Guide titled *Street Racing*.

## Related Problems

There are several cruising-related problems police must also address. These call for separate analyses and responses, and are not directly addressed in this guide:

- assaults,
  - auto theft,
  - curfew violations,
  - display of pornographic videos on vehicle-mounted televisions,
  - drug dealing,
  - drunken driving,
  - gang-related activity,
  - littering,
  - loitering,
  - loud car stereos,<sup>†</sup>
  - noise (including illegal use of amplifiers,<sup>6</sup> which can activate burglar alarms<sup>7</sup>),
  - street racing,<sup>††</sup>
  - traffic gridlock,
  - traffic violations and crashes,
  - underage drinking, and
  - vandalism.
-



*Nattalie Hoch*



**Drinking, littering, loud music, large crowds of spectators, and overcrowded vehicles can transform cruising from harmless fun to a police problem.**

## **Factors Contributing to Cruising**

Understanding the factors that contribute to your problem will help you frame your own local analysis questions, determine good effectiveness measures, recognize key intervention points, and select appropriate responses.

Since the 1940s, teenagers have had easier access to cars, and cruising has become a popular pastime. Everyone used to meet at drive-in restaurants. Two drive-in restaurants often anchored the ends of a cruise route where cars would "drag." Although there has been widespread closing of drive-ins since the 1970s, young people still find places to cruise.





Cruising remains popular for many reasons:

- It appears to be unsupervised.
- It gives people who are too young to go to bars or engage in other adult-only activities something to do (especially in cities that lack alternatives to cruising).
- It provides a means to socialize.
- It allows people to show off their vehicles and driving ability.<sup>8</sup>
- It lets people express racial and cultural pride (in locales where racial and ethnic identity is linked to the cruising phenomenon).
- Cars are a big part of American culture, and people value the freedom of the open road and the notion that one should be able to drive *wherever* one wants, *whenever* one wants.<sup>9</sup>





## **Understanding Your Local Problem**

The information provided above is only a generalized description of cruising. You must combine the basic facts with a more specific understanding of your local problem. Analyzing the local problem carefully will help you design a more effective response strategy.

### **Asking the Right Questions**

The following are some critical questions you should ask in analyzing your particular cruising problem, even if the answers are not always readily available. Your answers to these and other questions will help you choose the most appropriate set of responses later on.

#### *Harms Caused by Cruising*

- Does cruising cause traffic congestion, impeding emergency vehicles as well as others?
  - How many police service calls are attributable to cruising? What types of cruising-related calls and incidents have been officially recorded? (Determining a connection to cruising may not be easy if your records system does not allow dispatchers and officers to record such information.) Does controlling cruising take up a lot of police resources?
  - How many cruising-related assaults have occurred? How serious have the injuries been? (You may want to compare emergency room admissions records against police reports: not all assaults are reported to police.)
  - Does cruising contribute to high numbers of traffic crashes?
-



- How long has cruising been going on in your community?
- What percentage of cruising vehicles do officers deem unsafe and/or illegally equipped?

### *Victims*

- What is the public's opinion of cruising (as indicated by "letters to the editor," surveys, meetings, informal conversations, and so forth)? Do most people want cruising stopped altogether, or merely controlled?
- How has cruising affected business and home owners? Do business owners report increased or decreased revenues as a result of cruising?
- Who are the most vocal complainants about cruising? What is the specific nature of their complaints?
- How many people have been injured in cruising-related incidents? Are they victims of violent or nonviolent offenses? Personal or property crimes? Traffic crashes?

### *Offenders*

- Who are the cruisers (age, race, ethnicity, subcultural group)?
  - Are there organized groups of cruisers? If so, are they gangs? Are there tensions and confrontations between the groups? Do they fear, distrust, or commit crimes against each other?
  - Who causes most of the problems—cruisers, passengers, observers, or those not interested in cruising itself, but there to capitalize on other opportunities (e.g., drug dealing or other crimes)?
  - Why do people cruise?
-



- To what degree are unsupervised youths contributing to the problem?
- Where do cruisers live (i.e., are they local or from out of town)? How far do cruisers travel to get to the cruising area?
- What percentage of people cited or arrested for cruising-related offenses have previously been cited or arrested for similar behavior?
- On average, how many passengers do cruisers have?

