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Problem-Oriented Guides for Police
Response Guides Series
No. 1

The Benefits and Consequences of Police Crackdowns

by
Michael S. Scott

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About the Response Guides Series

The response guides are one of three series of the *Problem-Oriented Guides for Police*. The other two are the problem-specific guides and problem-solving tools.

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

- understand basic problem-oriented policing principles and methods,
- can look at problems in depth,
- are willing to consider new ways of doing police business,
- understand the value and the limits of research knowledge, and
- are willing to work with other community agencies to find effective solutions to problems.

The response guides summarize knowledge about whether police should use certain responses to address various crime and disorder problems, and about what effects they might expect. Each guide

- describes the response,
- discusses the various ways police might apply the response,
- explains how the response is designed to reduce crime and disorder,

- examines the research knowledge about the response,
- addresses potential criticisms and negative consequences that might flow from use of the response, and
- describes how police have applied the response to specific crime and disorder problems, and with what effect.

The response guides are intended to be used differently from the problem-specific guides. Ideally, police should begin all strategic decision-making by first analyzing the specific crime and disorder problems they are confronting, and then using the analysis results to devise particular responses. But certain responses are so commonly considered and have such potential to help address a range of specific crime and disorder problems that it makes sense for police to learn more about what results they might expect from them.

Readers are cautioned that the response guides are designed to *supplement* problem analysis, not to *replace* it. Police should analyze all crime and disorder problems in their local context before implementing responses. Even if research knowledge suggests that a particular response has proved effective *else*where, that does not mean the response will be effective *every*where. Local factors matter a lot in choosing which responses to use.

Research and practice have further demonstrated that, in most cases, the most effective overall approach to a problem is one that incorporates several different responses. So a single response guide is unlikely to provide you with sufficient information on which to base a coherent plan for addressing crime and disorder problems. Some combinations of responses work better than others.

Thus, how effective a particular response is depends partly on what other responses police use to address the problem.

These guides emphasize effectiveness and fairness as the main considerations police should take into account in choosing responses, but recognize that they are not the only considerations. Police use particular responses for reasons other than, or in addition to, whether or not they will work, and whether or not they are deemed fair. Community attitudes and values, and the personalities of key decision-makers, sometimes mandate different approaches to addressing crime and disorder problems. Some communities and individuals prefer enforcement-oriented responses, whereas others prefer collaborative, community-oriented, or harm-reduction approaches. These guides will not necessarily alter those preferences, but are intended to better inform them.

For more information about problem-oriented policing, visit the Center for Problem-Oriented Policing online at www.popcenter.org or via the COPS website at 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, and
- online access to important police research and practices.

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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.

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

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Defining Crackdowns

This guide deals with crackdowns, a response police commonly use to address crime and disorder problems. The term *crackdown* is widely used in reference to policing and law enforcement, although it is often used rather loosely. Journalists, for example, commonly refer to almost any new police initiative as a crackdown. For the purposes of this guide, a crackdown is generally defined as follows:

> *Sudden and dramatic increases in police officer presence, sanctions, and threats of apprehension either for specific offenses or for all offenses in specific places.*[1]

Crackdowns usually, but not necessarily, involve high police visibility and numerous arrests. They may use undercover or plainclothes officers working with uniformed police, and may involve other official actions in addition to arrests.

Several other terms are commonly used in connection with crackdowns, but their use is also often imprecise. Among them are *zero tolerance* and *sweeps*. *Zero tolerance*, often associated with the broken windows thesis,[2] implies that police suspend the level of discretion they would ordinarily use in their enforcement decisions in favor of strictly enforcing the law for all or selected offenses. *Sweeps* typically refer to coordinated police actions in which they seek out and arrest large numbers of offenders. Many reports relating to crackdowns refer to *aggressive* police methods–aggressive patrol, aggressive enforcement, and so forth. By aggressive it is meant that police make extra efforts to take official action, not that they are hostile or rude to people they contact.

The crackdowns this guide covers are larger-scale special operations authorized at a policy-making level; they are not crackdowns undertaken by a single, beat-level officer.

Related Responses

Police often use crackdowns in combination with other responses. Responses not directly addressed in this guide include:

- targeting repeat offenders,
- conducting sting operations,
- educating and warning citizens, and
- improving place management.

Types of Crackdowns

Crackdowns, generally defined, take many different forms. They range from highly planned, well-coordinated, intensely focused operations in which officers know the operational objectives and perform their duties precisely, to loosely planned initiatives in which officers are given only vague guidance about objectives and tasks, sometimes being told little more than to "get out there and make your presence felt." From a problem-oriented perspective, there is a world of difference among these various crackdowns. Most of the crackdowns reported in the research literature are reasonably well-planned, coordinated, and focused: they must be to justify the research. However, in practice, police agencies conduct many operations that can be defined as crackdowns, but which are not as well-planned, coordinated, and focused. Researchers are less interested in studying these initiatives precisely because they don't believe they will be able to systematically learn from them.

Consequently, we know less about the effects of the less well-planned, coordinated, and focused crackdowns.

Crackdowns can be classified along a few important dimensions. Among them are:

- police visibility/enforcement action,
- type of action expected,
- geographic target, and
- types of offenses targeted.

Police Visibility/Enforcement Action

Some crackdowns emphasize police visibility only, whereas others emphasize enforcement action.† Both types are intended to make potential offenders think they are more likely than usual to get caught. When a crackdown emphasizes enforcement, it obviously relies on actual sanctions being applied to offenders to enhance the deterrent effect. When a crackdown emphasizes police visibility only, additional enforcement and sanctions may or may not result; the enhanced visibility alone is intended to produce the deterrent effect. The Kansas City Preventive Patrol Experiment is a well-known example of a crackdown that emphasized police visibility only.†† Such crackdowns are often referred to as *saturation patrol*, *tactical patrol*, *directed patrol*, or *high-visibility patrol*. Most research suggests that simply adding more officers to an area without necessarily increasing levels of official action is unlikely to significantly reduce crime and disorder.[3] Intensive patrol around identified hot spots of crime and disorder, however, has been demonstrated to reduce crime and disorder at those hot spots.[4]

† Most crackdowns include high police visibility, but some do not, notably those in which undercover or plainclothes police are involved.

†† In this experiment, the levels of uniformed patrols were varied to test their relative effect on reported crime and citizen perceptions, but patrol officers were not instructed to take any special enforcement actions (Kelling, et al. 1974).

Type of Action Expected

Some crackdowns require that officers suspend the usual discretion they apply to situations in favor of certain prescribed enforcement actions. For example, they might make custodial arrests where once they might have issued a citation and released the offender; they might issue a citation where once they might have released the offender with a warning; they might actively look for offenders with outstanding warrants where once they might have served warrants only when encountering offenders in the routine course of their duties; and so forth.

Other crackdowns encourage officers to use a broader range of tactics to address targeted problems, exercising full discretion and initiative. In addition to taking more enforcement actions, officers might also be encouraged to apply the principles of problem-oriented policing or situational crime prevention as circumstances warrant.[5]

Specific actions officers might take as part of a crackdown include:

- arresting offenders;
- issuing citations;
- conducting field interviews;
- issuing written or verbal warnings;
- taking juvenile offenders into custody for status offenses (for example, for truancy or curfew violations);
- conducting highly visible patrols;
- conducting traffic stops;
- serving search warrants;
- serving arrest warrants;

- inspecting licenses (liquor, business, driver's);
- inspecting property for code violations, and enforcing them;
- establishing mobile police command posts/booking stations/neighborhood offices;
- conducting "knock and talk" operations (to gain information from citizens who are hesitant to contact the police directly, let the community know what the police hope to achieve, locate offenders, conduct voluntary searches of private premises, look for evidence in plain view, etc.);
- searching vehicles and interviewing drivers at roadblocks or checkpoints; and
- seeking enhanced penalties (for example, by filing cases typically prosecuted under state laws under federal laws).

Geographic Target

Some crackdowns are concentrated in small geographic areas–perhaps a couple of square blocks or a housing complex. Others extend to larger areas–whole neighborhoods or police districts. Others cover an entire jurisdiction–a city, a county, even a state.

