

# Community policing defined



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Community policing is defined as a " philosophy that promotes organizational strategies, which support the systematic use of partnerships and problem-solving techniques, to proactively address the immediate conditions that give rise to public safety issues such as crime, social disorder, and fear of crime" according to the U. S. Department of Justice. (U. S. Department of Justice). In other words the main goal of community policing is the allocation of various police agencies/staff to particular areas around the community so they become familiar with its inhabitants and lifestyle.

This style of policing attempts to modify the department through a system called de-bureaucratization and has four major goals to meet. Community policing aims to decentralize, de-formalize, despecialize, and delayerize the policing tactics used in dealing with day-to-day crimes within the community to make the civilians feel more connected with the police. By combining this theory and previous ideologies in police departments, the hopes was to boost trust and collaborative partnerships for the police to develop a more efficient solution to solving crimes.

Community policing has been an ever evolving way of how police react to certain crimes and recently has been more of the successful approaches towards positive community relations. Community policy steamed off a earlier model called team-policing in the 1970s. Team policing assigned responsibility for a certain geographic area to a team of police officers who would learn the neighborhood, its people, and its problems and remain in that one area. However promising this sounded team policing had its flaws such that of many " contradictions of the basic tenets of professionalism."

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It placed more emphasis on long-term problem solving than on rapid response to incidents within the community, making quantifiable performance measurements difficult. " It also crossed functional lines of authority, violating the chain of command and trespassing on the turf of detectives and other specialized units. " (Patterson) With the failure of this theory, the department opted to change the failing parts of team policing with a more effective protocol for their officers to follow.

Community policing balances aspects of team policing by bringing the public together while keeping some of the professional models aspects of supporting the communities education and growth research. This style of policing focuses more on the aftermath of a crime rather than on the first initial response. By having police officers devote their time to after-care programs, the community-police relations positively increased over time. The first most successful community policing program was observed in Chicago called the Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy or CAPS.

CAPS was a series of constant neighborhood meetings taken place for the community put on by the police officers to alert citizens of neighborhood problems and developing solutions. By allowing citizens to partake in the choices made by law officials, the conditions between officers and citizens improved causing cities to experience a decline in neighborhood crime. (Walker) Community-police advocates assert that the most effective way of reducing community decay and disorder is through a collaborative relationship between the police and community.

Allowing citizens to help the police, officers have a easier access to information which leads to a higher response time to the communities crime levels. Consultation between the police and the public provided the public with an opportunity to express their complaints involving police protocol and it provides officers with the criticism they needed to improve. Assigning key officers to permanent locations, Chicago officers could gain greater knowledge of the community problems and how to solve them responsibly.

Community policing displays the basic elements of policing and it has some helped shape recent policing strategies such as Problem-Oriented Policing and Zero Tolerance Policing. The most important obvious difference from other policing strategies is that it represents a major change in the basic role of a police officer. Traditionally police officers were used to only fight crime, with community policing it broaden their role to order maintenance, conflict resolution and social and physical disorders within the home. Problem-oriented policing main focus is based on law, order and fear problems.

Unlike Community policing, POP opts that officers should address particular problems and develop creative responses to each one. Instead of a " crime fighter" image officers under the POP ideology function as problem solvers, planners, and community advocates. POP and Community Policing are very similar in their police tactics however, the newly accepted Zero-tolerance Policy is very different. It is characterized by interventions that aggressively enforce criminal/civil laws and that are conducted for the purpose of restoring order to communities.

This theory believes through harsh and aggressive enforcement of laws, crime will cause the community to be more inclined to care which will increase police order and lead to a reduction of crime. Zero-tolerance policing focuses on its crime attack model while POP and community policing is on crime prevention. Another striking difference between the three policing strategies is that Zero-tolerance policing is based on the idea that the community may not be able to provide support for crime control due to lack of the public involvement and that the police must be the primary caretaker.

Community policing and POP allows the community to be its primary caretaker against crime through public criticism of police procedure. While community policing and POP focuses on carefully identifying problems and thoroughly analyzes a solution for said problem, Zero-tolerance policing main goal is to focus on specific behaviors and punish the offender as law enforcement see fit. Zero-tolerance policing is based off basic early strategies towards offenders such as the crime-fighting militaristic emphasis to centralize and keep its officers internally focused.

Most officers are more comfortable with this style of policing, however POP and community policing have been proven to be more effective in reducing crime. For many police officials all of these strategies (community policing, problem-oriented policing and zero-tolerance policing) have influenced their practicing for decades and have become basic traditions within their sectors. These three styles of policing have inspired new ways of policing in America.

Innovations under each of these strategies have been effective and ineffective based on how said policy is carried out. With new information technology applications, new crime analysis's, and various worldly events occurring every day, policing has shifted to a more Zero-tolerance policy in dealing with criminals. Due to various immigration, war, racial and ethnic profiling and expansion dilemmas policy agencies are very thorough in dealing with problems.

Zero-Tolerance policing will be part of the future of law enforcement at least for the next couple years until various situations in American can be resolved. " The zero tolerance law is used to describe a set of rules that allow for absolutely no exceptions. If a law is broken, zero tolerance extends full punishment and makes no reviews or modifications according to severity of the act. " With this act of policing style the rates of crime will decrease and hopefully keep america safe.