### *Locations/Times*

- Where are your jurisdiction's main cruising locations? Have they changed over time? If so, why?
- Does cruising occur on public streets, or on private property (e.g., parking lots)?
- Is cruising concentrated in business areas, residential areas, or both? What attracts cruisers to these areas? Do the areas have adequate lighting and traffic control?
- When does cruising typically occur (time of day/night, day of week, time of month/year, certain holidays)? When are cruising-related problems most acute?

## **Measuring Your Effectiveness**

Measurement allows you to determine to what degree your efforts have succeeded, and suggests how you might modify your responses if they are not producing the intended results. You should take measures of your problem *before* you implement responses, to determine how serious the problem is, and *after* you implement them, to determine whether they have been effective. All measures

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should be taken in both the target area and the surrounding area. You should be aware that your responses to cruising might displace it and related problems to other locations or types of offenses. (For more detailed guidance on measuring effectiveness, see the companion guide to this series, *Assessing Responses to Problems: An Introductory Guide for Police Problem-Solvers*.)

The following are potentially useful measures of the effectiveness of responses to cruising:

- reduced number of cruising-related service calls;
  - reduced number of cruising-related offenses;
  - improved citizen perceptions of safety regarding cruising;
  - improved merchant perceptions of business profitability;
  - reduced number of repeat offenders;
  - improved perceptions among racial, ethnic, or subcultural minority groups about how fairly police treat them; and
  - reduced police expenditures to control cruising.
-



## **Responses to the Problem of Cruising**

Your analysis of your local problem should give you a better understanding of the factors contributing to it. Once you have analyzed your local problem and established a baseline for measuring effectiveness, you should consider possible responses to address the problem.

The following response strategies provide a foundation of ideas for addressing your particular cruising problem. These strategies are drawn from a variety of research studies and police reports. Several of these strategies may apply to your community's problem. It is critical that you tailor responses to local circumstances, and that you can justify each response based on reliable analysis. In most cases, an effective strategy will involve implementing several different responses. Law enforcement responses alone are seldom effective in reducing or solving the problem. Do not limit yourself to considering what police can do: give careful consideration to who else in your community shares responsibility for the problem and can help police better respond to it.

### **General Considerations for an Effective Strategy**

**1. Enlisting community support.** The prospects for effectively addressing cruising improve when it is perceived as a community problem and not just a police problem. Combined efforts by the local government, community leaders, and media to inform citizens about the problem and involve them in initiatives to address it will enhance the likelihood of success. Without sufficient community support to control cruising, police risk criticism for cracking down on what some see as an innocent pastime. Therefore, we suggest that an

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educational campaign be launched to inform the public about cruising ordinances or crackdowns, and to solicit local compliance with, and support for, police actions. Other efforts might include distributing pamphlets to cruisers and area car clubs to solicit their help.

For many years, cruising problems plagued Santa Ana, Calif., on weekend nights. Many youths—a lot of them gang members—filled a popular cruise street and committed numerous violent, gang-related, and public-disorder crimes. High-visibility patrols and heavy enforcement accomplished little; in fact, the problem only grew worse. Lacking the resources to address the problem alone, the Santa Ana Police Department (SAPD) formed a multiagency task force comprising officers from almost every municipal Orange County police agency and the California Highway Patrol. In total, about 125 officers were deployed on weekends for three weeks. The SAPD examined the cruising participants' motivation. After determining that participants both expected and desired the disorder and violence, the SAPD and cooperating agencies decided to change the "rock concert" environment to one of strictly controlled vehicle movement and personal contact between officers and cruisers. The registered owner of each cruising vehicle subsequently received a registered letter explaining the city's policy. This operation put a stop to cruising within the first few nights, and two years later the city was still free of cruising, and officers formally assigned to the problem were being redeployed citywide. *Source:* Walters (n.d.).





Longmont, Colo., had a long history of cruising problems that included fighting, noise, traffic congestion, liquor violations, shoplifting, littering, drug dealing, vandalism, and weapons offenses. Cruising participants filled several business parking lots. The Longmont Police Department (LPD) examined the cruising problem's 20-year history and conducted a national survey of other police agencies to learn how they addressed cruising. The LPD's review of its own practices revealed that channeling traffic and issuing citations had no effect, and that officers had no commitment to solving the problem. City forums were held to consider possible solutions. Through the forums, many business owners agreed to post NO TRESPASSING signs in their lots, install or repair lights, gate entrances and exits, and install barriers as necessary. Beat officers also got involved in developing solutions. The LPD circulated a newsletter to more than 300 businesses, keeping them updated on issues and strategies, and gave cruisers a flier outlining the department's partnership with citizens, and its new zero-tolerance approach. Press releases and news stories also informed residents about the problems and about forthcoming police actions. Both on- and off-duty officers then took to the streets, on foot and bike, for enforcement operations. They issued over 800 summonses and 200 warnings, and made 171 arrests. The results were zero noise complaints from residents, and significant reductions in property crimes (40 percent), crowd dispersals from parking lots (66 percent), and disorderly conduct offenses (11 percent). Disturbances and weapons assaults also dropped significantly. Police had contingency plans for displacement, and where it occurred, beat teams resolved the problem. *Source:* Earhart (2000).