Types of Offenses Targeted

Some crackdowns focus on particular illegal conduct–robbery, burglary, drunken driving, speeding, drug dealing, gun-related crimes, etc. Others are more broadly aimed at deterring a range of illegal and problematic behavior–all crimes, all serious crimes, all calls for police service, etc.

Basic Elements of Crackdowns

Crackdowns have three basic elements, not all of which are always fully operating during any particular crackdown. They are:

- heightened police presence,
- increased severity or certainty of sanctions, and
- publicity.[6]

At times, these elements can work against one another. For example, if police make full-blown custodial arrests of all offenders, they risk reducing the police presence in the target area when they leave it to book prisoners. Or publicity about a crackdown in a target area might cause offenders simply to avoid that area and commit crimes elsewhere.

Several researchers have asserted that the best way to maximize the benefits of crackdowns is to conduct them briefly and intensively, rotate them among several target areas, and resume them either at unpredictable times in the future or when target offenses return to certain predetermined levels.[7]

For crackdowns to be effective, they must be sufficiently strong and long: strong enough doses of police intervention for long enough periods. Marginal increases in routine police activity are unlikely to produce significant effects. Exactly how much more intensive and extensive police action is required varies from problem to problem, but it must be sufficiently greater than normal to alter offenders' perceptions of risk.[†] If a crackdown is spread too thinly over too wide an area, its overall intensity may be insufficient to have much of an effect. Follow-up crackdowns to reinforce an initial crackdown typically do not need to be as intense.

† You may need to make special efforts to inform potential offenders about the heightened risks of apprehension: do not assume they obtain or process information about police activity in the same way as the general public might. One of the keys to effective deterrence in the Boston Gun Violence Project was how officials personally and persuasively told high-risk offenders about the new consequences for violent acts (Kennedy et al. 2001).

An Effective Drug Crackdown in San Diego

San Diego police were witnessing a full-blown crack epidemic on University Avenue. Heavily populated with seasoned and hard-core drug users, the street remained an entrenched drug market, stabilized by word-of-mouth marketing.

Applying basic marketing principles to both the illegal drug market and the legitimate retail merchandise market, police convinced drug users that University Avenue was the last place they wanted to be, and helped businesses convince residents that it was a convenient and safe place to shop. They divided their response into three stages: Operation Hot Pipe, Operation Smoky Haze, and Operation Rehab.

Operation Hot Pipe's goal was to destroy the perception that University Avenue was a safe and suitable environment for crack users. Officers established the area as a high-intensity zone and warned drug users that they would arrest them for any and all crimes committed there. Squads of officers began to systematically arrest drug users who loitered on University Avenue and who facilitated the drug market. Police identified three types of crack users: habitual users-facilitators, binge users, and partyers (who came to buy crack and then went home). The bingers and partyers depended on the habitual users for drugs. Police reasoned that if that group disappeared, the bingers and partyers would have to look elsewhere.

Officers told arrestees they would focus enforcement on them as long as they stayed in the target area, and gave them fliers designating University Avenue as off-limits to crack users. At first, the users did not believe officers, but it did not take long before the habitual ones began offering information to avoid arrest; officers arrested them anyway. One user walked into jail and was handed a flier, and as the arresting officers left, they heard the prisoner reading the flier to other inmates. Police also

posted fliers on storefronts, on electrical boxes, on planters, on windows, at bus stops, and in places identified as drug-dealing sites. Police told each person contacted to tell his or her friends that University Avenue was too hot to hang out.

Operation Smoky Haze's goal was to destroy the drug market's convenience and safety by confusing the buyers and sellers. Officers used an undercover, reverse-sting operation, arresting buyers for solicitation. Buyers became leery of fresh faces selling on University Avenue. Officers used informants to spread the word that the operation was continuing. They also casually leaked information to users about pending drug sweeps–some of which occurred, and some of which did not. They spread the word that dealers were ripping off buyers. During field interviews, they asked users for information concerning drug rip-offs and robberies, or for information on phantom suspects. The resulting confusion made buying inconvenient and risky. Officers also referred people to a newly formed drug court. Those who applied and were eligible were put on drug court probation.

Operation Rehab's goal was to change people's perception of the area from that of a drug corridor to that of a strong business community, through an intense positive marketing campaign.

As a result of the initiative, merchants reported that business had increased, they felt safer on University Avenue, and they were seeing more families and shoppers on the street. The habitual users became aware of increased enforcement through their own or acquaintances' arrests and the fliers. They reported that crack was harder to find. Some users left the area altogether. Street robberies declined. And complaints about drug dealing all but ceased.

Adapted from San Diego Police Department (1998). "Operation Hot Pipe, Smoky Haze, and Rehab." Submission for the Herman Goldstein Award for Excellence in Problem-Oriented Policing.

How Crackdowns Work to Reduce Crime and Disorder

Crackdowns can reduce crime and disorder in two ways: by increasing the *certainty* that offenders will be caught and punished more severely than usual, or by increasing offenders' *perceptions* that they are more likely to get caught and punished. Some people are deterred by crackdowns only when they get caught and punished; they are then less likely to repeat the offense. Others don't need to get caught; just hearing about a crackdown deters them. To some extent, the *perception* of risk is more important than the *actual* risk.

Probably to a lesser degree, crackdowns can also be effective by taking high-rate offenders out of circulation. Crackdowns are designed to apprehend many offenders, some of whom will be serious and/or high-rate. Increasing the likelihood that they are caught and jailed will help reduce the crime rate. But this is more incidental to crackdowns than it is purposeful: most crackdowns target *all* offenders, not just high-rate ones. It is possible, though, to focus crackdown efforts on high-rate offenders (or high-risk places).[8] Police may do so by identifying high-rate offenders and/or high-risk places *before* the crackdown and then concentrating efforts on them, or by giving special attention to high-rate offenders they encounter *during* the crackdown.

Ideally, crackdowns, especially on certain kinds of drug markets, will have a snowball effect. As initial enforcement reduces the number of offenders in circulation, the remaining offenders are at even greater risk because police can focus their resources on them. Eventually, the drug market will collapse for lack of buyers and sellers.[9] Thus, a

constant level of police resources dedicated to a crackdown will prove increasingly effective. Clearly, this snowball effect will not apply to every problem against which crackdowns are directed.

Crackdowns might also be effective by reducing the numbers of potential offenders and victims coming into contact with one another.[10] For example, if a drug enforcement crackdown clears many people out of a previously busy drug market, there are likely to be fewer opportunities for such crimes as drug-related robberies and assaults.

Drug enforcement crackdowns that reduce overall drug use will also reduce the need for cash to buy drugs, and thereby provide the added benefit of reducing some of the need to commit crimes to get cash.[11]

Benefits of Crackdowns

Crackdowns hold substantial appeal for the public, police, and government officials. They offer the promise of firm, immediate action and quick, decisive results. They appeal to demands that order be restored when crime and disorder seem out of control.

Research and practice have demonstrated that crackdowns can be effective–at least in the short term–at reducing crime and disorder in targeted areas, and can do so without necessarily displacing the problem.[12,†] Furthermore, the positive effects of crackdowns sometimes continue after the crackdowns end (these ongoing effects are sometimes referred to as *residual deterrence effects*).[13] In addition, crackdowns can reduce crime and disorder outside the target area or reduce offenses not targeted in the crackdowns, a phenomenon criminologists commonly refer to as a *diffusion of benefits*.[14]

Crackdowns appear to be most effective when used with other responses that address the underlying conditions that contribute to the particular problem.[15,††] The sequence in which police implement the various responses can sometimes be important. Often, crackdowns help reduce problems to more manageable levels, which gives longer-term responses a better chance to take hold.

† *Displacement* occurs when crime patterns (methods, places, or times) change as a result of a crime prevention effort. Research on displacement has found that it is not an inevitable result of crime prevention, and that even when it does happen, it is less than 100 percent.

