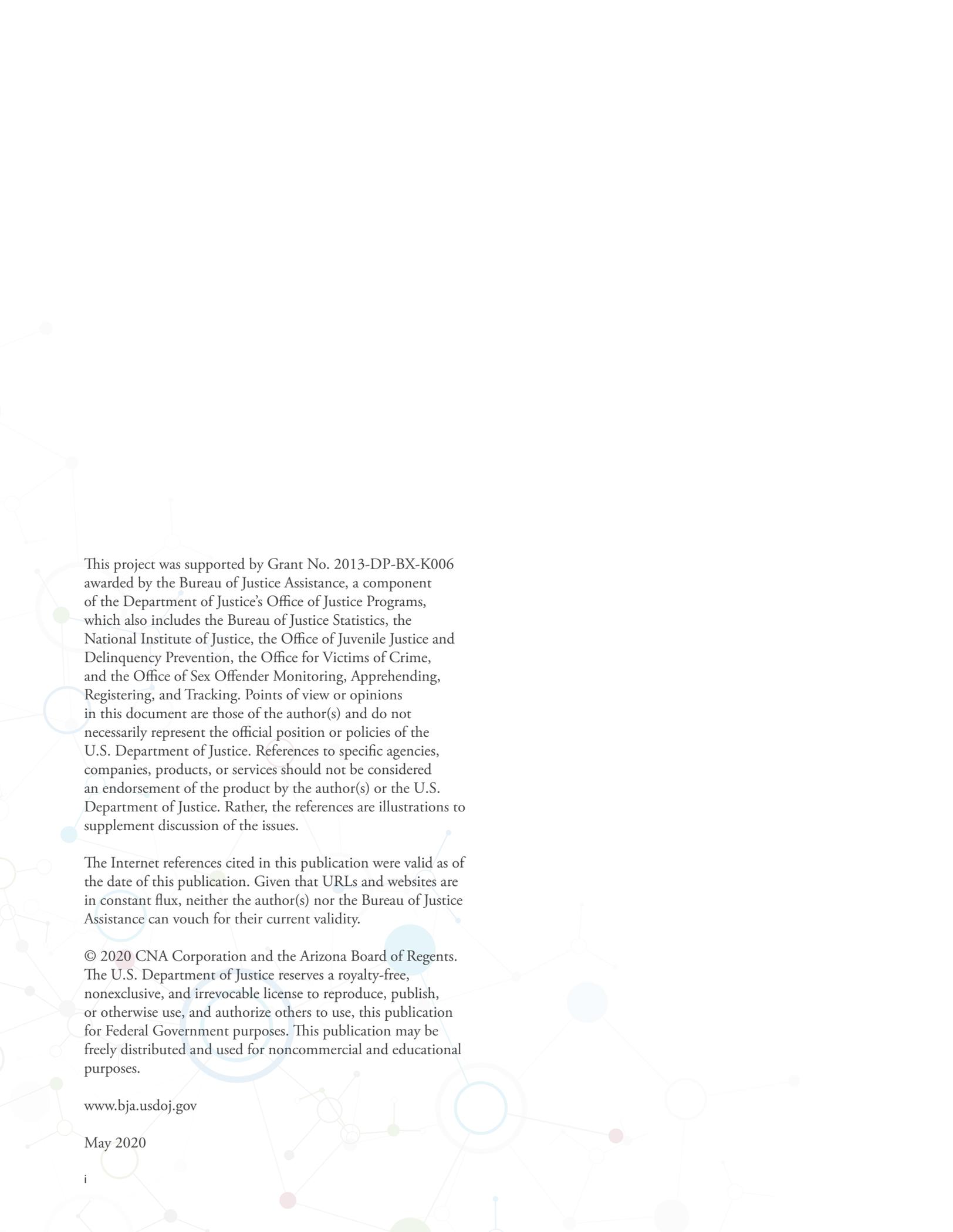


STRATEGIES FOR POLICING INNOVATION  
PROBLEM-ORIENTED GUIDES FOR POLICE  
PROBLEM-SPECIFIC GUIDE SERIES NO. 74

# RETALIATORY VIOLENT DISPUTES

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# ABOUT THIS GUIDE

## ABOUT THE STRATEGIES FOR POLICING INNOVATION PROBLEM-ORIENTED POLICING GUIDES

Since 2013, the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) has funded CNA to work with the Center for Problem-Oriented Policing to develop a series of Strategies for Policing Innovation (SPI) Problem-Oriented Guides for Police. These guides provide the law enforcement community with useful guidance, knowledge, and best practices related to key problem-oriented policing and strategic policing principles and practices. These guides add to the existing collection of Problem-Oriented Guides for Police.

SPI is a BJA-sponsored initiative that helps law enforcement agencies build evidence-based and data-driven law enforcement tactics and strategies that are effective, efficient, and economical. SPI represents a strategic approach that brings more science into police operations by leveraging innovative applications of analysis, technology, and evidence-based practices. SPI's goal is to improve policing performance and effectiveness while containing costs, an important consideration in today's fiscal environment.

SPI is a collaborative effort between BJA, CNA (SPI training and technical assistance provider), and over 40 local law enforcement agencies that are testing innovative and evidence-based solutions to serious crime problems.

For more information about the Strategies for Policing Innovation, visit [www.strategiesforpolicinginnovation.com](http://www.strategiesforpolicinginnovation.com).

## ABOUT THE PROBLEM-SOLVING TOOLS SERIES

The *Problem-Specific Guides* summarize knowledge about how police can reduce the harm caused by specific crime and disorder problems. They are guides to preventing crime and to improving the overall response to incidents, not to investigating offenses or handling specific incidents. They do not cover all of the technical details about how to implement specific responses. The guides are written for police—of whatever rank or assignment—who must address the specific problem the guides cover. The guides will be most useful to officers who:

- **Understand basic problem-oriented policing principles and methods.** The guides are not primers in problem-oriented policing. They deal only briefly with the initial decision to focus on a particular problem, methods to analyze the problem, and means to assess the results of a problem-oriented policing project. They are designed to help police departments decide how best to analyze and address problems they have already identified. BJA and CNA produced a companion series of *Problem-Solving Tools* guides to aid in various aspects of problem analysis and assessment.



The *Problem-Solving Tools* summarize knowledge about information gathering and analysis techniques that might assist police at any of the four main stages of a problem-oriented project: scanning, analysis, response, and assessment. Each guide



- Describes the kind of information produced by each technique



- Discusses how the information could be useful in problem-solving



- Gives examples of previous uses of the technique



- Provides practical guidance about adapting the technique to specific problems



- Provides templates of data collection instruments (where appropriate)



- Suggests how to analyze data gathered by using the technique



- Shows how to interpret the information correctly and present it effectively



- Warns about any ethical problems in using the technique



- Discusses the limitations of the technique when used by police in a problem-oriented project



- Provides reference sources of more detailed information about the technique



- Indicates when police should seek expert help in using the technique

- **Can look at a problem in depth.** Depending on the complexity of the problem, you should be prepared to spend weeks, or even months, analyzing and responding to it. Carefully studying a problem before responding helps you design the right strategy, one that is most likely to work in your community. You should not blindly adopt the responses others have used; you must decide whether they are appropriate to your local situation. What is true in one place may not be true elsewhere; what works in one place may not work everywhere.
- **Are willing to consider new ways of doing police business.** The guides describe responses that other police departments have used or that researchers have tested. While not all of these responses will be appropriate for your particular problem, they should help give a broader view of the kinds of things you could do. You may think you cannot implement some of these responses in your jurisdiction, but perhaps you can. In many places, when police have discovered a more effective response, they have successfully changed laws and policies, improving the response to the problem. (A companion series of *Response Guides* can help you understand how common police responses work on a variety of problems.)
- **Understand the value and the limits of research knowledge.** For some types of problems, a lot of useful research is available to the police; for other problems, little is available. Accordingly, some guides in this series summarize existing research whereas other guides illustrate the need for more research on that particular problem. Regardless, research has not provided definitive answers to all the questions you might have about the problem. The research may help get you started in designing your own responses, but it cannot tell you exactly what to do. Your response will depend greatly on the particular nature of your local problem. In the interest of keeping the guides readable, not every piece of relevant research has been cited, nor has every point been attributed to its sources. This would have overwhelmed and distracted the reader. The references listed at the end of each guide are those drawn on most heavily and represent the state of contemporary research on this topic; they are not complete bibliographies of research on the subjects.
- **Are willing to work with others to find effective solutions to the problem.** The police alone cannot implement many of the responses discussed in the guides. They must frequently implement them in partnership with other responsible private and public bodies, including other government agencies, non-governmental organizations, private businesses, public utilities, community groups, and individual citizens. An effective problem-solver must know how to forge genuine partnerships and be prepared to invest considerable effort in making these partnerships work. Each guide identifies particular individuals or groups in the community with

whom police might work to improve the overall response to that problem. Thorough analysis of problems often reveals that individuals and groups other than the police are in stronger positions to address problems and that police ought to shift some greater responsibility to them. Response Guide No. 3, *Shifting and Sharing Responsibility for Public Safety Problems*, discusses of this topic further.

These guides have drawn on research findings and police practices in the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the Netherlands, and Scandinavia. Even though laws, customs and police practices vary from country to country, it is apparent that the police everywhere experience common problems. In an increasingly interconnected world, it is important for police to be aware of research and successful practices beyond the borders of their own countries.

Each guide is informed by a thorough review of the research literature and reported police practices, and each guide is anonymously peer-reviewed by a line police officer, a police executive, and a researcher prior to publication. CNA, which solicits the reviews, manages the review process independently.