† A 1988 Boise (Idaho) Police Department survey of 229 police agencies serving populations of more than 50,000 revealed that most jurisdictions had some form of local ordinance regulating cruising (Carvino 1990). See also Gofman (2002).

†† For example, a California statute authorizing cities and police to combat cruising and divert traffic provides that police cannot ticket a cruiser unless they have previously given the cruiser a written warning after he or she has passed a traffic control point, and that cities must post adequate notices at the beginning and end of the street section subject to cruising controls (Gofman 2002).

## **2. Establishing alternative activities for youth.**

Although cruising is a major means of socializing for young people, events such as car shows or dances might also appeal to them. While some cruisers cruise to rebel and might not want to participate in officially sanctioned events, others less committed to cruising might participate. You should ask cruisers what alternative activities would appeal to them.

## **3. Promoting other uses of the cruising area.**

Increasing foot traffic in the cruising area, encouraging businesses to stay open later, allowing restaurants to set up tables between sidewalks and curbs, and bringing special events to the area (perhaps closing part of the street for them) can discourage cruisers, as they have to compete for space and attention. However, legal challenges may arise if use of public space is seriously restricted or people are charged admission to enter a public area.<sup>11</sup>

## **Specific Responses to Cruising**

**4. Enacting and enforcing cruising ordinances.** Typical cruising ordinances regulate how many times the same vehicle can pass a fixed point within a certain time.<sup>†</sup>

Warning signs to this effect are recommended, and may be legally required.<sup>††</sup> Police can give offenders a verbal or written warning (on the spot or in a letter), cite and release them, or arrest them. Enforcing such ordinances, however, usually requires many officers and, accordingly, is costly.<sup>12</sup>

Cruising ordinances have led to legal challenges. Most courts have held that, while the right to travel "has long been recognized by the courts as inherent in our...personal liberty,"<sup>13</sup> government has a legitimate interest in regulating vehicle traffic. The courts have concluded that cruising ordinances are valid insofar as



they prohibit only repetitive driving in specific locations, and do not impede regular travel.<sup>14</sup> Where such ordinances have been successfully challenged, it has usually been on the grounds that they were impermissibly vague.<sup>15</sup> In other challenges to cruising ordinances, such as when police ticketed a delivery truck driver for cruising, the court has held that the ordinance regulated all motorists uniformly and thus was not discriminatory.

<sup>†</sup> *Lutz v. City of York*, 692 F. Supp. 457, at 457-58 (M. D. Pa. 1988), aff'd, 899 F.2d 255 (3d Cir. 1990).

At least one federal court has addressed anti-cruising laws. In *Lutz v. City of York*,<sup>†</sup> the Third Circuit Court of Appeals found that cruising does fall under the fundamental right of intrastate travel, although ordinances may place a reasonable time, place, and manner restriction on such movement. The court found the York, Penn., ordinance problematic because it applied on weekday nights, when cruising was generally not a problem, and other traffic laws already addressed most of the disruptions caused by cruising. This case is the majority rule on anti-cruising laws. Since *Lutz*, local governments enacting anti-cruising ordinances have generally added procedural safeguards, such as requiring that adequate notice be given.

Local ordinances vary as to whom, specifically, police can charge with a violation. Most ordinances apply to the driver only, but others apply to passengers as well, or to the car's owner if he or she is in the car.

There is a risk that police might enforce cruising laws against drivers not actually cruising. To minimize this risk, some jurisdictions require not only proof of an intent to drive repetitively and unnecessarily, but also that the accused be exonerated if he or she has a legitimate reason for repetitive driving.<sup>17</sup>

Keep in mind also that some local businesses that cater to cruisers might suffer financially from cruising crackdowns.