†† Multiple responses tend to be more effective than sole responses, but it is more difficult to determine after the fact which particular responses or tactics were most effective. Since the primary police objectives are to reduce crime and disorder, and the fear they generate, the effectiveness issue is more important than the measurement issue.

Potential Criticisms and Negative Consequences of Crackdowns

Even when a crackdown would likely be effective, it might not necessarily be the best approach to use. There are a number of possible pitfalls to crackdowns, as discussed below. As Lawrence Sherman noted in his review of crackdowns, "[I]t is possible for well-intentioned efforts to make things worse."[16]

Short-term impact. Most crackdown studies have found that any positive impact they have in reducing crime and disorder tends to disappear (or decay) rather quickly, and occasionally even before the crackdown ends.[17] The effect can wear off for various reasons, including the tendency for police implementation to become less rigorous over time and for offenders to adapt to the crackdown.[18]

Whatever short-term reductions in crime and disorder they might provide, crackdowns do not address any of the physical or social conditions that often contribute to crime and disorder, either in general or at particular locations.[19] Broader situational crime prevention and problem-solving approaches are better suited to address these underlying conditions.[20]

This tendency for short-term impact does not necessarily make crackdowns inadvisable: for some problems and some areas, even short-term relief can justify the effort, particularly if that relief creates new opportunities to implement longer-term responses.

Displacement. While crackdowns do not inevitably lead to displacement of crime and disorder, it does occur in some cases. The same rationality that police count on to deter some offenders causes others to adapt to police tactics and continue offending at the same rate.[21] Depending on the extent and direction of displacement, police risk criticism for creating problems in areas previously unaffected. Once again, the potential for criticism does not necessarily make crackdowns inadvisable; sometimes, displacing a problem from an area that has suffered disproportionately, to other areas that haven't, can be justified as a more equitable distribution of suffering. Displacement, where and when it does occur, seldom occurs at 100 percent. That is, the problem usually decreases in some way, even as it shifts. The key is to be aware of the various possibilities for displacement, develop intelligence systems that inform you how the problem is shifting, and counteract it if possible.

Impact on police-community relations. Improperly conducted, crackdowns can worsen police-community relations and thereby undermine police legitimacy.[22] Indeed, many of the urban riots in U.S. cities in the 1960s were at least partly due to widespread crackdowns in minority neighborhoods.[23] Particularly when crackdowns are aimed at street activity, they can be criticized for their disparate impact on the poor, who typically spend more time on the street than do the affluent. Moreover, when police use highly aggressive tactics in crackdowns–such as using military strategies, weapons, and attire for relatively routine enforcement and patrol activities–they risk heightening fear among offenders *and* casual observers.[24]

Bob Morris

Combat uniforms and military-style gear and weaponry, designed to better protect officers as well as convey an image of seriousness, can also heighten fear among casual observers.

Said police scholar Herman Goldstein:

> It's one thing to realize a quick dramatic decrease in some types of offenses, but if that's at the cost of creating great antagonism toward the police on the part of youth and future generations, then police departments are going to have to deal with the consequences of that hostility.[25]

But loss of public support is not inevitable. Several studies have shown that when police explain the purpose and

scope of crackdowns to the public ahead of time, as well as to the people they stop during crackdowns, they can gain public support, support that continues while the crackdown is in effect.[26]

Potential for abuse. Without proper planning and supervision, crackdowns hold the potential for abuse of police authority. If officers are excessively pressured to make arrests and seize contraband, some might be tempted to take shortcuts that can compromise due process. Overzealous and poorly managed crackdowns can violate citizens' rights.[27] Where officers receive overtime pay for crackdowns, they risk being accused–however fairly or unfairly–of conducting them primarily to earn that pay. When officers conduct a crackdown in a target area they are not normally assigned to, there is a heightened risk that they will not be able to distinguish the truly suspicious from the ordinary as effectively as locally assigned officers.[28]

Expense. Crackdowns are usually expensive.[29] Many crackdowns require overtime funds to provide the necessary staffing. In addition to officer wages, crackdowns generate higher costs for booking prisoners, processing arrest files, and processing cases through the legal system, and may incur new equipment and training costs. Substantial increases in police presence in an area are usually hard to sustain for long periods due to the costs.[30] Whether or not crackdown-related expenses are justified depends on how sure you are that the crackdown prevented crime and disorder. A cost-effectiveness analysis is recommended.[31]

Impact on the rest of the criminal justice system. In addition to the financial costs crackdowns create for prosecutors, courts, and jails, they create pressure on those operations to adapt to the new workload by forcing other cases and prisoners out of the system.[32] Often, that means that offenders are offered lenient sentences in exchange for guilty pleas, which undercuts, to some extent, the crackdown's intended benefits. Or worse, prosecutors may choose not to prosecute the cases at all. At a minimum, police should coordinate crackdowns with other agencies the increased workload will affect.

Opportunity costs. Obviously, for police to devote a larger share of resources to one particular area or problem, they must divert resources from other areas and problems.[33] Thus, there is not only the cost of conducting the crackdown, but there is also the cost of not doing something else with the resources. You should not spread resources too widely just to avoid this criticism, lest you undermine the crackdown's potential to have a significant impact.

Using Crackdowns to Address Specific Problems

This section briefly summarizes the effects research has shown crackdowns to have on specific crime and disorder problems. Obviously, police have used crackdowns against other problems, as well, but those cited here are the most prominent in the research literature.

You should use this information cautiously. To properly develop responses for specific crime and disorder problems, you should first carefully analyze your jurisdiction's problem. Responses other than just crackdowns are often recommended. You should consult the guide covering the specific problem you are trying to address.

Serious Crime Problems

Robbery

Police have commonly used crackdowns to try to control robbery problems. Several studies have concluded that in jurisdictions where police aggressively enforce the law, the robbery rates are lower.[34] Aggressive field interrogations [35] and traffic enforcement[36] are among the specific crackdown tactics reported to have contributed to reductions in robbery rates. Large increases in police patrol in a subway system also appear to have been effective in reducing robbery.[37] A broader problem-oriented approach showed considerable success in reducing prostitution-related robberies.[38] Drug crackdowns can help reduce robbery where users rob to finance their purchases.[39],† See the problem-specific guides on *Robbery at Automated Teller Machines* and *Crime Against Tourists* for further information on addressing specific types of robbery.

† See the problem-specific guides on *Robbery at Automated Teller Machines* and *Crime Against Tourists* for further information on addressing specific types of robbery.

Burglary

Crackdowns designed to reduce burglary are typically of two types: those that focus on known burglars, and those that focus on other behavior thought to be connected to burglary (e.g., drug dealing, traffic violations, suspicious activity).

Directly focusing on known burglars has proved successful in at least one carefully planned initiative in the United Kingdom.[40] There, police sought to identify all known and active burglars in a target area and to take them out of circulation, mainly through arrest. Police and researchers believed that an area's burglary rate is directly proportional to the number of burglars operating in that area–that is, the supply of burglars drives burglary as much as the demand for stolen goods does. When they succeeded in taking the majority of burglars out of circulation, the burglary rate dropped significantly.[†, ††]

Crackdowns that focus on behavior that might be connected to burglary can help reduce burglary rates along with other crime rates. Intensive field interview initiatives have been shown to help reduce burglary,[41] as have aggressive patrol,[42] traffic enforcement,[43] drunken-driving enforcement,[44] and street-level drug enforcement.[45] Simply adding more patrol officers to an area does not appear to reduce burglary,[46] although one study did conclude that extra slow-moving patrols did reduce nighttime commercial burglaries (but not daytime residential burglaries), albeit at a prohibitively high cost.[47, †††]

† Measures taken to better protect potential burglary victims and their property also contributed to this project's success.

†† For further information about establishing repeat offender programs, see Spelman (1990).

††† See the problem-specific guides on *Burglary of Single-Family Houses* and *Burglary of Retail Establishments*.