For more information about problem-oriented policing, visit the Center for Problem-Oriented Policing online at [www.popcenter.org](http://www.popcenter.org). This website offers free online access to the following resources:

- The *Problem-Specific Guides* series
- The companion *Response Guides* and *Problem-Solving Tools* series
- Special publications on crime analysis and on policing terrorism
- Instructional information about problem-oriented policing and related topics
- An interactive problem-oriented policing training exercise
- An interactive *Problem Analysis Module*
- Online access to important police research and practices
- Information about problem-oriented policing conferences and award programs

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Problem-Oriented Guides for Police are produced by the Center for Problem-Oriented Policing at Arizona State University. While each guide has a primary author, other project team members, CNA and BJA staff, and anonymous peer reviewers contributed to each guide by proposing text, recommending research, and offering suggestions on matters of format and style.

The project team that developed the guide series comprised Herman Goldstein, Ronald V. Clarke, John E. Eck, Michael S. Scott, Rana Sampson, and Deborah Lamm Weisel.

Members of the San Diego, California; National City, California; and Savannah, Georgia police departments provided feedback on the guides' format and style in the early stages of the project.

Vivian Elliott and Christopher Sun oversaw the project for CNA. Phyllis Schultze conducted research for the guide at Rutgers University's Criminal Justice Library. Greg Mercer at CNA edited this guide.

# THE PROBLEM OF RETALIATORY VIOLENT DISPUTES

This guide begins by describing the problem of retaliatory violent disputes and reviewing factors that increase the risks of such disputes. It then identifies a series of questions to help you analyze your local retaliatory violent disputes problem. Finally, it reviews responses to the problem from evaluative research and police practice. Although the guide draws heavily on the authors' research and practice findings from the BJA/CNA Strategic Innovations in Policing-funded initiative in Rochester, New York—one of the few police initiatives explicitly focused on retaliatory violent disputes—the information in this guide is also supported by the broader body of research and practice on retaliatory violent disputes.

## WHAT THIS GUIDE DOES AND DOES NOT COVER

This guide addresses the particular problem of retaliatory violent disputes which includes retaliatory gang violence, retaliatory family feuds, and retaliatory interpersonal violence. Particular attention is given to those disputes that result in homicide, serious weapon violence, and serious damage to property. Although some of what is discussed here applies to disputes between romantic partners and their surrogates, this guide does not directly address retaliatory domestic violence. Retaliatory violent disputes are but one aspect of the larger set of problems related to violence. Related problems not directly addressed in this guide and requiring separate analyses include the following, some of which are covered in other Problem-Specific Guides:

- Assaults in and around bars
- Gun violence among serious young offenders
- Witness intimidation
- Domestic violence
- Drive-by shootings
- Hate crimes
- Home invasion robberies

For the most up-to-date listing of current guides, see [www.popcenter.org](http://www.popcenter.org).

## GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE PROBLEM

A dispute is a disagreement, an argument, or a quarrel. But these synonyms illustrate the two core problems in identifying and intervening in disputes: First, under what circumstances should retaliatory violence be recognized as part of a dispute that requires police for attention? And second, what characteristics of a retaliatory violent dispute and its participants should raise concern over the potential for additional violence?

Nearly every situation that involves the police, particularly acts of violence, could be considered a dispute. Police are called on to deal with conflicts between neighbors and friends, between shopkeepers and customers, between long-term rivals, and among sworn enemies. Many of these disputes do not result in violence. Not all violent acts are elements of a violent retaliatory dispute. Even if they were, police would never have the resources and manpower to treat all known disputes as if they pose an equal threat of further violence. Thus, a chief task in addressing dispute-related violence is to determine the types of cases for which dispute intervention may be productive at reducing the threat of further violence. The first step in that is to establish a clear workable definition. We offer the following definition:

A violent retaliatory dispute is:

- an interaction involving conflict
- over a period of time
- between two or more individuals and/or people associated with them
- marked by two or more events involving confrontation or intimidation
- in which at least some of those events involve violent acts or credible threats of violence.

The core element of this definition is the presence of at least two acts of violence or credible threats of violence over some time. At least two events create a pattern. Single events can be handled routinely, but a pattern of events should prompt a special police intervention.

Retaliatory violent disputes are not a new phenomenon. The legendary dispute between the Hatfields and McCoys started in 1878 with the alleged theft of a pig. Retaliation ensued after the trial for the theft did not result in a criminal conviction. The ensuing dispute lasted over 10 years and resulted in several deaths. Authorities made several unsuccessful attempts to end the dispute. It did not officially end until eight disputants on the Hatfield side were convicted of murder and received life sentences.<sup>1</sup>

In the United States, arguments are well-known as the most frequent cause of homicide.<sup>2</sup> In Rochester, New York, for example, as many as 75 percent of homicides in any given year are the direct result of a violent dispute.<sup>3</sup> Many of these disputes stem from minor altercations that subsequently erupt into violence.<sup>4</sup> Not only are these disputes often over seemingly minor issues, they can accelerate rapidly to violence. The escalation of a dispute into violence occurs in stages;<sup>5</sup> however, those stages are just as likely to play out over months as they are to play out over seconds.<sup>6</sup> Police require time to learn of

the dispute and conceive and execute intervention tactics, so disputes that immediately turn fatal not only offer few opportunities for intervention, but may also lay the foundation for retaliation involving a victim's friends or associates. Violent disputes that play out over a long time, involving multiple events and acts of retaliation, offer police opportunities to identify the dispute and then execute an appropriate response.

A disproportionate number of violent retaliatory disputes occur in socially disadvantaged neighborhoods.<sup>7</sup> These neighborhoods are characterized by high crime rates, skepticism about the efficacy of the criminal justice system, and low levels of cooperation with law enforcement.<sup>8</sup> Under these circumstances, many residents in these communities become more fearful of crime<sup>9</sup> and are more likely to carry guns for self-protection.<sup>10</sup> These residents come to view violence as a legitimate form of self-help.<sup>11</sup>

A “code of the street” in these neighborhoods further contributes to retaliatory violence.<sup>12</sup> The code of the street is a set of subcultural social norms that encourages violence to maintain social position and resolve conflicts. The code requires that disrespect be met with exaggerated violence that is often disproportionate to the seriousness of the initial dispute. Disproportionate responses to perceived affronts increase the likelihood of further retaliation, thereby contributing to the cycle of violence in these communities.

A significant proportion of the retaliatory violence that occurs in socially disadvantaged areas is between disputants engaged in some type of criminal enterprise.<sup>13</sup> This fact makes it difficult to settle disputes using conventional venues and resources. Drug dealers cannot turn to police when their drugs are stolen, so they have to rely on street justice.<sup>14</sup> Direct retaliatory violence helps the retaliator maintain his or her reputation, recover lost property, and exact personal vengeance.<sup>15</sup> This fact presents two challenges for police. First, addressing dispute-related

## A CASE OF RETALIATORY VIOLENCE IN ROCHESTER, NEW YORK

Disputes that escalate to violence over time, rather than immediately, accounted for nearly 20 percent of all 2010 homicides in Rochester, New York. In 2010, the motive in 21 of 41 Rochester homicides (51 percent) was an argument of some type. Of those 21 murders, 8 involved a violent retaliatory act (6 involving a firearm) preceded by a dispute at least two hours prior. Additionally, at least 60 percent of shootings that occurred in Rochester were precipitated by actions related to an identifiable dispute.

One Rochester homicide case from 2010 highlights the characteristics of retaliatory and associated opportunities for police intervention:

In the summer of 2010, Bobby Henderson\* was murdered by Richard Druther. Earlier in the night, Druther and friends were having a party for Druther's girlfriend. Druther's cousins left this party and drove to the west side of the city to taunt a group of people with whom they had an ongoing dispute. The dispute between the two parties had begun a week earlier at a local night club and had already resulted in at least two incidents of violence.

Druther's cousins found Bobby Henderson and his crew hanging out on the bleachers of a football field. As the car drove by, Druther's cousin shouted words of disrespect out of the car window. In response to the taunting, Henderson's crew pulled out several firearms and began shooting at Druther's cousins' car, hitting it once. The car pulled away and returned to the party. Later in the evening, Henderson's crew showed up at the party and began to fight with people there. During the fight, Druther pulled out a handgun and mortally shot Henderson, who was fighting one of Druther's cousins. Violence affiliated with this dispute continued even after Druther's conviction for the murder of Henderson. Shortly after Druther's conviction, one of his family members' house was shot up. Additionally, random encounters between disputants on both sides have led to further violence and property destruction. Several of Druther's family members have been targeted by Henderson's associates. Violence associated with this dispute also occurred around the first and second anniversaries of Henderson's death.

\* Names of people and locations changed to protect anonymity.  
Source: Rochester Police Department Dispute Bulletin

violence may require providing services to individuals who are simultaneously crime victims and offenders. Second, police may have to experiment with unproven approaches to responding to violence among this subpopulation.

Retaliatory violent disputes have several distinctive qualities that have implications for intervention:

- The existence of a long-standing and escalating dispute between individuals or groups of people
- Disputants who have criminal records and are on probation or parole, or have active warrants when the violent incident occurs
- A precipitating event (such as when gunshots are fired) involving a police response
- Some time between the initial dispute and the violent incident, during which the department can intervene
- Identifiable events and places for retaliation, such as at a house party or a known hang-out
- Key dates such as anniversaries of prior disputes that can escalate the risk of violence.

