

Crime Analysis: A Small Agency's Big Advantage



Crime analysis is a game-changer for small and rural law enforcement. By using calls for service, incidents, arrests or other data, analysis can help departments identify trends, support investigations, and allocate resources effectively. Crime analysis is the study of crime patterns, trends, and relationships by examining and interpreting data to assist law enforcement to prevent and solve crimes. While small agencies may not have dedicated analysts and advanced software, they can still leverage crime analysis using simple, cost-effective methods.

Crime analysis does not require expensive tools or specialized training. In reality, there is a lot that can be done using resources that you already have. Microsoft Excel is an excellent tool for organizing, cleaning, and analyzing data, while geospatial mapping software can help visualize crime trends through hotspots. Many

records management systems (RMS) also include built-in analysis features, making it easier to identify crime hotspots and patterns.

Crime mapping, for example, is a powerful technique that allows departments to track shifts in crime over time. By monitoring micro-hotspots, (small, specific locations where crime is highly concentrated within larger hotspots), and analyzing trends over time, agencies can anticipate changes in crime and deploy officers proactively.

During our recent webinar on crime analysis (click [HERE](#) for access), Chief Steve Lowell of the Oneida Police Department demonstrated how his department uses crime analysis for problem-solving. He initially used basic mapping techniques to identify crime hot spots, enabling targeted officer deployments and the implementation of Crime Prevention

Through Environmental Design (CPTED) strategies. (CPTED uses urban and architectural design to reduce crime by enhancing natural surveillance, access control, and maintenance.) Further analysis showed that mental health and substance abuse issues were clustered in the same hotspot areas. In response, the Chief is now partnering with mental health and substance abuse professionals, with specific instructions to the teams as to what is expected of them within each hot spot.

Using crime analysis can help small agencies make data-driven decisions, such as adjusting patrol schedules based on peak crime hours to improve response times and enhance community safety. Crime analysis does not have to be complex. By embracing these accessible tools and techniques, departments can maximize their resources to drive smarter policing decisions and improve public safety.

Info and Events

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April 23, 2025
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