Gun-Related Crime

Several well-evaluated studies have shown that crackdowns targeting gun offenses can reduce gun-related crime. In a gun crackdown in Indianapolis, police used two different tactics–one was to make a lot of short traffic stops of limited intrusiveness, and another was to target known offenders in high-crime areas and make longer stops with more aggressive follow-up investigation. The tactic targeting known offenders with more aggressive investigation proved more effective.[48] Intensive field interrogations with an emphasis on seizing guns significantly reduced crime in a Kansas City, Mo. initiative.[49] In Pittsburgh, extra patrols that focused on seizing illegally carried guns significantly reduced citizen calls about gunshots and gunshot injuries.[50] In both Indianapolis and Kansas City, there was reason to believe that targeting high-risk known offenders or high-crime areas for gun enforcement produced better results than the less focused efforts.†

† For further information on reducing gun-related crime, see the problem-specific guide on *Gun Violence Among Serious Young Offenders*.

†† This initiative was not a conventional crackdown in that it had many elements to it and was highly focused on known offenders, but clear threats of enhanced enforcement were communicated to target offenders, and in some cases carried out.

Gang-Related Crime

Truancy and curfew crackdowns have been shown to reduce gang-related violence,[51] and there are some reports of successful efforts to control gang-related crime through intensive enforcement, prosecution, incarceration, and probation supervision of gang members.[52] But for the most part, crackdowns targeting gang members have not been evaluated well enough to know what effect they are likely to have. A notable successful initiative against gang-related crime was Boston's Operation Ceasefire, in which a crackdown on violent youth gangs, combined with a variety of other responses, significantly reduced youth homicides.[53,††] One possible unintended consequence of

gang crackdowns is that they might increase gang members' solidarity and commitment to their gangs and lifestyle: by targeting gangs, police can inadvertently give them some of the recognition and status they seek.[54]

Traffic Problems

Traffic Crashes

Traffic enforcement crackdowns have had mixed results in reducing traffic crashes. Several studies have failed to show that aggressive enforcement had any significant impact on the number of crashes.[55] Concluded the authors of one study: "[W]ide variations in the overall levels of enforcement have no immediate measurable impact on the frequency or severity of traffic accidents, even when these interventions are highly publicized."[56] One of the earliest crackdown studies was on a 1955 crackdown on speeding in Connecticut: more speed enforcement and stiffer sentences reduced the number of speeders.[57] Crackdowns on seat belt violations might increase the number of drivers who wear them and thereby reduce crash-related injuries.[58]

Drunken Driving

Police checkpoints can be effective in reducing drunken driving and alcohol-related crashes.[59] (However, the effect of drunken-driving crackdowns on crashes is typically short-lived.[60]) They should be clearly focused, intensive, and well-publicized.[61] Drunken-driving crackdowns have the advantage over other crackdowns in that they target potential offenders who are likely to pay attention to media publicity about the crackdowns.[62]

Drug Problems

Most studies and practice have demonstrated that crackdowns can disrupt local drug markets, but for the most part, only in the short term.[63] Drug crackdowns are specifically intended to:

- reduce the visibility of drug deals,
- reduce the amount of drugs used,
- reduce the number of drug users,
- reduce the number of drug-related street crimes (especially crimes committed to get cash for drugs),
- improve the quality of life in the target area, and
- improve citizens' attitudes about police.[64]

Drug crackdowns raise the nonfinancial costs of dealing and buying: increasing the time it takes dealers and buyers to find one another and make a deal, increasing the risks of getting arrested, and increasing the risks of having drugs confiscated.[65] Dealers become less willing to sell to strangers, thus changing an open drug market into a closed one; this can reduce some of the disorder associated with open drug markets.†

† See the problem-specific guide on *Drug Dealing in Privately Owned Apartment Complexes* for a discussion of the different challenges presented by open and closed drug markets.

However, additional responses, particularly those that emphasize better management of places where drug dealing occurs, are typically required to achieve more lasting effects. Providing adequate treatment services and monitoring offenders after conviction to ensure their sobriety are particularly important to maximize the benefits of drug crackdowns.[66] Most drug crackdowns require some period of police maintenance to ensure the market does not reemerge after the crackdown ends.[67]

A number of local factors affect the likelihood that a specific drug crackdown tactic will be effective against a particular market. Consequently, it is important that you develop a solid understanding of the market's dynamics before choosing your tactics. Among the factors you should consider are the characteristics of the drug sellers, the drug users, and the drug market (including the physical environment); and community attitudes toward the police and drug dealing.[68]

† See the response guide on *Closing Streets and Alleys to Reduce Crime* for further information about the effects of street design on crime and disorder.

Drug crackdowns can displace at least some of the market to other locations (or from outdoors to indoors), or cause some buyers to move to new drug markets altogether. You should be alert to any spatial displacement and take steps to ensure it does not create a worse problem in a new location. If a drug market is in an area that is relatively hard to enter and exit (due to natural geography, street design,† gang turfs, etc.), then spatial displacement is less likely to occur after a drug crackdown. Police are more likely to remain in the crackdown area, and offenders have more difficulty evading them in a confined area.[69]

Motivated drug buyers and sellers can adapt to police crackdowns–for example, by finding alternative ways to contact one another and negotiate a deal (e.g., via cellular telephones, beepers, steerers).[70] Compared with newer users, more experienced and seriously addicted users are probably less likely to be deterred by drug crackdowns, and more likely to adapt to them. Dealers are less likely to carry drugs on them when they are aware of crackdowns, and more likely to stash the drugs elsewhere. Of course, drug stashes are vulnerable to theft and police confiscation.

Drug crackdowns can also have some negative consequences. Heroin users made nervous by crackdowns might rush intravenous drug use; use unclean needles; use the drug in remote places where they might not be found if they overdose; hide the drug in body cavities, increasing the risk of accidental overdose or infection; and more carelessly discard used syringes.[71] When buyers and sellers become more wary of one another due to a crackdown, the risk of violence can increase. If buyers remain highly motivated to get drugs in spite of a crackdown, and the crackdown causes drug prices to rise, buyers might commit more crime to finance their habit.[72] (However, street-level drug enforcement typically reduces drug availability rather than raises prices.[73]) Each of these possible consequences poses a challenge for police.

† See the problem-specific guide on *Street Prostitution* for more information about effective measures to address street prostitution.

Street Prostitution Problems

Crackdowns, together with other responses designed to help street prostitutes quit their trade and to alter the environmental conditions in which prostitution flourishes, have been demonstrated to be effective in reducing prostitution and related crime.[74,†] To be fair and effective, crackdowns should target both prostitutes and their clients.

Arrests alone are ineffective in addressing street prostitution.[75] Merely processing offenders through the criminal justice system, often with modest fines and short jail terms, does little to reduce the problem, and can even make it worse by putting prostitutes under further financial pressure, which many can alleviate only through more prostitution. Follow-up education, monitoring, drug treatment, counseling, and other measures to integrate prostitutes into a prostitution-free lifestyle are essential. Some prostitutes can be compelled to quit altogether,

while others may be forced to work indoors, where they are less susceptible to arrest, but also less of a nuisance. Moving prostitution indoors is a form of displacement, but it is generally preferable to the problems street prostitution causes. Prostitutes, like drug dealers, sometimes adapt to crackdowns by devising new ways to negotiate transactions (e.g., via beepers and cellular telephones).

The following passage from the problem-specific guide on *Street Prostitution* directly relates to prostitution crackdowns:

> In addition to routinely enforcing prostitution laws, the police often conduct intensive arrest campaigns against prostitutes, clients, or both. These campaigns significantly increase the risks of arrest, at least temporarily, bringing large numbers of prostitutes and clients into the formal justice system. When combined with media coverage, the campaigns are intended to deter those arrested from offending again, and to deter potential clients. The campaigns' deterrent value wears off after time, however. In high-volume arrest campaigns, the chances that police will arrest innocent people increase, unless they take special precautions. Without some follow-up court intervention or measures to change the environment, intensive enforcement campaigns only temporarily interrupt street prostitution, or move it elsewhere; they do not shut down a street prostitution market entirely.[76]

Measuring Your Effectiveness

The measurement of your effectiveness should be tailored to the particular problem you are trying to address, rather than to a single response such as a crackdown.[77] (See the guide on *Assessing Responses to Problems: An Introductory Guide for Police Problem-Solvers* for further information on measurement.)† Nevertheless, if a crackdown is part of your overall response to a problem, there are several measures of effectiveness you might hope to achieve. Among them are:

† See also Sherman (1990), Kinlock (1994), and Worden, Bynum and Frank (1994) for discussions of measurement specific to crackdowns.