In some instances, if police had known about the initial dispute and identified it as a likely candidate for retaliation, they would have had time to intervene with place-, victim- or offender-based interventions, even if the specific nature of the dispute was unknown.

## HARM CAUSED BY RETALIATORY VIOLENCE

Retaliatory violent disputes can cause great harm to communities. Although there are no national statistics on retaliatory violence, criminological research suggests that nearly half of interpersonal assaults among youth are motivated by revenge.<sup>16</sup> Research in Rochester revealed that 60 percent of the shootings that occurred between 2010 and 2012 were associated with a previously identifiable dispute and that a few violent disputes can substantially increase overall violence counts.<sup>17</sup> For instance, one retaliatory dispute in Rochester accounted for 7 percent of the gun assaults and 5 percent of the homicides that occurred in the city in 2015. This suggests that developing protocols to interrupt retaliatory violence early on can lead to considerable reductions in violence. Retaliatory violence can also affect perceptions of violence and fear of crime. The dispute-related violence in shared public spaces, such as parks and transportation centers, increases fear of violence and leads people to avoid those places.<sup>18</sup> Violence victims suffer pain, fear, posttraumatic distress, and other mental symptoms.<sup>19</sup> Violence victims may also be more likely to develop attitudes that are supportive of retaliatory violence, which is associated with higher levels of aggression and higher frequency of fighting over time.<sup>20</sup>

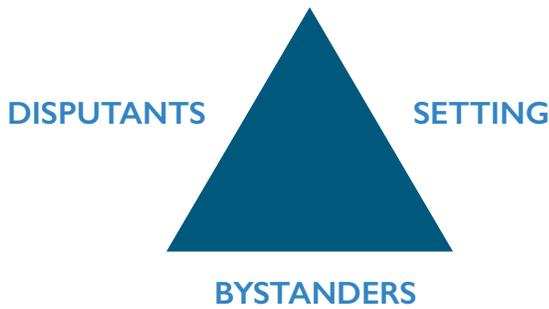
### EXAMPLES OF THE IMPACT OF RETALIATORY VIOLENCE ON COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS IN ROCHESTER, NEW YORK

Two examples of dispute-related-violence “spill over” in Rochester highlight the impact that retaliatory violence can have on a city. The Lilac Festival is Rochester’s preeminent festival. The festival includes art, music, food, and flora; it draws more than 500,000 attendees from the Rochester region. In 2013, 16 people were arrested after a brawl between youth groups broke out at the festival. Upon investigation, police determined that the brawls at the Lilac festival were the result of an ongoing dispute between rival groups. The actors had made threats on social media and agreed to meet at the Lilac Festival to settle the score. Media coverage of the brawl included interviews of festival-goers who vowed never to return the festival. The brawls and subsequent media coverage contributed to the notion that Rochester is unsafe. This has led to increased pressure on city officials to keep visitors safe.

Another example of how dispute-related violence can harm the community involves the opening of the Regional Transit Service Transit Center in downtown Rochester. Shortly after the opening, several youths were stabbed and several large brawls occurred. Investigation revealed that many of the incidents involved ongoing disputes among youths, some of which began at school. On other occasions, youths from rival groups were using the Transit Center as a staging area to settle existing “beefs.” In response to the violence, local authorities enhanced security around the Transit Center, and the Rochester School District agreed to reroute some buses to decrease the likelihood that youths from rival neighborhoods would arrive at the Transit Center at the same time. These changes contributed to a substantial reduction in violence, but the violence that occurred contributed to the notion that Rochester is not safe for visitors and that public transportation should be avoided.

## FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO VIOLENT RETALIATORY DISPUTES

The problem analysis triangle is a useful framework for understanding retaliatory violence. Disputants, bystanders, and the setting each play an important role in determining the frequency and nature of such violence. An understanding of the unique role that each plays in shaping retaliatory violence can help you develop effective solutions to respond to the problem.



For *disputants*, engaging in retaliatory violence plays several important functions. First, retaliation allows disputants to exact retribution for a perceived wrong. Second, engaging in such violence helps them command respect among their peers and in the broader community.<sup>21</sup> Additionally, engaging in violence can protect disputants from being viewed as weak or easy prey; thereby decreasing their risk of victimization.<sup>22</sup> Engaging in retaliatory violence helps gang members establish prestige within the group.<sup>23</sup> Conversely, disputants may avoid carrying out retaliatory violence if they fear the consequences retaliation may bring or if the act of retaliation might bring harm to friends or family.<sup>24</sup>

Disputants' likelihood of committing acts of retaliatory violence is shaped by the presence of *bystanders*.<sup>25</sup> Bystanders are present in about two-thirds of violent victimizations,<sup>26</sup> and play an important role in either instigating or preventing retaliatory violence. Bystanders may instigate retaliation by encouraging disputants to act aggressively and respond to a perceived affront with violence. This is especially important when disputants come to believe that failing to respond violently may damage their image or street credibility. In this sense, retaliation becomes an important and necessary aspect of managing one's reputation. On the other hand, bystanders can reduce the risk of violence by intervening in disputes and discouraging retaliation. They can help disputants redefine the perceived affront, thereby making violence unnecessary or undesirable.<sup>27</sup> Efforts to discourage violence might be carried out by associates of the disputants, established community members who have credibility among disputants<sup>28</sup> or designated groups of so-called street interrupters who actively engage disputants and mediate disputes.<sup>29</sup> Importantly, police have a special capacity to provide the necessary guardianship to prevent disputants from engaging in violence, or carrying out dispute-related retaliation in problem areas.<sup>30</sup>

The *setting* provides the context where the violence is carried out.<sup>a</sup> In places with high levels of crime, violence often becomes an institutional feature of street life.<sup>31</sup> The threat of violence influences attitudes and behavior. Inhabitants of violent settings may adopt the code of the street, arm themselves, and band together for protection. Some locations—such as drug corners, house parties, transit centers, or schools—become staging areas where violence is carried out. These locations facilitate the social interaction between disputants and establish normative structures that support violence.<sup>32</sup> Informal social control is weak in these settings and the police presence is often inadequate. Particular features of such locations include the congregation of large groups of people, many of whom are criminal offenders; presence of many bystanders who constitute the audience for the dispute; and the absence of surveillance (natural or electronic).

Illicit drug markets are an important setting that influences the frequency and nature of retaliatory violence. There are systematic features of drug markets that increase the likelihood that drug disputes will result in violence.<sup>33</sup> Drug sellers often find it necessary to use violence when competing for territory, in retaliation for transgressions by partners or competitors, or in response to conflict with customers.<sup>34</sup> Drug-market activity in particular neighborhoods influences perceptions about the use of violence and facilitates dispute-related violence.<sup>35</sup> Importantly, not all drug conflicts result in violence. In some circumstances drug dealers choose toleration, avoidance, and negotiation rather than retaliation.<sup>36</sup> This suggests that steps can be taken to reduce the likelihood that drug dealers with a grievance see violent retaliation as a viable option.

The nature of the retaliation that occurs is largely based on two factors: (1) whether retaliation occurs immediately after an affront and (2) whether the retaliation involves face-to-face contact with the transgressor.<sup>37</sup> These two factors influence when the retaliation occurs, the time between incidents, and who (or what) is targeted. In circumstances where the retaliator is in close physical proximity with the transgressor, and possesses the upper hand, immediate retaliation may occur. In circumstances where the retaliator is at a disadvantage, the retaliation may be delayed until he or she can engage the transgressor under more advantageous circumstances.

Although aggrieved individuals usually plan their retaliation, incidents of retaliatory violence are not entirely premeditated. Retaliators' actions are bounded by anger, uncertainty and time pressure<sup>38</sup> which combine to increase the likelihood that aggrieved parties will retaliate in a manner disproportionate to the affront, redirect their retaliation to the transgressor's associates, or even target people not connected to the dispute. Ironically, carrying out retaliation in this manner increases the likelihood that the retaliator will become a target for further retaliation, thus contributing to the cycle of violence.

<sup>a</sup> See Problem-Solving Tools Guide No. 6, *Understanding Risky Facilities*, for further discussion of why some places are especially prone to crime and disorder.

## Transgressor and Retaliator Characteristics

There is no single set of demographic characteristics that account for participants in retaliatory violence. In urban areas, a disproportionate amount of serious violent retaliatory disputes appears to be between minority males from socially disadvantaged neighborhoods, many of whom are involved in gang activities and/or the illicit drug trade.<sup>39</sup> Although young minority males tend to be heavily involved, disputes involving females and older members of the community also occur, such as those associated with romantic disputes or family disputes in which elders are drawn into the conflict. There is also evidence that an honor culture supportive of solving disputes with the use of violence is present in some segments of the rural American South.<sup>40</sup>

## Times and Locations

Retaliatory dispute incidents mirror other types of street violence in terms of time, day, and location of occurrence. These incidents are more likely to occur on weekend evenings. The nature of the dispute shapes the extent to which retaliatory violence is linked to particular hotspots or troubled areas. Retaliatory violence between established gangs or between neighbors might be contained to specific geographic boundaries or spill over to other locations. Once a retaliatory dispute is active, dispute-related incidents can happen virtually any place where disputants happen or plan to meet, including parks, transit centers, recreation centers, concerts, house parties, sporting venues, schools, and festivals. Furthermore, although

most retaliatory disputes are short, lasting less than a month, some retaliatory violence can continue for several months, often reactivating after dormant periods. In that sense, retaliatory disputes represent a “hot relationship” between actors that is not bound by space or time. The violence can only be contained after the disputants’ anger subsides or actors are prevented from engaging in subsequent retaliation.