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**5. Enforcing trespassing and loitering laws.** Police often enforce cruising ordinances in conjunction with trespassing and loitering laws to keep cruisers from hanging out on private property near the cruising location. Enforcing trespassing and loitering laws on private property will likely require that property owners grant police specific authority to do so in their behalf. Judicial cooperation may be necessary to ensure that such enforcement is perceived as productive.<sup>18</sup>

**6. Restricting parking.** Prohibiting parking—both on public streets and in nearby private parking lots—serves to limit the number of spectators in the cruising area. Without a sufficient crowd, cruisers are discouraged from cruising.

**7. Enforcing laws that restrict juveniles' driving privileges.** At least 36 states have enacted tighter restrictions on teenage drivers, and these restrictions can help police control cruising, especially at night. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration refers to this trend as "graduated driver licensing."<sup>19</sup> Common restrictions include prohibiting 15- and 16-year-olds from driving without an adult passenger at night, requiring that seat belts be worn, and limiting the number of passengers a young driver can have. They further threaten license revocation if underage drivers are convicted of any offense involving drinking.<sup>20</sup>

**8. Regulating and redirecting traffic.** In conjunction with strict enforcement of other ordinances, nearly every city that has aggressively addressed cruising problems has used barricades and traffic cones to shut off selected streets, keep traffic flowing in one direction, prohibit U-turns at favorite U-turn points, or redirect traffic (to shut



down main cruising streets, channel traffic to one lane to identify drivers, inhibit conversation and antagonism between vehicle occupants, etc.). Many police agencies have found that using signs is not a long-term solution, however; when they remove the barricades and cones, the cruisers return. Furthermore, residents must be able to get through barricades to leave or get to their homes.

To deal with the worst of gang-related cruising, cities have erected barriers to block off one end of affected streets; the courts have upheld such practices.<sup>21</sup> Some jurisdictions have created an ordinance allowing the on-duty command officer to erect barricades and close main cruising routes when cruising becomes a problem.<sup>22</sup>

† The Lighting Research Center, a subsidiary of the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, is an excellent resource for lighting information, addressing transportation, health and safety, productivity, and performance issues. See [www.lrc.rpi.edu/resources/news/enews/apr04/generalnews.html](http://www.lrc.rpi.edu/resources/news/enews/apr04/generalnews.html).

**9. Increasing street lighting.** Increased lighting in large parking lots or other cruising gathering points can help to make those areas safer.<sup>23</sup> (Note, however, that it can be very expensive for property owners to install and maintain additional lighting, and too much light can cause glare and disturb nearby residents.)<sup>†</sup>

## **Responses With Limited Effectiveness**

**10. Sanctioning cruising in alternative locations.** Some police agencies, such as those in Arlington, Texas, and Huntington, W.Va., have tried to relocate and control cruising rather than stop it. In this response, police divert cruising to locations where it is less likely to disrupt other community activities. They might select well-lit locations with a "downtown" atmosphere, reduced and slower traffic, more side streets for turning, more on-street parking, and added lanes.<sup>24</sup> Or they might reserve a large parking lot for cruisers, setting up traffic cones to create



cruising routes. (A task force studying Boise cruising problems found this alternative highly controversial, however, and did not recommend its use, due to city liability issues and business-owner opposition.)<sup>25</sup>

*Nordic Pontiac Association*



**Sanctioned or controlled cruising has been shown to have only limited effectiveness as a response to cruising problems.**

To the Arlington Police Department (APD), cruising had become a chronic headache that defied solution, freezing traffic for hours, adversely affecting businesses, and disturbing residents. The APD's first response was to assign its 15-officer motorcycle unit to the area; they issued up to 600 tickets a night for minor violations. After two years, it became evident that enforcement was producing no long-term results. Next, they set up barricades to divert and break up the traffic flow. But crowd control remained a core problem, with fights, alcohol and drug abuse, vandalism, littering, and thefts in abundance. Finally, the city leased a large parking lot and opened it to cruisers on weekend nights, staffing it with police, equipping it with portable restrooms, and cleaning up each morning. The presence of foot and mounted patrols was a key component of the plan, providing a secure yet unstructured environment. Everyone involved deemed the effort a success. Street traffic flowed smoothly, customers returned to once off-limit businesses, and neighborhoods were free from problems. *Source:* Bell (1989).