- reduced number of target offenses in the target area;
- reduced severity of harm caused by target offenses in the target area;
- absence of evidence that the problem has merely moved to another location, with no net benefit to the community;
- evidence that the crackdown has the support of the general public and the communities it most directly affects, or at a minimum, evidence that the crackdown has not seriously compromised public support for the police;
- increased sense of safety felt by the general public and the communities the problem most directly affects;
- increased perception of people directly affected by the problem that the situation has improved;
- absence of evidence that the crackdown undermined the integrity of the criminal justice system (e.g., poor-quality arrests, as shown by low prosecution and conviction rates; high levels of citizen complaints and lawsuits against police); and
- increased perception of offenders and potential offenders that they are at higher risk of arrest (i.e., evidence that they noticed the crackdown and altered their behavior because of it).

Measuring the numbers of stops, searches, arrests, etc., made during a crackdown, and the sanctions imposed on offenders, is important for understanding the degree to which the crackdown was actually applied, but these are measures only of the *process*, and not of the *outcomes* crackdowns are intended to achieve.

Conclusion

Poorly planned, ill-conceived, and improperly managed crackdowns, intended merely as a show of police force and resolve, can create more problems than they solve. But carefully planned crackdowns, well supported by prior problem analysis, implemented with other responses to ensure longer-term gains, and conducted in a way that maintains public support and safeguards civil rights, can be an important and effective part of police strategies regarding a range of crime and disorder problems.

Appendix: Summary of Crackdown Studies

The table below summarizes published studies on crackdowns. Given the frequency and expense of crackdowns, the research is quite limited. The studies listed are not of equal value: some were better implemented than others, some were better evaluated than others. They used a variety of evaluation methods, some stronger than others. Accordingly, you should not use only this table to inform your decision-making about crackdowns. It only supplements the information provided in this guide's main text. Those interested should read the original study reports to better judge the reliability of the findings and conclusions.

Evaluations of police operations are always complicated. Many of the most important things you would want to measure are difficult to measure accurately, such as actual victimizations (as opposed to only those reported), unwitnessed violations, and police officers' discretionary actions. It is equally difficult to determine reliably what factors other than the crackdown might have contributed to the results, and whether and how the problem might have been displaced. Nevertheless, these studies comprise some of the best available information, however imperfect. More and better studies are needed, of course, but in the final analysis, no amount of research knowledge completely substitutes for the good judgment police decision-makers must exercise, taking many factors into account.

Offenses Targeted	Jurisdiction	Year	Project/ Operation Name	Crackdown Tactic(s)	Evaluation
All crimes	New York City (20th Precinct)	1966		Extra police patrol (40% increase)	Green (1996) and Sherman (1997) (both citing Press, 1971)
All crimes	Newark, N.J.	1978-79	Newark Foot Patrol Experiment	Extra foot patrol	Police Foundation (1982)
All crimes	Dayton, Ohio			Aggressive traffic enforcement	Weiss and Freels (1996)
All crimes	Indianapolis	1995	Safe Streets Project	High volume of traffic stops in drug market areas; aggressive traffic enforcement; field interviews; street-level drug enforcement; follow-up investigation of arrestees; case-building	Weiss and McGarrell (1999)
All crimes	Kansas City, Mo.	1974	Preventive Patrol Experiment	Random preventive patrol	Kelling et al. (1974)
All crimes	Nashville, Tenn.	1974-75		Saturation patrol (four times the normal level, and 30 times the normal level of "slow patrol")	Schnelle et al. (1977)

Deemed Effective	Evidence of Displacement/ Diffusion of Benefits/Residual Deterrence Effects	Evidence of Negative Effect on Police-Community Relations
Yes, reduced street crimes	Yes, spatial displacement to adjacent precincts	
No, but had a positive effect on public perceptions of safety		No, increased citizen satisfaction with police
No, did not reduce robbery or auto theft or have any measurable effect on traffic crashes		
Yes, reduced burglary in three out of four districts; reduced robbery in one out of four; reduced auto theft in all four (by 43%, 50%, and 53% in three districts), while the citywide crime rate was climbing		
No	No	
Yes, reduced nighttime, but not daytime, burglary; concluded that the crackdown was not cost-effective	No spatial displacement	

Offenses Targeted	Jurisdiction	Year	Project/ Operation Name	Crackdown Tactic(s)	Evaluation
All crimes (specially intended to reduce crimes considered suppressible: burglary; street and commercial robbery; assault; auto theft; thefts from yards, autos, or buildings; DUI; possession of stolen property or weapons; and disorderly conduct)	Savannah, Ga.	1998		Aggressive traffic enforcement, especially of speeding, signal violations, seat belt violations, DUI, and license and registration violations; from 140% to 430% increase above normal levels	Josi, Donahue, and Magnus (2000)
All crimes and calls for service	Kansas City, Mo.	1991-92	Crack House Police Raids Program	Drug warrant raids	Sherman and Rogan (1995)
All crimes and citizen fear	New York City (subways)	1984		Subway patrol by Guardian Angels (private patrol force)	Kenney (1986)
All UCR Index offenses	Houston	1994-96	Targeted Beat Program	Overtime to put 655 additional officers in the seven highest crime beats in the city; high-visibility patrol; hot-spot monitoring; zero tolerance; problem-oriented approaches	Caeti (1999)
Assault, malicious damage to property, and offensive conduct	Sydney, Australia	1992		Regular but unpredictable visits to licensed premises to check for breaches of licensing laws	Burns and Coumarelos (1993)

Deemed Effective	Evidence of Displacement/ Diffusion of Benefits/Residual Deterrence Effects	Evidence of Negative Effect on Police-Community Relations
Mixed results: there were significant reductions in Part I crimes (mainly burglary and larceny) in three out of four target areas, but there was less evidence of a significant impact on assaults and Part II offenses		
Yes, but the effect was modest; concluded the crackdown was not cost-effective	Yes, some spatial displacement	
No, but there was a short-term reduction in citizen fear		
Yes, there were significant reductions in UCR Index crimes	No displacement; some diffusion of benefits to adjacent areas	
No		

Offenses Targeted	Jurisdiction	Year	Project/ Operation Name	Crackdown Tactic(s)	Evaluation
Burglary	United Kingdom	1995	Operation Christmas Cracker	Raids; arrests of burglary suspects; seizure of stolen property	Wright and Pease (1997)
Burglary (residential)	West Yorkshire, England (Boggart Hill area)	1995		Targeted and intensive enforcement against known burglars, followed by repeat victimization reduction efforts (target hardening, educating elderly potential victims of burglary by deception) and youth outreach programs	Farrell, Chenery, and Pease (1998)
Disorder-related calls for service	Minneapolis	1988-89	Hot Spots Patrol Program	Intense intermittent patrol at known hot spots (100% increase in patrol time at hot spots)	Sherman and Weisburd (1995)
Drug hot spots	Jersey City, N.J.	c. 1992	Drug Markets Analysis Program	Identification and analysis of drug hot spots; engagement of business owners and citizens in crime control efforts; increased pressure on open-air markets (through drug enforcement, code enforcement, license regulation), maintained by patrol	Weisburd and Green (1995)

Deemed Effective	Evidence of Displacement/ Diffusion of Benefits/Residual Deterrence Effects	Evidence of Negative Effect on Police-Community Relations
There was no mention of an evaluation		
Yes, there was a significant reduction in burglary and repeat victimization	No evidence of spatial displacement; some evidence of diffusion of benefits to other types of crime (auto theft)	
Yes, there was a modest effect (25% less disorder at hot spots)		
Yes, there were consistent and strong impacts in reducing disorder-related emergency calls for service, but there was no impact on violent or property offenses	No evidence of displacement; some evidence of diffusion of benefits to adjacent areas	