## Motivations for Disputes

You should work to understand motivations for retaliatory violence in your jurisdiction. Working closely with intelligence officers, crime analysts, and research partners can help facilitate this process. Several useful methods include performing incident reviews of identified retaliatory disputes, interviewing and conducting focus groups with officers and investigators, and creating and analyzing investigative documents to track and monitor retaliatory violence.

There are several basic types of disputes commonly associated with retaliatory violence. Each type implies a different basic motivation for the dispute. Table 1 shows the distribution, number of incidents and duration of different types of violent retaliatory disputes in Rochester, New York, from 2010 to 2012. Though the figures shown might differ from your jurisdiction, they provide a snapshot of what retaliatory violence looks like in an urban area.

**TABLE 1: DISPUTE-TYPE FREQUENCY, AVERAGE NUMBER OF RETALIATORY INCIDENTS AND AVERAGE DISPUTE DURATION: ROCHESTER, NEW YORK, 2010–12**

DISPUTE TYPE	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL DISPUTES (N = 93)*	AVERAGE NO. OF TOTAL INCIDENTS	AVERAGE NO. OF VIOLENT INCIDENTS	AVERAGE NO. OF PROPERTY INCIDENTS	AVERAGE LENGTH OF DISPUTE (DAYS)
All Disputes	---	3.8	3	0.8	33
Gang Involved	53%	4	3.6	0.4	36
Gang v. Gang	25%	4.7	4.5	0.2	55
Theft of Drugs/Property	37%	4.1	3.6	0.4	53
Romantic	17%	3.8	2.4	1.4	41
Neighbor Dispute	12%	3.6	2	1.6	51
Witness Intimidation	9%	6.4	4.6	1.8	221
Family Retaliation	18%	4	2.7	1.3	71
Undefined	4%	3.7	1.3	2.4	7

\*The total percentage for dispute risk-factors is higher than 100 percent because several of the disputes examined here were characterized by more than one risk factor.

### Gang-involved disputes

Gangs clearly play a significant role in dispute-related violence but there are also important differences in that role.<sup>b</sup> Gang-involved disputes are those in which at least one of the disputants is a known gang member or associate. Gang members are more likely to engage in violence<sup>41</sup> and have a greater risk of violent victimization.<sup>42</sup> This is partially due to gang membership, but also due to the criminal lifestyle of individual gang members.<sup>43</sup> This lifestyle increases the risk of interpersonal disputes with both gang members and nonmembers alike. Many of the interpersonal disputes involving gang members are not caused by gang business, but are over issues such as drugs or property. Further, gang membership provides retaliators with added resources with which to exact retribution. Over all retaliatory disputes identified in Rochester, New York, about one-third involved at least one active gang member. Table 2 shows the nature of gang involvement in violent retaliatory disputes in Rochester, and the frequency of each type of gang involvement.

### Gang-versus-gang disputes

In gang-versus-gang disputes both sides of the dispute are members of established gangs and the dispute is over matters affecting the whole gang, not just individual members. These disputes are characterized by multiple members on each side of the dispute carrying out collective violence for retaliation, and to establish and maintain gang hierarchy.<sup>44</sup> These disputes contribute to the contagion of violence, as rival gangs will respond to retaliation with further violence.<sup>45</sup>

### Theft of drugs/personal property disputes

These disputes occur as a result of the theft of or conflict over drugs or other property.<sup>c</sup> While the possession of drugs and property make criminally involved actors attractive robbery targets, avenging the theft of that property is the underlying motivation for retaliatory violence.

### Romantic disputes

Romantic disputes involve conflict between current or former domestic or romantic partners. Romantic partners are at risk of retaliatory violence when the retaliator wishes to get revenge for a previous perceived transgression, such as inappropriate behavior or infidelity.<sup>46</sup>

### Neighbor disputes

Neighbor disputes can readily become retaliatory because the parties see one another regularly and their proximity provides both with many opportunities for retaliatory acts. Neighbor disputes may be common in settings where criminally involved actors live in close proximity to one another and are likely to come into conflict or in settings where the code of the street is dominant and residents believe that use of violence is an effective tool for dispute resolution.

**TABLE 2: NATURE OF GANG INVOLVEMENT IN VIOLENT RETALIATORY DISPUTES IN ROCHESTER, NY**

GANG INVOLVEMENT	PERCENTAGE OF DISPUTES (N=139)
No indication of any gang connection	47.8%
Gang member versus non-gang member over personal issues (for example, insults or disrespect)	15.8%
Gang member versus gang member over personal issues	9.3%
Gang versus gang conflict (involving multiple members) over gang business (for example, turf or drug business)	5.7%
Gang member versus gang member over gang-related business (for example, gang discipline)	5.0%
Gang member versus non-gang member over gang-related business (for example, drug-business conflict)	0%
Gang versus gang conflict (involving multiple members) over personal issues (for example, disrespect of key members)	0%
Unknown	16.4%
Total	100%

<sup>b</sup> In some communities, groups known as cliques or crews are more common than strongly organized gangs and thereby less committed to engaging in group violence to settle disputes.

<sup>c</sup> For more on disputes over drugs, see Jacques (2010). See Topalli, Wright and Forango (2002) for a discussion of robbery of drug dealers and retaliation.

<sup>d</sup> See Problem-Specific Guide No. 42, *Witness Intimidation* for further information.

### *Witness-intimidation disputes*

Witness-intimidation disputes involve intimidation of witnesses who have testified in a criminal trial or are considering testifying.<sup>d</sup> Those who cooperate with authorities or are perceived as a risk of cooperation can be targets of retaliation.<sup>47</sup>

### *Family-retaliation disputes*

Family-retaliation disputes involve disputes where family members join the dispute after one of their family members has been victimized.

### *Important elements of retaliatory disputes*

Based on the Rochester study findings, the following important conclusions about retaliatory disputes should be taken into consideration when you are developing police responses to retaliatory violence:

- Retaliatory disputes involve a variety of relationship types.
- Both violent<sup>e</sup> and nonviolent<sup>f</sup> retaliation occurs in retaliatory disputes.<sup>g</sup>
- Some types of disputes are more likely to be characterized by violence than others. For instance, a significantly higher proportion of the incidents in gang disputes involved violence than incidents in neighbor disputes.
- Retaliatory disputes have a life course.<sup>48</sup> Most disputes in Rochester lasted about a month,<sup>h</sup> which reveals that there is often ample time for police to intervene in retaliatory disputes, provided the infrastructure is in place to identify, track, and intervene.
- Some types of disputes last longer than others. Witness intimidation disputes last longer because they are closely tied to criminal-justice processes, with threats and violence occurring before, during, and after a trial.
- While most disputes are best understood as individual interpersonal conflicts suitable for intervention with known individuals, retaliatory disputes can also emerge between groups, which would require different approaches.

<sup>e</sup> Violent events include homicide, assault shootings, shots fired, robbery, fights (with or without a weapon) and menacing.

<sup>f</sup> Most property incidents involve damage or destruction of property in retaliation for an attack or perceived affront.

<sup>g</sup> See Jacobs and Wright (2006) for further discussion of the use of non-violent retaliation in retaliatory disputes.

<sup>h</sup> Median values were reported here because outliers unduly inflated the calculation of the mean.

# UNDERSTANDING YOUR LOCAL PROBLEM

The discussion above provides a general description of retaliatory violent disputes. To understand your local problem, you will need to consider both general knowledge about retaliatory violence and those factors that are unique to your local area. Local analyses of dispute-related retaliatory violence will require a willingness to organize police work around the concept of disputes, rather than individual incidents, which will require your officers to think beyond making arrests for particular incidents of violence and challenge them to develop strategies that focus on suppressing dispute-related violence.

A collaboration among command staff, line officers and detectives, crime analysts, and, if applicable, your local research partner, can identify the nature and characteristics of retaliatory violence in your community and develop strategies to reduce it. Research partners, many of whom are affiliated with local colleges or universities, can supplement work by in-house crime analysts to identify disputes, assess their risk of further violence, and measure the effects of violence-reduction interventions.

To recognize an ongoing dispute and assess the risk of further violence, you must focus on the links among events. That may seem obvious, but it can require a major change in thinking, from an incident-based mindset to a problem-based mindset. Be alert to organizational impediments to working disputes rather than incidents. Events tied to the same dispute might occur in different places, on different shifts, and at times when officers with valuable information are not on duty. Moreover, incidents might be assigned to different units for follow-up investigation. Accordingly, it is important to have a communications strategy that facilitates officers sharing information about the connections among dispute-related events.

## STAKEHOLDERS

Identifying the proper stakeholders can help you better understand retaliatory violence and enhance your ability to effectively respond to it. Through collaboration with community partners, you will be able to develop a dispute-intervention approach that leverages community assets and utilizes a diverse set of tactics in response to the unique needs of particular disputes. Effective responses to retaliatory violence will require a robust law-enforcement response, but may also require attention from community-based partners outside of law enforcement. The exact roles and responsibilities of community partners will depend on the unique needs of your jurisdiction.

