

12.370 PROBLEM SOLVING AND THE NEIGHBORHOOD LIAISON PROCESS

Reference: Problem Solving Guide
Critical Elements for Problem Solving
Problem Solving Tracking System (PSTS) Database Users Guide

Definitions:

Problem Oriented Policing (POP) – A crime reduction and safety approach that involves examining repeat or recurring incidents for the conditions that permit them to occur. It involves seeking out and implementing effective responses, examining the impact these responses have on the problem and subsequently reporting the results in ways that will benefit other police agencies.

Community Problem Oriented Policing (CPOP) – Facilitating the POP process through the police, community, other City departments and Community Police Partnering Center (CPPC) working together in a partnership.

Problem Solving – Identifying and analyzing recurring crime or safety problems, developing and implementing tailored responses based on the analysis, and evaluating the impact of the responses on the problem.

Problem – A recurring set of related harmful crime or safety incidents in a community that members of the public expect the police to address.

Incident – A single service request, for an individual or community concern.

SARA – The acronym for the problem solving process.

Scanning – The first stage in the SARA process, involving problem identification, verification, and classification.

Analysis – The second stage in the SARA process, involving systematic examination of the problem to identify possible causes or conditions that might be susceptible to alternative responses.

Response - The third stage in the SARA process, involving the development and implementation of tailored interventions designed to reduce the problem.

Assessment – The fourth stage in the SARA process, involving evaluating the effectiveness of the implemented responses.

Repeat Spreadsheet – A spreadsheet that tracks the repeat incidents involving the three components of crime: repeat victims, repeat suspects, and repeat locations. Located on the H:drive and updated monthly by Information Technology Management Unit (ITMU).

Situational Crime Prevention – Techniques used with problem oriented policing to reduce or block crime opportunities.

Neighborhood Liaison Sergeant – one sergeant in each district designated to be the link between the Department and the Community. Reports directly to the district commander and supervises the district's neighborhood liaison officers.

Neighborhood Projects Unit (NPU) – the Police Relations Section comprised of project coordination officers who help conduct research, collect data, assist in developing Response plans and monitor problem-solving projects.

Purpose:

To define a Departmental process of identifying and addressing problems and community service requests in an effort to improve the quality of life, safety and security of citizens.

The measurable outcomes to the Department achieving the goals of problem solving include:

1. Monthly reductions in repeat locations, offenders and victims as measured by a weighted process.
2. Five new projects initiated per district, per month. Specialized units will initiate at least two problem-solving projects per year. The Patrol Bureau Commander will periodically review the volume of projects and make necessary adjustments as needed to ensure the quality of projects and service.
3. POP Guides and other resources are utilized.
4. Problems are favorably resolved with minimal displacement.

Policy:

The SARA problem solving methodology is the Department's principal strategy for addressing crime and disorder problems.

Information:

Inter-agency collaboration and stakeholder participation is extremely important to effective problem solving. City employees will work with community members to identify and resolve neighborhood problems. The Community Police Partnering Center (CPPC) is also available as a resource for problems identified by a district/section/unit commander as a possible POP initiative. The CPPC can provide a link to community services and other resources. City and CPPC staff work together to provide training and facilitate problem solving.

City staff, community members, and the CPPC will activate the problem solving process when a pattern of incidents is identified. District/section/unit commanders may refuse to accept a situation as a problem or incident. Participation and success in problem-solving is a part of the Performance Evaluation Process for every sworn employee in the Department.

Procedure:

A. Problems Generated by Citizens

1. Citizens identifying a problem may directly contact the police or go through a variety of City and Police Department access points, including the Internet (City's web page and/or Police Department's web page).
 - a. Police Department personnel will obtain the necessary information to complete a Form 560, CPOP Project Submission Request, and follow the process outlined in Section C.1. – C.4.

B. Problems Generated by the Community Police Partnering Center (CPPC)

1. Police personnel who become aware of a problem generated by the CPPC will complete a Form 560 describing the problem and forward the report to the affected district/section/unit commander.

C. Problems Received and/or Generated by Police Personnel

1. Police personnel will complete a Form 560 for recurring crime or safety problems and submit the completed report to their supervisor.
2. The supervisor will review the report for accuracy and completeness and forward the report to the neighborhood liaison sergeant.
3. The neighborhood liaison sergeant will review the Form 560 and route the report to the district/section/unit commander with a recommendation.
4. The district/section/unit commander will review the Form 560 to determine if it is a problem or an incident.
 - a. If the district/section/unit commander determines the issue is a "problem", he will approve the Form 560 and forward it to the neighborhood liaison sergeant, who will:
 - 1) Enter the problem into the PSTS database and record the tracking number on the Form 560.
 - 2) Make a blotter entry indicating a problem-solving project has been approved for the specific address.
 - 3) Forward a copy of the Form 560 to the appropriate relief lieutenant and the Neighborhood Projects Unit.

- a) The relief lieutenant is responsible for ensuring the coordination and completion of all neighborhood projects assigned to their relief.
 - b) The relief lieutenant will advise the project coordination officer of the start date of the Response phase of the project.
 - c) Relief lieutenants will meet with the district commander as needed to report the progress and status of their relief's problem-solving projects.
- b. If the district/section/unit commander determines the issue is an "incident", the neighborhood liaison sergeant will handle with the appropriate action or referral to an outside resource.
5. District crime analysts will utilize the repeat spreadsheet to recommend monthly projects to their district commander. Each project will be documented on a Form 560.
- a. The district commander will present the project ideas to the appropriate Community Council to ensure input from community members.
 - b. The projects will primarily be shift specific. Projects that span more than one shift will be coordinated between the relief lieutenants.
 - c. When the district commander determines which projects will be initiated, the process outlined in C.4.a will be followed.

