



# CITY OF MADISON POLICE DEPARTMENT STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE



## Evidence-Based Problem Oriented Policing

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Eff. Date: 11/06/2025

### Purpose

The purpose of this standard operating procedure is to provide guidance for evidence-based Problem-Oriented Policing (POP).

Evidence-based policing considers research, evaluation, analysis, and the scientific process.

Herman Goldstein, an American criminologist and Professor at the University of Wisconsin Law School, developed POP in 1979. POP is an evidence-based policing-model that emphasizes identifying the underlying causes of crime and disorder and developing a specific response and then evaluating the response.

POP is an evidence-based policing model that encourages practitioners to gather high-quality, accurate information and tailor an approach to a problem of crime or disorder.

### Problem-Solving Approach

Most calls for service fit into one of three categories: individual incidents, patterns, or problems. The problem-solving approach is intended to address identified short-term and long-term problems. Problems are more complex and persistent than individual incidents and patterns. Due to their complexity, solving problems often requires police to draw not only on criminal law, but also rely on other municipal and community resources. Within the Madison Police Department (MPD) organization, once a problem is identified, commanders are responsible for organizing and directing resources toward a solution.

Commanders should use the SARA model (Scanning, Analysis, Response, Assessment) for problem-solving. The SARA model consists of four steps:

#### Scanning

- Identifying recurring problems of concern to the public and to the police
- Identifying the consequences of the problem for the community and for the police
- Prioritizing those problems
- Developing broad goals
- Confirming that the problems exist
- Determining how frequently the problem occurs and how long it has been taking place
- Selecting problems for closer examination

#### Analysis

- Identifying and understanding the events and conditions that precede and accompany the problem
- Identifying relevant data to be collected
- Researching what is known about the problem type
- Taking inventory of how the problem is currently addressed and the strengths and limitations of the current response
- Narrowing the scope of the problem as specifically as possible
- Identifying a variety of resources that may be of assistance in developing a deeper understanding of the problem
- Developing a working hypothesis about why the problem is occurring

#### Response

- Brainstorming for new interventions
- Searching for what other communities with similar problems have done

- Choosing among the alternative interventions
- Outlining a response plan and identifying responsible parties
- Stating the specific objectives for the response plan
- Carrying out the planned activities

### Assessment

- Determining whether the plan was implemented (a process evaluation)
- Collecting pre- and post-response qualitative and quantitative data
- Determining whether broad goals and specific objectives were attained
- Identifying any new strategies needed to augment the original plan
- Conducting ongoing assessment to ensure continued effectiveness

## **Procedure**

- Once a problem has been identified by district/unit command, a district/unit commander will complete SARA Planning Form A. At the conclusion of the problem-solving effort, or after at least 90 days, a district/unit commander will complete SARA Assessment Form B. Also see Problem- Oriented Policing Initiatives below.
- Commanders will request a case number from dispatch to assign to each Problem-Solving initiative.
- All SARA planning forms, operational plans, Incident Command System (ICS) documents and reports shall be completed under the original problem-solving case number. Planning forms, operational plans and ICS documents shall be electronically submitted/scanned into the Law Enforcement Records Management System (LERMS) for documentation purposes.
- Patrol officers responding to the problem, will use the assigned problem solving case number to capture their activities to resolve the problem.
- If the response to a problem requires the use of a shared Community Policing Team (CPT) or resources outside of the district/unit, the requesting commander will bring the request to the appropriate lieutenants' meetings to coordinate the use of shared resources. CPT and district personnel requests should be made at the Operations Lieutenants' meetings; specialty team personnel requests should be made at the Detective Lieutenants' meetings.
- CPTs may play a significant role in many problem-solving efforts. CPT members are expected to regularly document their work on the problem through the completion of standard police reports and the use of the Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) records. Units are expected to reassign themselves to the original Problem-Solving case number for tracking purposes.
- Commanders are responsible for tracking all progress on the problem they have identified. This includes reviewing and monitoring completed police reports associated with the problem, tracking time officers/units spend on solving the problem and completing a final assessment. This assessment is completed on a final SARA problem-solving template and will be electronically submitted/scanned into LERMS for record management.
- District / unit captains are responsible for approving problem-solving initiatives in their district or purview.

## **Problem-Oriented Policing Initiatives**

The safety of community members and of police is of paramount importance. Deliberate planning coupled with written communication of goals, strategies, and tactics reduces uncertainty and increases opportunities

for success. Additionally standardized record keeping creates organizational efficiencies and enhances efforts to recreate activities.

All pre-planned initiatives involving 10 or more officers shall have a completed Operational Plan, an ICS 202 and an ICS 204. These forms should all be completed under the original problem-solving case number and shall be electronically submitted/scanned into LERMS for records management.

All initiatives with pre-planned overtime shall be approved by an Assistant Chief prior to the implementation of the initiative.

Notification of the initiative prior to the implementation of the operational plan shall include the following:

- OIC
- Dispatch
- On duty patrol supervisor (if available)

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