- **Law enforcement partners.** Partners in neighboring police agencies, prosecutors' offices, jails, and probation and parole can share important intelligence that can help identify a dispute and its motives and help develop and implement responses to retaliatory violence.<sup>49</sup>
- **Schools.** Urban schools are often nested in socially disadvantaged neighborhoods where retaliatory violence disproportionately occurs. As such, some dispute-related retaliatory violence can spill over onto school grounds. School administrators can assist in several ways.<sup>50</sup> First, school officials can share intelligence about dispute-related violence that occurred on school grounds but was not reported to police. Second, they may be able to identify dispute participants not known to local police. Third, they may be able to connect police with parents and others who may be able to influence youth engaged in the dispute. Fourth, school resource officers can help develop and implement dispute interventions. Fifth, school administrators can help develop and implement educational programs that discourage youth from engaging in retaliatory violence.
- **Transit officials.** A transit center can serve as a staging area for retaliatory violence when it becomes a location where disputants are likely to converge.<sup>51</sup> Transit officials, with an interest in maintaining the safety of their customers, can provide descriptions of disputants and perhaps video surveillance footage of violent incidents. They might also maintain records of dispute-related incidents on transit vehicles and at stations.
- **Neighborhood associations.** Neighborhood associations can work with police to support nonviolent responses to crime in the neighborhood<sup>52</sup> and increase community members' willingness to cooperate in investigations of dispute-related violence.
- **Hospitals.** Hospital staff can help in identifying high risk disputants, administer hospital-based interventions<sup>53</sup> and provide post-release referrals.<sup>1</sup> Patients treated for a serious non-accidental injury are potentially involved in a retaliatory dispute. Identifying violence victims can help police identify new disputes and track existing ones. Additionally, hospital security officers may be able to identify associates of the disputant who may have important intelligence about the dispute.
- **Social service agencies and organizations.** Various government agencies and non-government organizations work to reduce urban violence. Some directly target dispute intervention, including by accepting police referrals. Others work to change social norms relating to retaliatory violence and/or encourage people to avoid risky lifestyles and choose alternatives to violence.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department (2008) for an example of how a hospital-based intervention can be incorporated into a program to reduce retaliatory violence.

- **Religious officials.** Ministers and other religious officials can condemn and discourage violence by virtue of their moral standing in the community.<sup>55</sup>
- **Researchers.** Research partners can help collect and analyze data that will help you understand the nature of your local problem and evaluate initiatives to combat it.

## ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

The following are some critical questions you should ask in analyzing your particular problem of retaliatory violent disputes, even if the answers are not always readily available. Your answers to these and other questions will help you choose the most appropriate set of responses later on.

### Dispute Characteristics

- What proportion of your violent incidents are dispute-related?
- How many active, potentially violent disputes exist in your jurisdiction?
- Are dispute-related incidents concentrated in particular areas or locations?
- What are the different types of disputes and how prevalent is each type in your jurisdiction? (See *Motivations for Disputes* section above.)
- Do different dispute types have different types and levels of violence?

### Characteristics of Key Disputants

- Are there noticeable demographic characteristics among those involved in violent retaliatory disputes (e.g., age, gender, race, ethnicity)?
- Are individuals involved in active disputes engaging in particular types of behaviors before dispute-related retaliatory incidents occur (e.g., gang activity, drug dealing, other criminal activity)?
- Are there particular groups of people disproportionately involved in disputes?

### Current Responses to the Problem

- What, if anything, is currently done by police or others to reduce the risk of dispute-related retaliatory violence?
- Are there efforts to monitor individuals who are known disputants?
- Is there a mechanism—such as social network analyses—to link dispute-related incidents in your jurisdiction to identify patterns?
- Are patrol officers collecting and documenting useful street intelligence that will inform responses to dispute-related violence?
- Is there a protocol in place that allows officers to notify superiors and other officers if they believe there is an active retaliatory dispute?

- Has your department designated a crime analyst to help assess and monitor dispute-related violence?
- Who within the police department is responsible for addressing ongoing, potentially violent disputes (e.g., patrol officers, detectives)?
- Is your department equipped to work collaboratively to address retaliatory violence?
- Are there community partners who offer conflict-resolution services elsewhere in the community (e.g., gang outreach workers, mediation centers)?
- Are other law-enforcement stakeholders engaged in activities that might complement a program to reduce violent retaliatory disputes?

## MEASURING YOUR EFFECTIVENESS

Measurement allows you to determine the degree to which your efforts have succeeded and suggests how you might modify your responses if they are not producing the intended results. You should take measures of your problem *before* you implement responses, to determine how serious the problem is, and, after you implement them, to determine whether they have been effective. You should take all measures in both the target area and the surrounding area. For more detailed guidance on measuring effectiveness, see Problem-Solving Tools Guide No. 1, *Assessing Responses to Problems: An Introductory Guide for Police Problem-Solvers* and Problem-Solving Tools Guide No. 10, *Analyzing Crime Displacement and Diffusion*.

The following are potentially useful measures of the effectiveness of responses to retaliatory violent disputes. Process measures show the extent to which responses were properly implemented. Outcome measures show the extent to which the responses reduced the level or severity of the problem.

### Process Measures

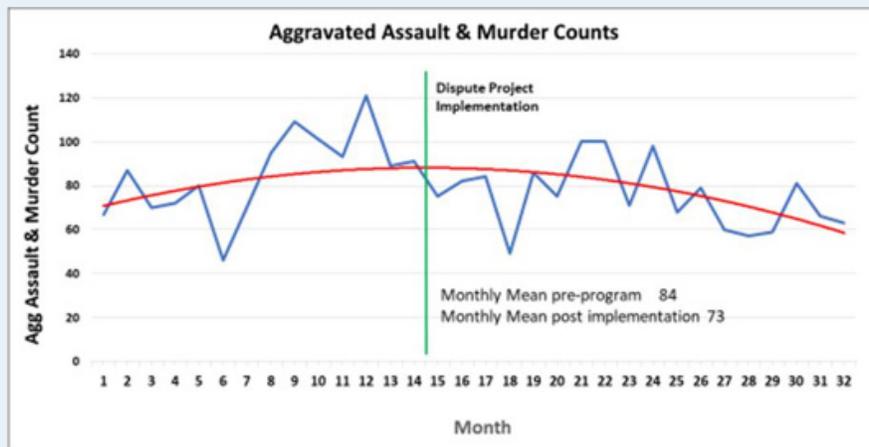
- Clear delegation of responsibility for addressing violent disputes
- Adequate staffing (e.g., crime analysts, dispute investigators) to identify and intervene in potentially violent disputes
- Improved data and communication systems for identifying, classifying and monitoring retaliatory disputes
- Existence of a risk-assessment instrument for retaliatory violence
- Earlier identification of potentially violent disputes
- Existence of a system for periodically assessing retaliatory violent-dispute strategies and tactics
- Greater willingness of community partners and other non-law enforcement stakeholders to work with police to reduce retaliatory violence

## Outcome Measures

- Fewer active retaliatory disputes in your jurisdiction
- Reductions in simple and aggravated assaults and homicides emanating from retaliatory violence
- Reductions in non-violent retaliatory crimes
- Reductions in threats to commit violent retaliatory acts disputes

### FIGURE 1: AGGRAVATED ASSAULT AND MURDER COUNTS IN ROCHESTER, NEW YORK

The graph below shows aggravated assault and murder counts for before and after implementation of the Rochester dispute project. The results suggest that a dispute-intervention strategy can reduce overall rates of violence in a jurisdiction. On average, there were 84 aggravated assaults and murders per month before the implementation of the project, and an average of 75 aggravated assaults and murders per month after project implementation.



These results are promising. They show a gradual decline reflecting the progress of the intervention, a pattern that seems much more likely than a sudden and dramatic decline. More rigorous analysis is needed, however, before definitive statements about causality can be made.

# RESPONSES TO RETALIATORY VIOLENT DISPUTES

## GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR RESPONDING TO RETALIATORY DISPUTES

Identifying disputes early provides a basis for preventing the next violent incident from occurring. Preventing retaliatory violence might well require prioritizing the investigation of an incident and arresting one or other of the offenders. But a quick arrest is not always possible and violent events relating to a dispute may continue. Making the prevention of further violence the goal can open a wider range of response strategies than just criminal law enforcement.

### Assessing the Risks That Disputes Will Become Violent

Reducing retaliatory violence requires first assessing the risk that disputes will become violent. Some disputes pose higher likelihoods of becoming violent than do others. Before assessing risk, however, you must establish a protocol to determine how and when risk assessments occur.<sup>j</sup>

You should establish protocols for when risk assessments are performed. The exact mechanism should consider the unique needs and nature of your police department, but should establish a clear procedure for at least two levels of risk assessment. Any police officer, detective, or analyst who receives credible information about a possible violent retaliatory dispute should complete a level-1 risk assessment form (ideally electronically) documenting the concern, which is quickly routed to a supervisory officer for review. Upon the supervisory officer's authorization, a level-2 risk assessment should be conducted to gather more thorough information about the history of the dispute and its risks for future violence. See Appendices A and B for sample dispute-risk-assessment forms. A level-1 risk assessment can be conducted either at the discretionary judgment of an officer, detective or analyst, or it can be required whenever certain dispute activities occur (e.g., an assault or shooting, or a credible threat of violence).

A thorough (level 2) violent-retaliatory-dispute risk assessment should consider the following information:

- Violence in the current event
- Linked past violent events
- Involvement of weapons in this dispute
- Participants' prior violence
- Participants' reputation for violence

- Participants' gang, drug, gun, and recent-incarceration history
- Friend or family connections that might instigate violence
- Associates' gang-, gun-, and drug histories
- Physical proximity of parties' residences or workplaces
- Other aggravating or mitigating factors

Taking into account the factors above, you need to make two key judgments: First, is the event that caught your attention one of a series of linked violent events suggesting that a dispute is likely to continue, or is it merely a single isolated event? Second, does the incident pose a substantial risk of continuing violence? If you conclude there is a substantial threat of retaliatory violence, you should implement and document preventative strategies.