D. Neighborhood Projects Unit

1. The Neighborhood Projects Unit lieutenant will review the Form 560 and assign it to a project coordination officer , who will:
 - a. Contact the relief lieutenant to obtain any additional information or ideas related to the project.
 - b. Conduct in-depth research of best practices as related to the type of problem(s) to be addressed.
 - c. Review situational crime prevention techniques to determine approaches that may fit the problem.
 - d. Identify and collect pertinent data from crime analysts and other sources.
 - e. Develop a minimum of two Response plans for recommendation to the relief lieutenant.

2. The Response plans will be reviewed by the Neighborhood Projects Unit lieutenant and forwarded to the neighborhood liaison sergeant and relief lieutenant. The relief lieutenant may use any of the Response plans or develop a different strategy to use.
 3. The project coordination officer will monitor the problem-solving project through all stages of the SARA process.
 - a. Quality control reviews will be conducted by the project coordination officer to ensure complete documentation and timely updates.
 - b. If data entry corrections are needed, the Neighborhood Project Unit lieutenant will advise the relief lieutenant via email.
 4. The Neighborhood Projects Unit will conduct a bi-monthly audit of open CPOP projects and provide the information to the Patrol Bureau Commander.
- F. CPOP/SARA Problem Entry
1. All approved projects will be initially entered into the PSTS database by the neighborhood liaison sergeant.
 - a. Projects that include the involvement of citizens, the CPPC or other City departments will be designated as a "CPOP" project.
 - b. Projects that involve police personnel only will be designated as a "CPD" project.
 - c. Updates to projects will be entered into the PSTS database by the Department employee(s) or CPPC member(s) who are involved in the activity being reported.
 2. The PSTS database will generate the SARA problem solving method by utilizing the questions contained in the Critical Elements field to identify resources and develop a plan to respond to the specific problem.
 - a. The PSTS database will automatically assign a unique number to each case which will contain the district, year and next sequential case number.
 - b. The PSTS database contains dropdown menus and open fields for inputting narratives.
 - c. When adding actions to a case, each question in the "Critical Elements" field must be answered with accurate, detailed information.

- 1) The repeat spreadsheet is accessible to all officers and should be used to assist in determining the scope of a problem.
- 2) Crime analysts should be utilized to obtain pertinent data related to the problem, especially during the Analysis and Assessment phases.
3. Specialized units such as Vice, Homicide, Personal Crimes, Financial Crimes, Traffic, Youth Services, Park and Vortex will initiate at least two problem-solving projects per year. They will also serve as a resource for district projects.

G. Editing of a CPOP Problem

1. Any member of the Department or the CPPC may input information to existing cases and projects.
2. Changes made to the dropdown menus or "Actions" boxes can only be made by the individual who originally entered the information.

H. Closure of a CPOP Problem

1. Following the Assessment phase, the relief lieutenant will confer with the project coordination officer and the Department member(s) involved with the project to determine if the goals of the problem solving process were attained.
 - a. If the assessment shows little or no effect on the project objectives, a new Response plan will be discussed and implemented to address the problem.
 - b. If the assessment shows the problem-solving response was effective, the project will be closed in the PSTS database with the appropriate closure(s):
 - 1) Closed – Harm Reduced
 - 2) Closed – Incidents Reduced
 - 3) Closed – Problem Eliminated
 - 4) Closed – Problem Handling Improved
2. The closing officer will notify the complainant who initiated the Form 560 of the results of the problem solving process.

I. Neighborhood Liaison Process

1. One sergeant in each district will be designated as the neighborhood liaison sergeant. They should have a working knowledge of CPOP and the SARA problem-solving process. Their responsibilities include:

- a. Maintain an open line of communication between the Department and community members.
 - b. Facilitate Customer Service Requests (CSR) that meet the definition of a "problem".
 - c. Coordinate information to be shared or dispensed at community meetings.
 - d. Attend CERT functions.
 - e. Conduct Safety Presentations (excluding schools).
 - f. Coordinate police attendance at community functions.
 - g. Attend district functions and meetings, as designated by the district commander.
 - h. Supervise the district neighborhood liaison officers.
2. The neighborhood liaison officers' responsibilities include:
 - a. Assist with district problem-solving projects when requested.
 - b. Attend and assist in the coordination of community meetings, as designated by the district commander.
 - c. Assist the neighborhood liaison sergeant with duties as needed.

J. Community Meetings

1. Each relief lieutenant will be assigned to specific neighborhoods (for CPOP purposes only) and is responsible for ensuring attendance at community meetings and coordinating problem-solving projects in those neighborhoods.
 - a. All officers attending community meetings will arrive prepared and on time.
 - b. Attendance at community meetings must be documented on a Form 628, Public Appearance Report, and forwarded to the Public Information Office (PIO).
2. District commanders should prioritize the list of community meetings that require police representation, based upon citizen attendance and agendas.
3. District commanders shall meet with their Citizens on Patrol representatives one time per month. The time and place for this meeting is at the discretion of the district commander.

- K. Form 562, Community Problem Oriented Policing Resource Request
1. Personnel in need of assistance from another district/section/unit will forward a request on a Form 562, Community Problem Oriented Policing Resource Request, through the chain of command.
 2. Personnel who have identified a need for additional funding to assist in solving a CPOP problem will complete a Form 562 and forward it through the chain of command.