Offenses Targeted	Jurisdiction	Year	Project/ Operation Name	Crackdown Tactic(s)	Evaluation
Gang-related violence	Dallas	1996-97		Enforcement of truancy and curfew laws; high-visibility patrol, with lots of stops and frisks by six to eight officers in areas where gangs hung out	Fritsch, Caeti, and Taylor (1999)
Gun-related crime	Indianapolis	1997	Directed Patrol Project	Two alternative interventions: 1) increased traffic enforcement on major arteries, with lots of stops of limited duration (general deterrence strategy); 2) traffic stops of suspected gang members and drug dealers, of longer duration, with more investigation and vehicle searches	Weiss and McGarrell (1999)
Gun-related violence	Kansas City, Mo.	1992-93	Gun Project	Intensive enforcement of gun-carrying laws (Terry stops, searches incident to arrest, car stops and searches, plain-view searches,); door-to-door solicitation of tips; police training to interpret gun-carrying cues; field interviews in known gun crime hot spots	Sherman, Shaw, and Rogan (1995)

Deemed Effective	Evidence of Displacement/ Diffusion of Benefits/Residual Deterrence Effects	Evidence of Negative Effect on Police-Community Relations
Yes, there were significant reductions in gang violence	No, minimal evidence of displacement	
Yes, the second intervention tactic resulted in significant reductions in gun-related crimes, aggravated assault, and homicide; there were no similar reductions resulting from the first intervention tactic	Little evidence of displacement; no evidence of geographic diffusion of benefits; modest evidence of residual deterrence effects 90 days after intervention	No, evidence of high level of public support both before and after intervention
Yes, there was a 49% reduction in gun crimes in the target area during the intervention period, compared with the prior 29-week period; there were declines in both drive-by shootings and homicides; there was no apparent effect on total calls for service, other violence calls, property offenses, or disorder; the community became less fearful of crime and more satisfied with the neighborhood	Yes, modest spatial displacement; some evidence of diffusion of benefits to two adjoining beats	No

Offenses Targeted	Jurisdiction	Year	Project/ Operation Name	Crackdown Tactic(s)	Evaluation
Gun-related crime	Pittsburgh	1998	Firearm Suppression Patrol Program	Extra dedicated police patrols on high-crime days of the week and times of day for 14 weeks; traffic and pedestrian stops and searches; targeting of hot spots and times based on crime analysis	Cohen and Ludwig (2002)
Marijuana cultivation	Kentucky	1982-87		Locating, cutting down, and burning marijuana plants; asset seizure and forfeiture; drug enforcement	Potter, Gaines, and Holbrook (1990)
Public disorder (street cruising, loud music, and public drinking)	Anonymous jurisdiction	1992		Liquor license agents issued citations for open containers and other alcohol violations; local police parked police cars at intersections to monitor cruising; lasted for one month in 10-by-12- block area; no media publicity	Novak et al. (1999)
Robbery	New York City (subways)	1965		Extra police patrols put on subways from 8 PM to 4 AM; nearly every station and train had a uniformed officer on duty; total transit system police force increased by 250%	Chaiken, Lawless, and Stevenson (1974)

Deemed Effective	Evidence of Displacement/ Diffusion of Benefits/Residual Deterrence Effects	Evidence of Negative Effect on Police-Community Relations
Yes, reduced shots fired by 34% and hospital-treated assault gunshot injuries by 71%	No evidence of temporal or spatial displacement; residual deterrence effects lasted about two weeks	No, no reported citizen complaints against police
No (but the methodology limited the findings)	Yes	
No (but the methodology limited the findings)		
Yes, minor offenses and felonies declined significantly due to increased patrol, but at substantial extra cost (about $35,000 per felony crime prevented); there was some question as to whether police reporting procedures accounted for some of the claimed reduction	No displacement; residual deterrence effects for eight months	

Offenses Targeted	Jurisdiction	Year	Project/ Operation Name	Crackdown Tactic(s)	Evaluation
Robbery, burglary, grand theft, petty theft, auto theft, assault/ battery, sex crimes, and malicious mischief/ disturbances	San Diego	1973	Field Interrogation Project	Field interrogations	Boydstun (1975)
Speeding	Connecticut	1955		Stiffer sanctions for speeding convictions: 30-day license suspensions for first offense, 60 for second, indefinite for third	Campbell and Ross (1968)
Speeding and other traffic problems, crime, and disorder and blight	Charlotte, N.C.	1997		Saturation patrol by about 30 officers/agents from various agencies; about 10 times the normal level of police activity in the area; traffic unit focused on traffic problems; alcohol agents worked bars; sheriff's deputies supervised inmates doing community service; traffic arrests increased tenfold; police made highly visible arrests in well-traveled parking lot at major intersection	Priest and Carter (2002)

Deemed Effective	Evidence of Displacement/ Diffusion of Benefits/Residual Deterrence Effects	Evidence of Negative Effect on Police-Community Relations
Yes (there was some evidence that burglary, petty theft, and malicious mischief/disturbances are the most suppressible)	Inconclusive	No
Not definitive; the overall conclusion was that the crackdown was a substantial enforcement effort, but some of its effects were mitigated in practice		
Yes, there was some evidence of a modest effect on reported crime; unable to measure the effect on traffic crashes (weak evaluation)		

Offenses Targeted	Jurisdiction	Year	Project/ Operation Name	Crackdown Tactic(s)	Evaluation
Street drug markets	Richmond, Va.	1999	Blitz to Bloom	Regular patrol supplemented by specialized units (10 times the normal level); field interviews; citations; surveillance; arrest of street drug dealers and buyers; high-visibility presence (including setting up a mobile police command post); code enforcement; cleanup; public works repairs; trimming of foliage	Smith (2001)
Street drug markets	New York City	1988-90	Tactical Narcotics Teams (TNTs)	Buy-busts and high police visibility in hot spots with high mobility; vehicle seizures and confiscations; initial crackdown operation never lasted longer than 90 days in an area, but maintenance crackdowns occurred as necessary; initiative claimed to incorporate community involvement and interagency collaboration to address drug market conditions, but there is little evidence this occurred	Smith et al. (1992)

Deemed Effective	Evidence of Displacement/ Diffusion of Benefits/Residual Deterrence Effects	Evidence of Negative Effect on Police-Community Relations
Yes, total reported Part I offenses and violent crime declined significantly (by 92%) during the crackdown period and rates were unchanged in the comparison area; Part I property crimes and calls for service declined, but not significantly	No spatial displacement of crimes, but significant displacement of calls for service to adjacent areas; some evidence of diffusion of benefits to adjacent areas; residual deterrence effects lasted about six months	
There was a limited impact; there was an immediate benefit, but conditions returned to normal soon after the TNTs left; there were no measurable effects on public perceptions of crime, quality of life, or police-community relations; there was some increase in fear because drug dealing moved indoors to apartment hallways; there were some positive effects in making drug markets less visible in the target blocks	Yes, some displacement to indoor locations	No, some evidence community was largely unaware of the crackdown in their neighborhood; community leaders generally supportive of crackdown

Offenses Targeted	Jurisdiction	Year	Project/ Operation Name	Crackdown Tactic(s)	Evaluation
Street drug markets	New York City (Lower East Side)	1984-86	Operation Pressure Point (two smaller Pressure Point operations conducted in subsequent years)	240 uniformed officers on foot patrol to disperse crowds; increased arrests; field interviews; warnings and parking tickets; searches; mounted park patrols; canine units to clear buildings; surveillance and buy-busts; anonymous tip lines; raids on dealing locations; asset forfeiture; increased likelihood of conviction and severity of sentences; custodial arrests made instead of citing and releasing; additional responses to address environmental conditions	Zimmer (1990); Kleiman (1988)
Street drug markets	Washington, D.C.	1988	Operation Clean Sweep	High-volume arrests for drug dealing and other offenses	Reuter et al. (1988)
Street drug markets	Houston	1988	Link Valley Drug Sweep	100 officers conducted buy-busts; checkpoints established; door-to-door searches of residences; media publicity; neighborhood cleanups; code enforcement	Kessler and Duncan (1996)