You should also consider whether the obligation to respond to retaliatory violence will be the responsibility of the entire department or a specialized unit. A department-wide approach makes it possible to leverage all department resources toward reducing retaliatory violence. However, coordination of all departmental resources may be difficult, and competing demands faced by department staff may distract from efforts to focus on retaliatory violence. Designating a specialized unit of officers allows for the sustained prioritization on retaliatory violence. The unit's success, however, will be contingent upon its cooperation with other sections within the department and with outside agencies. Both of these approaches have been shown to be effective.<sup>k</sup> The option that you choose should depend on your department's needs.

Two types of regular meetings are important for an effective retaliatory-violent-disputes initiative: *dispute meetings* and *incident reviews*.

Relevant command staff should discuss at least weekly the status of known violent retaliatory disputes. These *dispute meetings* provide a forum for intra- and interagency information sharing.<sup>56</sup> The meeting should be chaired by police department command staff and include representatives from all local law enforcement agencies, crime analysis centers, community stakeholders, and research partners, if so engaged. The meeting should include reviews of new high-risk disputes, actions taken on existing disputes, and ideas for improving response tactics. A dispute analyst should present case summaries, disputant backgrounds, known vulnerabilities, and assessments

<sup>j</sup> Risk assessment in criminal justice has played a prominent role in a number of areas, including pretrial release, probation and parole. For more on risk assessment and criminal justice see Andrews, Bonta, and Wormith (2006).

<sup>k</sup> See El Paso Police Department (2002) and Boston Police Department (2012) Safe Street Teams for examples of programs that designated specialized groups to respond to retaliatory violence. See Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department (2008) for a broader approach.

of current response tactics.<sup>l</sup> These dispute meetings could be integrated into other operational meetings, such as Compstat-style meetings, so long as the focus on disputes, rather than incidents, is not lost.

Conducting formal *incident reviews* has become an important way of sharing information across agency partners addressing violence problems. They provide a forum for exchanging and analyzing information, and for gaining a shared understanding of cases.<sup>57</sup> Incident reviews can provide a foundation for the command reviews, but bear in mind the differences in purpose for these reviews. The goal of dispute meetings is to generate strategies specifically intended to prevent further violence associated with the particular dispute being discussed.

The dispute analyst should develop dispute bulletins to help command staff track violence associated with particular disputes.<sup>m</sup> Dispute bulletins are analyst-generated investigative documents that link incidents believed to be connected to a retaliatory dispute. These bulletins include information about the transgressor and retaliator, and their respective allies, as well as the circumstances of each incident tied to the dispute. Each bulletin should include investigative documentation connecting the incidents. Examining bulletins can help police identify the key characteristics of violent retaliatory disputes and tailor dispute-specific response strategies.

Once command staff determines that additional follow-up processes are no longer needed, the dispute analyst will complete an assessment of the status of the situation, the impact of any strategies that were implemented and any additional information that came forward in the response to the events. All intervention strategies, responsibilities, and outcomes should be entered into a dispute database.

Figure 2 outlines the dispute assessment and intervention process.

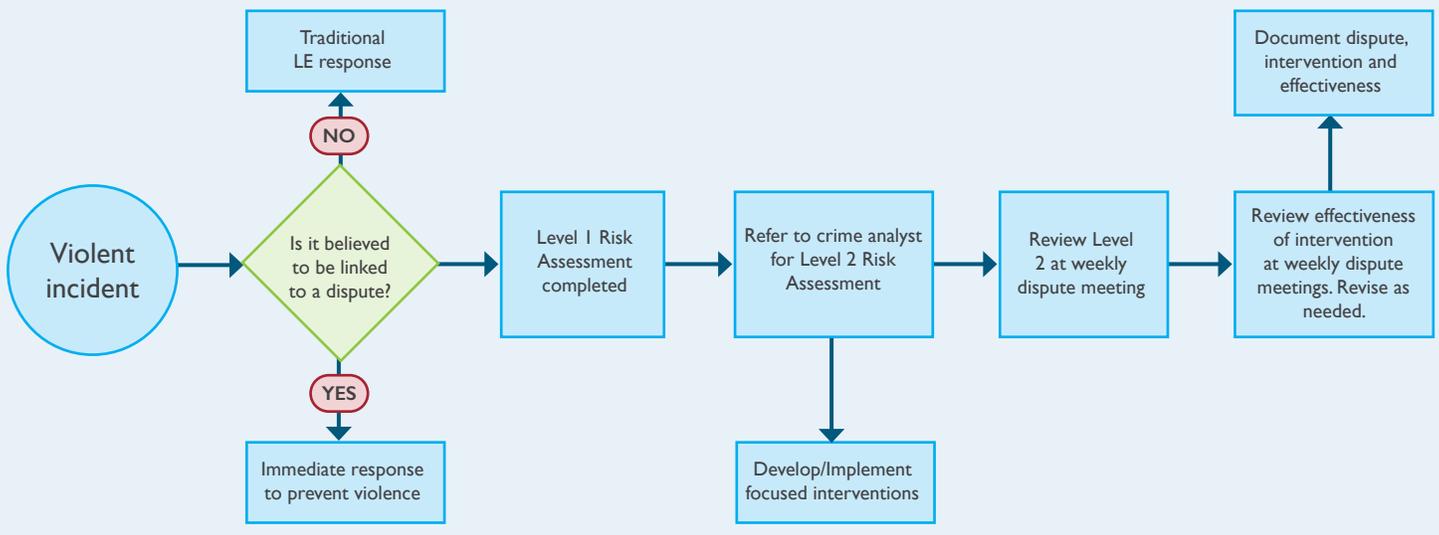
## Monitoring and Tracking Retaliatory Violent Disputes

You should develop a database to track retaliatory violence and dispute interventions. This database should capture dispute-level processes that are important for understanding the nature of retaliatory violence and how interventions influence outcomes for retaliatory disputes. The database should capture information about field assessments, risk assessments, related cases, amounts and types of violence, and intervention strategies employed. The database should also record activities of police personnel or units that are responsible for addressing the various disputes that are being monitored. Traditional records management systems will provide useful information, but may not adequately capture this information. Ideally, a dedicated dispute-monitoring module would be integrated into the records management system.

## The Importance of Strong Leadership and Feedback

Strong leadership is required for a successful retaliatory-violence-intervention project. Leaders must encourage their personnel to think differently about their role in violence reduction. Preventing retaliatory violence relies heavily on patrol officers to collect and forward street intelligence to crime analysts for risk assessment. Command staff must ensure that patrol officers are trained to be recognize, document, and forward such intelligence, and that they receive feedback on both the value of the intelligence they provide and the status of the dispute. Having street intelligence disappear into a virtual black hole is one of the surest ways of discouraging patrol officers from providing it.

**FIGURE 2: DISPUTE-RELATED VIOLENCE: IDENTIFICATION, RISK ASSESSMENT, INTERVENTION MODEL**



<sup>l</sup> See Gangs Action Group (2011) for an example of the critical role that crime analysts can play in a retaliatory violence intervention.

<sup>m</sup> See Appendix C for a sample dispute bulletin.

## Training Line Personnel

It is imperative that your staff are adequately trained to reduce retaliatory violence. Patrol officers should be trained to identify disputes and notify their superiors about them. This training could begin with an introduction to problem-oriented policing and how disputes can be understood as problems that require special police attention. The training could then transition to more specific processes that your department will use to identify, monitor, and respond to retaliatory violence. Additionally, crime analysts will need training on identifying potential disputes, linking individual incidents, and conducting risk assessments.

## SPECIFIC RESPONSES TO RETALIATORY VIOLENT DISPUTES

A wide range of interventions can be used to prevent retaliatory violence. These interventions work best when they are tailored to the unique circumstances of each particular dispute. Dispute interventions are of three basic types: investigative interventions, extended-enforcement interventions, and direct-prevention interventions. It is important to note that while all of the interventions suggested below have been used by police, not all of them have been proven to reduce retaliatory violence. Your selection of responses should be driven by the dispute circumstances and resources available to your department. Additionally, you should consult with your local legal counsel on the legal requirements of some responses.

### Investigative Interventions

Investigative interventions prioritize criminal arrest as an objective. Custodial arrests can prevent subsequent violence by incapacitating dispute participants and deterring other dispute participants from engaging in subsequent retaliatory violence. Moreover, the filing of criminal charges can provide leverage that might be helpful with regard to other preventive measures.

1. **Prioritizing investigation of incidents known to be related to an active, potentially violent dispute.** This calls for deviating from conventional investigative priorities that are based primarily on the seriousness of the offense and solvability factors.
2. **Referring high-priority investigations to special investigative units.** Special investigative tactics such as electronic or plainclothes surveillance can be useful in developing evidence sufficient to arrest dispute participants for past violence or drug or vice crimes.<sup>58</sup> These arrests can incapacitate dispute participants, lead to the development of new intelligence related to the dispute, and provide additional investigative leverage.
3. **Debriefing dispute participants and knowledgeable others.** This technique can develop new intelligence related to the dispute. A key element is securing the crime scene, particularly to ensure that all witnesses are interviewed about the potential for retaliatory violence.<sup>59</sup>

4. **Monitoring jail conversations/telephone calls.** This can lead to the development of new intelligence that aids in the investigation of dispute-related incidents and enhancement of dispute-prevention strategies. Disputants often share important details about causes of the dispute, the principal actors, locations where dispute-related violence occurred, and the types of weapons used.<sup>60</sup>
5. **Monitoring dispute participants' social media.** Social media has become an important forum for tracking dispute-related activity.<sup>61</sup> Disputants often will brag about the victimization of rivals and make threats of subsequent violence. In some cases, dispute participants have posted pictures of the weapons and vehicles used in dispute-related assaults. There are also instances when dispute participants arrange appointments to meet for the continuation of retaliatory violence.
6. **Canvassing neighborhoods.** Neighborhood canvasses can provide street intelligence on dispute characteristics relevant to the investigation and access to witnesses who, while reluctant to testify in court, can provide important street intelligence about disputes.
7. **Referring retaliatory disputes to school resource officers (SRO) for additional information.** SROs often know the history and social networks of school-aged disputants. This helps investigators understand dispute motives and identify others who may be able to provide information about the dispute. SROs are particularly helpful gathering intelligence on school-aged disputants who are affiliated with gangs or other problem groups.
8. **Referring retaliatory disputes to mental health agencies.** In cases where disputants have a documented mental illness, police may consult with mental health agencies to determine the best strategies to effectively reduce levels of violence. In some cases, a disputant's underlying mental disorder may be contributing to the dispute and may be treatable.