**11. Enforcing juvenile curfews.** Because cruising typically occurs at night, enforcing juvenile curfews can reduce the number of young people on the street, thereby reducing their risk of offending and being victimized, and reducing the number of cruising spectators.<sup>26</sup> Enacting and enforcing such curfews can be politically controversial, however. Furthermore, if the majority of the cruising crowd is too old to be affected by curfews, their usefulness will be limited.

In Anoka, Minn., up to 500 teenagers were milling about among cruisers on weekend nights, resulting in fights, traffic violations, underage drinking, vandalism, sexual assaults, and drug dealing. The city appointed a task force to study the problem and recommend solutions. First, the city enacted a no-cruising ordinance, which included the designation of a No Cruising Zone. To be considered a violator, a driver had to have passed a traffic control point at least three times between 10 p.m. and 2 a.m., and before police could issue a citation, they had to have previously issued a warning ticket good for six months. The warning clause proved to make the ordinance ineffective, and meanwhile, gang activity, drug dealing, serious assaults, and vandalism were increasing. The city removed the warning clause and more clearly defined the loitering law. More officers were assigned downtown on bike and foot patrols, and off-duty state troopers and sheriff's deputies were also hired. While they were enforcing the ordinances, the department also picked up all youths violating the curfew ordinance. Word circulated about the crackdown, and violators filled the courtrooms each week. After five weekends of intensive enforcement, the cruising and loitering problems were solved. *Source:* Revering (1993).



**12. Increasing police patrols.** All cities that use police to address cruising problems do so on a large scale, employing foot, bike, and motorcycle officers to enforce existing ordinances to the fullest. (Foot patrol and bike officers can more easily move through congested traffic areas and parking lots, identifying violators and communicating with drivers.) Some cities have numerous off-duty officers work solely on cruising problems, while others have special units do so. Other jurisdictions have created a multiagency task force, deploying state troopers as well as local deputies and officers to quell the problem on weekends.<sup>27</sup> However, such saturation patrol is normally quite expensive, and therefore unsustainable for the long term.

**13. Sentencing offenders to community service.** People convicted of minor cruising-related offenses might be sentenced to do community service tasks pertaining to cruising, such as cleaning up litter left over after cruises, repairing property damaged during cruises, etc.<sup>28</sup> This approach may reduce jail crowding and costs. While community service may be good policy and often receives widespread business and citizen support, it alone may not guarantee that offenders won't cruise again.<sup>29</sup>

**14. Setting up sobriety and vehicle inspection checkpoints.** Sobriety and vehicle inspection checks can help remove intoxicated drivers and unsafe vehicles from the cruising area. They are, however, costly. Moreover, they may cause traffic congestion and confusion.

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## Appendix: Summary of Responses to Cruising

The table below summarizes the responses to cruising, the mechanism by which they are intended to work, the conditions under which they ought to work best, and some factors you should consider before implementing a particular response. It is critical that you tailor responses to local circumstances, and that you can justify each response based on reliable analysis. In most cases, an effective strategy will involve implementing several different responses. Law enforcement responses alone are seldom effective in reducing or solving the problem.

Response No.	Page No.	Response	How It Works	Works Best If...	Considerations
<i>General Considerations for an Effective Strategy</i>					
1.	11	Enlisting community support	Establishes joint ownership of the problem, while educating the public	...there is sufficient police knowledge of, and public interest in, the problem	Partnerships offer the best approach for addressing problems over time
2.	14	Establishing alternative activities for youth	Removes some of the motivation for cruising, directing youth attention away from the streets	...a long-term goal of establishing teen clubs or centers is set, and local businesses contribute	It sends a message that youth are important and community amenities are accessible to all
3.	14	Promoting other uses of the cruising area	Discourages cruisers, as they have to compete for space and attention	...foot traffic increases, cruise areas are used for special events, and businesses stay open later	There may be legal challenges if public space is seriously restricted or people are charged admission to enter public areas



Response No.	Page No.	Response	How It Works	Works Best If...	Considerations
<i>Specific Responses to Cruising</i>					
4.	14	Enacting and enforcing cruising ordinances	Deters cruisers through the threat of fines or other penalties	...a large number of officers are deployed in the cruising area, and they enforce the ordinances in conjunction with other, related ordinances	Cruising ordinances are generally less vulnerable to legal challenges if the city posts warning signs in cruising areas and police first give cruisers a written warning; they can be expensive to enforce
5.	16	Enforcing trespassing and loitering laws	Reduces opportunities for onlookers to watch cruising, thereby reducing a main incentive for it	...police obtain judicial cooperation, so that enforcement actions have a significant impact	Enforcing trespassing laws on private property requires owners' consent; loitering laws are subject to legal challenges
6.	16	Restricting parking	Limits the size of the crowds watching the cruising	...parking is restricted on both public streets and private parking lots near the cruising area	New parking ordinances may be required
7.	16	Enforcing laws that restrict juveniles' driving privileges	Reduces the number of juveniles cruising, thereby reducing their risk of offending and being victimized	...the laws prohibit youths from driving at night and limit the number of passengers they can have	Stiffer penalties might include license revocation if underage drivers are convicted of any drinking-related offense; it requires a strong police commitment to enforce the laws