Deemed Effective	Evidence of Displacement/ Diffusion of Benefits/Residual Deterrence Effects	Evidence of Negative Effect on Police-Community Relations
Yes, the search time for drugs increased; there was a reduction in heroin-related street activity; there were reductions in selected crime rates: burglary (37%), robbery (47%), grand larceny (32%), and homicide (62%); the neighborhood was revitalized; there was an increased demand for drug treatment	No spatial displacement of crimes, but significant displacement of calls for service to adjacent areas; some evidence of diffusion of benefits to adjacent areas; residual deterrence effects lasted about six months	
No, but there was some evidence that the overall crime rate declined, and the study concluded that local drug crackdowns were worthwhile		
No, there were no significant reductions in overall crime, calls for service, or drug-related crime		

Offenses Targeted	Jurisdiction	Year	Project/ Operation Name	Crackdown Tactic(s)	Evaluation
Street drug markets	Tampa, Fla.	1989-91	Quick Uniform Attack on Drugs (QUAD)	Observation by four 10-officer teams; arrests for drug dealing, public drinking, etc. (by special unit and patrol officers); short-term undercover work and buy-busts; reverse stings; vehicle seizures; use of confidential informants; code enforcement; neighborhood cleanups; demolition of abandoned buildings; heavy media coverage; visible response to every citizen complaint; encouragement of anonymous complaints, with promises to protect complainants' identities; mobile booking stations to speed up arrests; parked marked units in middle of drug markets; uniformed patrol through the markets; removal of shade covering dealers; use of expedited nuisance abatement procedures; provision of police beeper numbers to citizens so they could feel more assured of anonymity; confiscation of stashed drugs from citizen tips; arrests for loitering for the purpose of drug dealing (and conspicuously posted warning signs); trespass authority arrests	Kennedy (1993)

Deemed Effective	Evidence of Displacement/ Diffusion of Benefits/Residual Deterrence Effects	Evidence of Negative Effect on Police-Community Relations
Yes, visible drug dealing declined significantly, but the study was unable to determine which particular tactics were the most effective; there was some evidence of declines in overall crimes, calls for service, and drug-related homicides	Yes, some displacement to indoor locations	No, evidence of high level of community support from both majority and minority communities

Offenses Targeted	Jurisdiction	Year	Project/ Operation Name	Crackdown Tactic(s)	Evaluation
Street drug markets (crack)	Oakland, Calif.	1988-89	Special Duty Unit 3	Intensive drug enforcement through high-visibility patrol (stopping, questioning, and frisking motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians); buy-busts (targeted in hot spots); crack house raids; compared with door-to-door interviews with residents to discuss drug problems and a drug hotline	Uchida, Forst, and Annan (1992)
Street drug markets (heroin)	Lawrence, Mass.	1984	Lawrence Drug Task Force	Surveillance; informants; informant buys; buy-busts; anonymous drug tip line	Kleiman (1988)
Street drug markets (heroin)	Lynn, Mass.	1983-84	Lynn Drug Task Force	Four to six narcotics officers surveilled known drug-dealing locations, questioned buyers and sellers, made arrests for possession, used informants for buy-bust arrests, and executed search warrants on drug houses; hotline for anonymous tips was established and publicized	Kleiman (1988)
Street drug markets (heroin)	Maribyrnong, Australia	2000	Operation Clean Heart	Field interviews; high-visibility patrol	Aitken et al. (2002)

Deemed Effective	Evidence of Displacement/ Diffusion of Benefits/Residual Deterrence Effects	Evidence of Negative Effect on Police-Community Relations
Mixed results: there was some positive effect on violent crimes but not on burglary and robbery; there were positive effects on citizen perceptions of safety, drug dealing, and police services	Yes, evidence of spatial displacement, but police shifted crackdown to new areas	No
No, there was some evidence of suppression of the heroin market in one location, but the overall effect on markets and crime was limited	Yes, some evidence drug buyers easily shifted to drug market in nearby city	
Yes, there was a significant decrease in the volume and flagrancy of the retail heroin market; there was some evidence that heroin use declined; there was an 85% increase in the demand for drug treatment; reported robberies declined by 18.5%, burglaries by 37.5%, and crimes against the person by 66%	Unknown if there was displacement to other types of drugs; one year after the crackdown, burglaries stayed down and robberies continued to decline	No, high citizen satisfaction with results
Yes, but at a high social cost	Yes	Yes

Offenses Targeted	Jurisdiction	Year	Project/ Operation Name	Crackdown Tactic(s)	Evaluation
Street drug markets (heroin)	Sydney, Australia	1995-97; 2001		Buy-busts of dealers and users	Maher and Dixon (2001)
Street drug markets (heroin, crack, marijuana)	London	2000	Operation Crackdown	Arrests; drug seizures	Best et al. (2001)
Street drug markets (powder cocaine and Dilaudid)	Birmingham, Ala.	1988	Operation Caine Break	Intensive drug enforcement (buy-busts, reverse buys, vehicle forfeiture, media coverage of arrests), compared with two other responses: door-to-door surveys of residents about drug problems, and establishment of police substation	Uchida, Forst, and Annan (1992)
Street drug markets (powder cocaine)	Hartford, Conn.	1990	COMPASS	Street-level drug enforcement (undercover drug buys, search warrants, buy-busts, reverse stings, surveillance arrests, vehicle safety checks), followed by community revitalization	Caulkins, Larson, and Rich (1993)
Street prostitution	London	1983-86		Intensive enforcement against prostitutes, clients, pimps, and brothel operators, combined with road closures	Matthews (1990)

Deemed Effective	Evidence of Displacement/ Diffusion of Benefits/Residual Deterrence Effects	Evidence of Negative Effect on Police-Community Relations
The study acknowledges some success in disrupting street drug markets, but it focused more on the negative consequences of crackdowns	Yes, some spatial displacement to indoor locations and other neighborhoods	
No	No	
Mixed results: there was no measurable reduction in drug trafficking, but there were positive effects on citizen perceptions of police and crime problems; there were some measurable crime reductions		No
There was some evidence of effectiveness; there was a dramatic decrease in drive-by shootings; the study concludes that geo-graphically contained areas are more favorable for crackdowns	No	No
Yes, prostitution and serious crime declined significantly; the sense of public safety increased; crime reporting rates increased	No evidence of spatial displacement	No, actually improved police-community relations

Offenses Targeted	Jurisdiction	Year	Project/ Operation Name	Crackdown Tactic(s)	Evaluation
Street prostitution	New York City (Midtown Manhattan)	1993		Intensive enforcement of low-level offenses by patrol officers, combined with sanctions of the Midtown Community Court	Weidner (1999)
Street prostitution	New York City (Times Square)	1983	Operation Weekend	Arrest sweeps	Eckart (1984)
Street prostitution	Newport News, Va.	1984		Variety of responses in a problem-oriented policing project, including arrests of prostitutes	Eck and Spelman (1987)
Traffic crashes	Nashville, Tenn.	1978		Intensive traffic enforcement (compared with normal and below-normal levels)	Carr, Schnelle, and Kirchner (1980)
Violent crime at targeted locations	Jersey City, N.J.	1994	POP at Violent Places Project	Variety of responses (28 different ones); aggressive order maintenance	Braga et al. (1999)

Deemed Effective	Evidence of Displacement/ Diffusion of Benefits/Residual Deterrence Effects	Evidence of Negative Effect on Police-Community Relations
Yes, the incidence and prevalence of street prostitution significantly declined; some stroll areas disappeared almost entirely; there was little evidence that many prostitutes quit the trade, however	Yes, evidence of spatial displacement to outer boroughs; evidence of target, method (prostitutes switched from walking to driving around), and temporal displacement	
No impact evaluation was reported		
Yes, there was a significant reduction in the number of street prostitutes and prostitution-related robberies	No	
No		
Yes	Some spatial displacement of property crimes, but most crimes and calls for service not displaced	

Endnotes

[1] Davis and Lurigio (1996); Sherman (1990).