### Extended-Enforcement Interventions

Extended-enforcement interventions are those that address behavior and conditions outside the most recent dispute incidents.

9. **Targeting enforcement on key individuals.** Targeted enforcement of key individuals can interrupt dispute-related violence by incapacitating the most violent disputants.<sup>62</sup> However, incapacitating key individuals may not end the dispute if known associates are willing and able to carry out further violence.
10. **Saturating high-risk areas with patrol.** This strategy can temporarily deter dispute participants from engaging in retaliatory violence. Saturation patrol can also increase opportunities to collect intelligence relevant to the investigation.
11. **Searching homes for weapons and dispute intelligence.** Often, at least some of the disputants are on either probation or parole. In cases where suspected disputants are on parole or probation, and probable cause is established, the property of probationers and parolees can be searched

as a condition of their supervision.<sup>n</sup> These searches can sometimes generate important intelligence related to the dispute, including weapons. Furthermore, probation or parole violations that lead to incarceration can temporarily incapacitate probationers/parolees that are engaged in a dispute, thereby reducing the risk for retaliatory violence.

Parents, spouses, and roommates of disputants may wish to cooperate with law enforcement, particularly when they believe the continued dispute will result in their child, spouse, roommate, or themselves being harmed incarcerated. Consent searches can help find guns or other weapons and can provide useful intelligence for the investigation of dispute-related violence.<sup>63</sup>

12. **Conducting warrant checks and checks of unresolved driving infractions and violations.** Dispute participants sometimes have outstanding cases, active warrants, or license and moving violations. These can provide leverage for law enforcement and may even lead to the temporary incapacitation of dispute participants, thereby reducing the likelihood of subsequent retaliatory violence.
13. **Tracking probationers and parolees via electronic monitoring.** Electronic monitoring of probationers, parolees, or defendants on bail release can help authorities track high-risk actors who may be involved in retaliatory disputes. Access to GPS monitoring can help authorities determine if actors were in the vicinity of particular dispute incidents. This can help police determine if particular subjects should receive special attention or be ruled out as suspects in the investigation.
14. **Conducting social service checks and enforcing related violations.** Police can work with social service agencies to investigate services for disputants and their families to avoid violence.
15. **Conducting knock-and-talk home visits.** Police, perhaps accompanied by social-service providers or clergy can visit the homes of youth believed to be engaged in retaliatory violence.<sup>64</sup> This can also yield new intelligence about the dispute.
16. **Communicating directly with disputants.** This could include a range of strategies from formal letters from police or prosecution officials to home visits in order to personally deliver messages dealing with dispute resolution strategies, services and, deterrence.<sup>o</sup>
17. **Executing emergency detentions of mentally ill, violent disputants.** Some disputants may have mental health issues. Making a mental health detention can temporarily incapacitate dispute participants and may provide access to treatment which reduces the likelihood of further violence in the dispute.

## Direct-Prevention Interventions

Direct-prevention interventions involve direct preventive action other than arrest.

18. **Enforcing property and business codes.** Property code enforcement reduces the likelihood that disputants congregate in or around problem areas. Vacant houses and commercial buildings can sometimes become magnets for dispute-related violence because the lack of social control in such settings can lead to the promotion of vice and violence.<sup>65</sup> Cincinnati police were able to reduce violent crime significantly by improving control over networked places where violence—including retaliatory dispute violence—occurred or was staged.<sup>66</sup>
19. **Referring disputants to street outreach workers.** Police can refer disputes to street outreach workers when disputants are not amenable to police intervention. The street outreach workers can develop a plan to deter subsequent retaliatory violence.<sup>67</sup>
20. **Referring disputants to local community, legal, or religious organizations that specialize in mediation or dispute resolution.** Many cities have non-profit entities that offer free dispute-resolution services to reduce violence. Police can actively refer disputants to such services. These services can be used in isolation, or in combination with some other approach.
21. **Engaging significant others in exercising informal social control.** Significant others often cooperate with law enforcement and provide important intelligence on the dispute. Engaging significant others can help alert them concerning the serious nature dispute. This may lead them to engage their significant other in a manner that reduces the likelihood of subsequent retaliatory violence. Examples of significant others that can be engaged include romantic partners, family members, and friends.
22. **Having police officers actively mediate disputes.** Police can meet with dispute parties to discourage retaliation and mediate or negotiate settlements when serious crimes have not yet occurred. The police department could establish a cadre of trained negotiators.
23. **Assisting disputants in relocating to avoid disputes.** Disputants often wish to end the violence, but have no place of refuge that can shield them from potential retaliation. Providing relocation assistance can remove disputants from the theatre of operations and decrease the likelihood of subsequent retaliatory violence.<sup>p</sup>
24. **Assisting disputants in negotiating or settling debts.** A significant number of the disputes begin as a result of conflicts over money or property. Negotiating debt between disputants can help resolve the dispute and reduce the likelihood of subsequent retaliatory violence.

<sup>n</sup> As laws and policies governing police searches vary significantly across countries, states, and police agencies, you should consult your agency's legal counsel for advice before adopting this strategy.

<sup>o</sup> See *Focused Deterrence of High-risk Individuals*, Response Guide No. 13 for further information.

<sup>p</sup> For further information, see Problem-Specific Guide No. 42, *Witness Intimidation*.

25. **Linking disputants to social services.** Provision of social services can help to divert dispute participants to a conventional lifestyle by (re)connecting them to prosocial others and institutions.<sup>9</sup>
26. **Linking disputants to recreational activities.** Recreation centers such as Boys and Girls Clubs can provide a safe space for children living in high-crime areas. Unfortunately, these centers can also sometimes serve as incubators of criminal activity. Police can work closely with administrators of such centers to ensure that dispute-related activity is not carried out on the premises of recreational centers. Recreation center staff may also possess important intelligence on dispute-related activity.
27. **Conducting focused-deterrence call-ins and custom notifications with disputants.** Focused-deterrence call-ins can be utilized to deter disputants and associates from engaging in subsequent retaliatory violence.<sup>†</sup> The extent to which call-ins can aid in reduction of retaliatory violence in your jurisdiction will be contingent upon your ability to implement an effective call-in program that can be incorporated within a broader strategy to reduce retaliatory violence. Custom notifications can be sent directly to disputants and the message can be tailored to particular individuals. This approach is particularly useful when there is not enough time to schedule a focused-deterrence call-in.

## HOW TO START A RETALIATORY VIOLENCE REDUCTION PROGRAM

If your jurisdiction is interested in starting an initiative to reduce retaliatory violence, you should take the following major steps:

- Understand the nature of retaliatory violence in your community. To accomplish this task, it may be necessary to solicit support from a research partner. Collecting and analyzing local data can provide insight on the most appropriate ways to respond to the problem in your jurisdiction.
- Develop a clear set of protocols to determine when and how your department will respond to retaliatory disputes. This protocol should establish when risk assessment is warranted, a process for reviewing disputes, a process for responding to disputes, and a mechanism to track and monitor the strategies used and their effects.
- Implement a robust training regimen for officers, crime analysts, and law enforcement partners that will be working on this project. This training should provide clear guidelines on the roles and responsibilities of all actors, including: patrol officers, command staff, crime analysts, and other law enforcement personnel.
- Establish a mechanism to assess the implementation of the project and determine what is going well and changes that need to be made to fit the unique needs of your jurisdiction.

<sup>9</sup> See *Focused Deterrence of High-risk Individuals*, Response Guide No. 13 for further information.

<sup>†</sup> See *Focused Deterrence of High-risk Individuals*, Response Guide No. 13 for further information.

# APPENDIX A: LEVEL I DISPUTE ASSESSMENT FORM

## DISPUTE VIOLENCE RISK ASSESSMENT LEVEL I REVIEW

Complete this form when you identify a potentially violent dispute. For additional information on the individuals/location below, call the Crime Analysis Center.

Incident Location: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of incident: \_\_\_\_\_ Case report #(s): \_\_\_\_\_

### Retaliatory dispute definition

A violent retaliatory dispute is an interaction involving conflict, over a period of time, between two or more individuals and/or people associated with them and marked by two or more events involving confrontation or intimidation, in which at least some of those events involve violent acts or credible threats of violence.