Response No.	Page No.	Response	How It Works	Works Best If...	Considerations
8.	16	Regulating and redirecting traffic	Discourages cruisers from driving in cruising areas, and prevents conversation and antagonism between vehicle occupants	...police also enforce related ordinances	It may require special legal authorization
9.	17	Increasing street lighting	Reduces the risk of traffic crashes, gives victims a better opportunity to identify offenders, and increases the public's sense of security	...a qualified lighting designer and city planners determine types and locations of lighting	It may be costly to implement and bothersome to surrounding residents
<i>Responses With Limited Effectiveness</i>					
10.	17	Sanctioning cruising in alternative locations	Moves cruising to areas where it is less likely to interfere with other activities, and where police can more easily monitor and control it	...all or most cruisers are willing to use the alternative locations	Local governments may be liable for harms occurring at officially sanctioned locations; police must still be present to monitor cruising; extra amenities may be required if the locations are deemed public spaces
11.	19	Enforcing juvenile curfews	Reduces the number of juveniles cruising, thereby reducing their risk of offending and being victimized	...there is widespread public support for curfew enforcement	Curfews are commonly politically controversial and subject to legal challenge; police enforcement may be labor-intensive



Response No.	Page No.	Response	How It Works	Works Best If...	Considerations
12.	20	Increasing police patrols	Deters cruisers through increased police presence and enforcement	...a special detail of officers (e.g., a traffic unit) is deployed at peak cruising times	It is costly and reduces the number of officers available for other tasks
13.	20	Sentencing offenders to community service	Deters offenders	...community service activities address cruising-related harms	It could gain widespread business and citizen support, and promote positive police-youth relations, depending on whether police administer the program in a positive manner
14.	20	Setting up sobriety and vehicle inspection checkpoints	Discourages cruising, and removes intoxicated drivers and unsafe vehicles from the cruising area	...the checkpoints do not contribute to traffic congestion and confusion	They are labor-intensive and costly



## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Gofman (2002).
  - <sup>2</sup> Witzel and Bash (1997).
  - <sup>3</sup> Gofman (2002).
  - <sup>4</sup> Patterson and Barbour (1989).
  - <sup>5</sup> Walters (n.d.).
  - <sup>6</sup> Brinkmann (2001).
  - <sup>7</sup> Lezon (1999).
  - <sup>8</sup> Carvino (1990).
  - <sup>9</sup> Carvino (1990).
  - <sup>10</sup> Carvino (1990).
  - <sup>11</sup> Trapp (2000).
  - <sup>12</sup> Trapp (2000).
  - <sup>13</sup> *Brandmiller v. Arreola*, 199 Wis.2d 528, 544 N.W.2d 894 (Wis. Supr. Ct. 1996).
  - <sup>14</sup> Podgers (1996).
  - <sup>15</sup> *State v. Stallman*, 519 N.W.2d 903 (Minn. Ct. App. 1994).
  - <sup>16</sup> *Scheunemann v. City of West Bend*, 507 N.W.2d 163 (Wis. Ct. App. 1993).
  - <sup>17</sup> Gofman (2002).
  - <sup>18</sup> Carvino (1990).
  - <sup>19</sup> U.S. Department of Transportation, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (2004).
  - <sup>20</sup> Wilkinson (2001).
  - <sup>21</sup> See, for example, *Townes v. St. Louis*, 949 F. Supp.731 (E. D. Mo. 1996), *aff'd*, 1997 U.S. App. LEXIS 8861 (8th Cir., Sept. 6, 1997).
  - <sup>22</sup> Carvino (1990), as reported by the Reno Police Department, pp. 1–16.
  - <sup>23</sup> Carvino (1990), as reported by the Reno Police Department, pp. 1–16.
  - <sup>24</sup> Carvino (1990); see also Avon and Somerset Constabulary (2002).
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<sup>25</sup> Carvino (1990).