[2] Wilson and Kelling (1982).

[3] Chermak, McGarrell, and Weiss (2001); Caeti (1999); Fritsch, Caeti, and Taylor (1999); Eck and Spelman (1987); Police Foundation (1982); Kelling et al. (1974). But see Sherman (1997) for some evidence that substantial increases in police officers in high-crime big cities do reduce reported crime levels.

[4] Sherman and Weisburd 1995.

[5] Smith (2001); Braga et al. (1999); Jacobson (1999); Caeti (1999); Capowich and Roehl (1994); Pennell and Curtis (1993); Eck and Spelman (1987).

[6] Sherman (1990).

[7] Weiss and McGarrell (1999); Farrell, Chenery, and Pease (1998); Wright and Pease (1997); Caulkins, Larson, and Rich (1993); Sherman (1990).

[8] Cohen and Ludwig (2002); Chermak, McGarrell, and Weiss (2001); Braga et al. (1999).

[9] Kort et al. (1998); Kleiman (1988).

[10] Novak et al. (1999); Worden, Bynum, and Frank (1994); Kleiman (1988).

[11] Worden, Bynum, and Frank (1994).

[12] Braga (2001); McGarrell, Chermak, and Weiss (1999); Caeti (1999); Cordner (1996); Weisburd and Green (1995).

[13] Chermak, McGarrell, and Weiss (2001); Sherman (1990).

[14] Braga (2001).

[15] Braga (2001); Braga et al. (1999); Wright and Pease (1997); Davis and Lurigio (1996); Green (1996); Weisburd and Green (1995); Capowich and Roehl (1994); Pennell and Curtis (1993); Potter, Gaines, and Holbrook (1990).

[16] Sherman (1990).

[17] Cohen and Ludwig (2002); Sherman (1997); Sherman and Rogan (1995); Sherman (1990); Matthews (1990).

[18] Josi, Donahue, and Magnus (2000); Wright and Pease (1997); Matthews (1990); Sherman (1990).

[19] Braga (2001).

[20] Caeti (1999); Capowich and Roehl (1994).

[21] Weidner (1999); Davis and Lurigio (1996); Kennedy (1993); Matthews (1990).

[22] Maher and Dixon (2001); Eck and Maguire (2000); Caeti (1999); Sherman (1997); Worden, Bynum, and Frank (1994); Kleiman (1988).

[23] National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (1968).

[24] See Kraska and Kappeler (1997).
[25] Rosen (1997).
[26] Cohen and Ludwig (2002); Chermak, McGarrell, and Weiss (2001); Eck and Maguire (2000); Davis and Mateu-Gelabert (1999); Caeti (1999); Boydstun (1975).
[27] Davis and Lurigio (1996); Kennedy (1993); Sherman (1990); Kleiman (1988).
[28] National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (1968).
[29] Smith (2001); Jacobson (1999); Sherman and Rogan (1995); Kennedy (1993); Uchida, Forst, and Annan (1992); Matthews (1990); Conners and Nugent (1990); Kleiman (1988); Schnelle et al. (1977); Chaiken, Lawless, and Stevenson (1974).
[30] Schnelle et al. (1977).
[31] See Cohen and Ludwig (2002) and Smith (2001) for examples of crackdown cost-effectiveness analyses.
[32] Davis and Lurigio (1996); Green (1996); Zimmer (1990).
[33] Maher and Dixon (2001); Naik et al. (1996); Worden, Bynum, and Frank (1994); Potter, Gaines, and Holbrook (1990); Sherman (1990); Kleiman (1988).
[34] Sampson and Cohen (1988); Wilson and Boland (1978). But see Jacob and Rich (1981), cited in Sampson and Cohen (1988), for contrary conclusion.
[35] Caeti (1999), citing Whitaker et al. (1983, 1985); Boydstun (1975).
[36] Weiss and McGarrell (1999); Sampson and Cohen (1988); Wilson and Boland (1978). But see Weiss and Freels (1996) for a contrary finding that aggressive traffic enforcement produced no reduction in robbery or auto theft.
[37] Chaiken, Lawless, and Stevenson (1974).
[38] Eck and Spelman (1987).
[39] Kleiman (1988).
[40] Farrell, Chenery, and Pease (1998).
[41] Boydstun (1975).
[42] Smith (2001), citing Cordner (1981); Caeti (1999), citing Dahmann (1974). But both Sampson and Cohen (1988) and Wilson and Boland (1978) found that aggressive enforcement was not strongly correlated with low burglary rates.
[43] Josi, Donahue, and Magnus (2000); Weiss and McGarrell (1999).
[44] Smith (2001), citing Sampson and Cohen (1988).
[45] Uchida, Forst, and Annan (1992); Zimmer (1990); Kleiman (1988).
[46] Novak et al. (1999); Schnelle et al. (1977), citing Schnelle et al. (1975); Kelling et al. (1974).
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[54] Caeti (1999), citing Klein (1995).
[55] Weiss and Freels (1996); see also Josi, Donahue, and Magnus (2000).
[56] Carr, Schnelle, and Kirchner (1980).
[57] Campbell and Ross (1968).
[58] McMahon (2000).
[59] Ross (1994).
[60] Sherman (1990), citing Ross (1981).
[61] Ross (1994).
[62] Sherman (1990).
[63] Smith (2001); Gersh and Beardsley (2000); Davis and Lurigio (1996); Sherman and Rogan (1995); Smith et al. (1992); Zimmer (1990); Sherman (1990); Reuter et al. (1988).
[64] Davis and Lurigio (1996); Worden, Bynum, and Frank (1994); Kleiman (1988); Reuter et al. (1988).
[65] Jacobson (1999); Green (1996); Worden, Bynum, and Frank (1994); Kleiman (1988).
[66] Maher and Dixon (2001); May et al. (2000); Kleiman (1988); Reuter et al. (1988).
[67] Naik et al. (1996).
[68] See Connors and Nugent (1990) for a discussion of how these factors affect the choice of drug enforcement tactics.
[69] Davis and Lurigio (1996); Caulkins, Larson, and Rich (1993); Smith et al. (1992).
[70] Aitken et al. (2002); May et al. (2000); Davis and Lurigio (1996); Potter, Gaines, and Holbrook (1990); Zimmer (1990).
[71] Aitken et al. (2002); Maher and Dixon (2001).
[72] Maher and Dixon (2001); Worden, Bynum, and Frank (1994); Caulkins, Larson, and Rich (1993); Kleiman (1988).
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Michael S. Scott is the director of the Center for Problem-Oriented Policing, Inc. and clinical assistant professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison Law School. He was formerly chief of police in Lauderhill, Fla.; served in various civilian administrative positions in the St. Louis Metropolitan, Ft. Pierce, Fla., and New York City police departments; and was a police officer in the Madison, Wis., Police Department. Scott developed training programs in problem-oriented policing at the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF), and is a judge for PERF's Herman Goldstein Award for Excellence in Problem-Oriented Policing. He was the 1996 recipient of the Gary P. Hayes Award for innovation and leadership in policing. Scott holds a law degree from Harvard Law School and a bachelor's degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

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.

- ***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.

- ***Not Rocket Science? Problem-Solving and Crime Reduction***, by Tim Read and Nick Tilley (Home Office Crime Reduction Research Series, 2000). Identifies and describes the factors that make problem-solving effective or ineffective as it is being practiced in police forces in England and Wales.

- ***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.

- ***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 through 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.

- ***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.

- ***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). Provides a brief introduction to problem-solving, basic information on the SARA model and detailed suggestions about the problem-solving process.

- ***Situational Crime Prevention: Successful Case Studies***, Second Edition, edited by Ronald V. Clarke (Harrow and Heston, 1997). Explains the principles and methods of situational crime prevention, and presents over 20 case studies of effective crime prevention initiatives.

- ***Tackling Crime and Other Public-Safety Problems: Case Studies in Problem-Solving***, by Rana Sampson and Michael S. Scott (U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2000) (also available at www.cops.usdoj.gov). Presents case studies of effective police problem-solving on 18 types of crime and disorder problems.

- ***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.

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