<sup>26</sup> Meares and Kahan (1998).

<sup>27</sup> Walters (n.d.).

<sup>28</sup> Carvino (1990).

<sup>29</sup> Carvino (1990).



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## Recommended Readings

- ***A Police Guide to Surveying Citizens and Their Environments***, Bureau of Justice Assistance, 1993. This guide offers a practical introduction for police practitioners to two types of surveys that police find useful: surveying public opinion and surveying the physical environment. It provides guidance on whether and how to conduct cost-effective surveys.
- ***Assessing Responses to Problems: An Introductory Guide for Police Problem-Solvers***, by John E. Eck (U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2001). This guide is a companion to the *Problem-Oriented Guides for Police* series. It provides basic guidance to measuring and assessing problem-oriented policing efforts.
- ***Conducting Community Surveys***, by Deborah Weisel (Bureau of Justice Statistics and Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 1999). This guide, along with accompanying computer software, provides practical, basic pointers for police in conducting community surveys. The document is also available at [www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs).
- ***Crime Prevention Studies***, edited by Ronald V. Clarke (Criminal Justice Press, 1993, et seq.). This is a series of volumes of applied and theoretical research on reducing opportunities for crime. Many chapters are evaluations of initiatives to reduce specific crime and disorder problems.



- ***Excellence in Problem-Oriented Policing: The 1999 Herman Goldstein Award Winners.*** This document produced by the National Institute of Justice in collaboration with the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services and the Police Executive Research Forum provides detailed reports of the best submissions to the annual award program that recognizes exemplary problem-oriented responses to various community problems. A similar publication is available for the award winners from subsequent years. The documents are also available at [www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij).
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  - ***Opportunity Makes the Thief: Practical Theory for Crime Prevention,*** by Marcus Felson and Ronald V. Clarke (Home Office Police Research Series, Paper No. 98, 1998). Explains how crime theories such as routine activity theory, rational choice theory and crime pattern theory have practical implications for the police in their efforts to prevent crime.
  - ***Problem Analysis in Policing,*** by Rachel Boba (Police Foundation, 2003). Introduces and defines problem analysis and provides guidance on how problem analysis can be integrated and institutionalized into modern policing practices.
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- ***Problem-Oriented Policing***, by Herman Goldstein (McGraw-Hill, 1990, and Temple University Press, 1990). Explains the principles and methods of problem-oriented policing, provides examples of it in practice, and discusses how a police agency can implement the concept.
  - ***Problem-Oriented Policing and Crime Prevention***, by Anthony A. Braga (Criminal Justice Press, 2003). Provides a thorough review of significant policing research about problem places, high-activity offenders, and repeat victims, with a focus on the applicability of those findings to problem-oriented policing. Explains how police departments can facilitate problem-oriented policing by improving crime analysis, measuring performance, and securing productive partnerships.
  - ***Problem-Oriented Policing: Reflections on the First 20 Years***, by Michael S. Scott (U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2000). Describes how the most critical elements of Herman Goldstein's problem-oriented policing model have developed in practice over its 20-year history, and proposes future directions for problem-oriented policing. The report is also available at [www.cops.usdoj.gov](http://www.cops.usdoj.gov).
  - ***Problem-Solving: Problem-Oriented Policing in Newport News***, by John E. Eck and William Spelman (Police Executive Research Forum, 1987). Explains the rationale behind problem-oriented policing and the problem-solving process, and provides examples of effective problem-solving in one agency.
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- ***Problem-Solving Tips: A Guide to Reducing Crime and Disorder Through Problem-Solving Partnerships*** by Karin Schmerler, Matt Perkins, Scott Phillips, Tammy Rinehart and Meg Townsend. (U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 1998) (also available at [www.cops.usdoj.gov](http://www.cops.usdoj.gov)). Provides a brief introduction to problem-solving, basic information on the SARA model and detailed suggestions about the problem-solving process.
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  - ***Using Analysis for Problem-Solving: A Guidebook for Law Enforcement***, by Timothy S. Bynum (U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2001). Provides an introduction for police to analyzing problems within the context of problem-oriented policing.
  - ***Using Research: A Primer for Law Enforcement Managers***, Second Edition, by John E. Eck and Nancy G. LaVigne (Police Executive Research Forum, 1994). Explains many of the basics of research as it applies to police management and problem-solving.
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