1. Provide the names of two or more individuals/groups believed to be involved in this dispute.

---

---

---

2. Do you believe the risk of violence is? (check all that apply)  Immediate  Ongoing  Long term

3. Why do you think this will result in further violence?

---

---

---

4. Briefly describe the way you found out about this dispute. What event or information is relevant?

---

---

---

5. What do you believe is the cause of this dispute?

---

---

---

6. What specific actions did you take to address this dispute?

---

---

---

Name of person completing this report: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor review: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# APPENDIX B: LEVEL 2 RISK ASSESSMENT TOOL

## DISPUTE VIOLENCE RISK ASSESSMENT LEVEL 2: INTERMEDIATE REVIEW AND INTERVENTION

The goal of this form is to help you assess the level of risk of violence in a dispute that you have identified.

### Retaliatory Dispute Definition

A violent retaliatory dispute is an interaction involving conflict, over a period of time, between two or more individuals and/or people associated with them and marked by two or more events involving confrontation or intimidation, in which at least some of those events involve violent acts or credible threats of violence.

Name of person completing this report: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Incident Location: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Case Report#(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Level 1 Completed: \_\_\_\_\_

### 1. Dispute summary

---

---

---

### 2. Provide the names of two or more individuals or groups that you believe are involved in this dispute

---

---

---

### 3. Briefly describe the way you found out about this dispute.

---

---

---

### 4. What do you believe is the cause of this dispute?

---

---

---

Total number checked: \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Unknown

Name of person reviewing this report: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Reviewer's comments: \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

Action taken by reviewer:

## Dispute Violence Risk Assessment

Check If

Yes No Unknown *Check all that apply. Add comments when needed.*

### 1. Current Event (the event that brought the issue to the officer's attention)

- |                          |                          |                          |   |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Event involved confirmed violence           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Event involved confirmed threat of violence |

Comments:

### 2. Past Events Linked to Current Event

- |                          |                          |                          |   |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | There is one or more linked past event which involved violence            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | There is one or more linked past event which involved threats of violence |

Comments:

### 3. Involvement with Weapons in this Dispute

- |                          |                          |                          |   |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Current or prior events in this dispute involved weapons                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Recent reckless endangerments (RE) involved participants or their property            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Recent prohibited use of a weapon (PUW) involved participants and/or associates       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Participants or associates recently stopped for criminal possession of a weapon (CPW) |

Comments:

### 4. Participants' Prior Violence

- |                          |                          |                          |   |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Someone on one side has a prior record involving violence   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Someone on both sides has a prior record involving violence |

Comments:

### 5. Participants' Reputation

- |                          |                          |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Someone on one or both sides has a reputation for being "out of control" |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|

Comments:

Check If

Yes    No    Unknown    *Check all that apply. Add comments when needed.*

**6. Participants: Other Characteristics**

- One or more participants is a known gang member
- One or more participants is a known drug dealer
- One or more participants is believed to carry a gun
- One or more participants was recently released from incarceration

Comments:

**7. Associated Individuals**

- Friends of either or both parties have been recruited into the conflict
- Either or both parties are members of known problem families

Comments:

**8. Associates: Other Characteristics**

- One or more associates of either or both parties is a known gang member
- One or more associates of either or both parties is a known drug dealer
- One or more associates of either or both parties is believed to carry a gun

Comments:

**9. Proximity of Parties to One Another**

- Residences of those involved are close to each other
- Parties currently attend the same school
- Parties shared a connection to an illegal business

Comments:

**10. Other Aggravating or Mitigating Factors**

- There are no responsible third parties to intervene to reduce violence
- There are third parties who intervene to support violence
- There are other known factors that increase the likelihood of violence (describe)

Comments:

**Total\***    \_\_\_\_\_    \_\_\_\_\_    \_\_\_\_\_

\* The tally of the numerical scores on this checklist helps police managers efficiently prioritize investigative resources by: a) providing them a short-hand violence-risk summary, b) rank ordering by risk level the many ongoing disputes in the community, c) differentiating disputes that are well understood by police from those that are not (and thereby alerting crime analysts and patrol officers to gather more intelligence about these disputes), and d) providing an objective basis for committing extra resources to intervening in the most dangerous disputes.

# APPENDIX C: SAMPLE DISPUTE BULLETIN

**LEGEND:** V = Victim R = Reporter S = Suspect NI = Person who was at the scene but not interviewed.

## SUMMARY

On 9/7/09, \_\_\_\_\_ was stabbed during a dispute with persons associated with [ADDRESS] (Case Number XX-xxxxxx). Since then, there has been an ongoing dispute between residents at [ADDRESS] and [ADDRESS].

## EVENT TIMELINE:

### Not Included in Quantitative Analysis because of the concern about link:

**RE:** [ADDRESS] (Case Number XX-xxxxxx) 03/28/10, 00:36

(V1): 5-3-73/[ADDRESS]

(V2): [ADDRESS]

(S): m/h/dark vest/light sweatshirt

Suspect fired three shots into the side of the above location. Unknown why S fired at house, investigation continues with an attempt to determine any connection. [ADDRESS] had multiple cameras on the house and captured the S firing shots from in front of [ADDRESS] and then fleeing east bound through the yards. Three .45 caliber casings recovered.

**Criminal Mischief:** [ADDRESS] (Case Number XX-xxxxxx) 10/04/09, 2:00

(V1): 2/13/75, [ADDRESS]

(PK) 10/17/67, [ADDRESS]

(NI): 7/14/92

(R): 5/3/73, [ADDRESS]

Vehicles: 1998 Pontiac Bonneville, white, [LICENSE PLATE NO.] & 1996 Ford Taurus, red, [LICENSE PLATE NO.]

R called to report that his girlfriend's above vehicles were damaged. R states that he came outside and saw that one tire on the Ford was flat and that there was a scratch on the rear drivers side fender. R also saw that 2 driver's side tires of the Pontiac were slashed.

R.O spoke to Pk who states that he saw NI walk by both vehicles and briefly bend down next to them. Pk knows NI from the neighborhood and knows NI lives at [ADDRESS].

**Harassment:** [ADDRESS] (Case Number XX-xxxxxx) 09/08/09, 21:20

V: 7/2/96, [ADDRESS]

R: 7/18/75, [ADDRESS]

S: 1/20/93, [ADDRESS]

R states that she was in her home and V was on the upstairs porch. S walked up to the house and began yelling "pussy bitch come down here and I'll beat your ass" at V. R immediately called 911 due to ongoing problems with S.

**Assault Stabbing:** [ADDRESS] (Case Number XX-xxxxxx) 09/07/09, 20:35

V: 5/3/73, [ADDRESS]

NI: 10/12/72, [ADDRESS]

Pk1: 12/7/89, [ADDRESS]

W: 7/18/75, [ADDRESS]

V states on the above date in the area of [ADDRESS] he observed several members of his family including his girlfriend (w) involved in a physical altercation with neighbors and PK1. V states he tried to separate the parties broke the situation escalated. During the altercation V states he was struck in the left side of his stomach with an unknown object by S. V described the S as a M/H with a yellow t-shirt and black shorts. V states he can ID S. NI was identified as a possible S for this crime.

### Below is not confirmed as part of dispute, but relevant.

**Narcotics Search Warrant:** [ADDRESS] (Case Number XX-xxxxxx) 09/30/08, 09:15

PK1: [NAME], 7/18/75, [ADDRESS]

PK2: [NAME] 9/30/81, [ADDRESS]

On the above date various members of SIS executed a narcotics search warrant at the above address. Pk1 and 2 were in the home along with ----- 1/21/80, the search warrant was commenced. The only item located during the search warrant was a black Marksman BB gun with a brown grip. The warrant was obtained based on the crack cocaine being purchased from this location on 3 separate occasions.

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# ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> The History Channel (n.d.)
- <sup>2</sup> Wolfgang (1958); Pizarro (2008).
- <sup>3</sup> Klofas (2001).
- <sup>4</sup> Felson and Tedeschi (1993); Griffiths, Yule, and Gartner (2011).
- <sup>5</sup> Athens (2005), Taylor (2012), Luckenbill (1977).
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- <sup>8</sup> Wilkinson, Beaty and Lurry (2008).
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- <sup>11</sup> Black (1983).
- <sup>12</sup> Anderson (1999).
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- <sup>15</sup> Topalli, Wright and Forgango (2002).
- <sup>16</sup> Kivivuori, Savolainen, and Aaltonen (2016).
- <sup>17</sup> Altheimer and Klofas (2013).
- <sup>18</sup> Rengifo and Bolton (2012).
- <sup>19</sup> Kamphuis and Emmelkamp (2005).
- <sup>20</sup> Copeland-Linder et al. (2012).
- <sup>21</sup> Anderson (1999).
- <sup>22</sup> Anderson (1999); Jacobs and Wright (2006).
- <sup>23</sup> Hughes (2013).
- <sup>24</sup> Garot (2009).
- <sup>25</sup> Wilkinson (2003).
- <sup>26</sup> Planty (2002).
- <sup>27</sup> Taylor (2012).
- <sup>28</sup> Anderson (1999).
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- <sup>30</sup> Weisburd and Eck (2004).
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- <sup>32</sup> Bruce, Rosigno, and McCall (1998).
- <sup>33</sup> Reuter (2009); Goldstein (1985).
- <sup>34</sup> Taylor (2012).
- <sup>35</sup> Wilkinson (2003).
- <sup>36</sup> Jacques and Wright (2011).
- <sup>37</sup> Jacobs (2004).
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- <sup>39</sup> Anderson (1999).
- <sup>40</sup> Cohen and Nisbett (1994).
- <sup>41</sup> Melde and Esbensen (2013).
- <sup>42</sup> Katz et al. (2011).
- <sup>43</sup> Taylor et al. (2008).
- <sup>44</sup> Decker (1996).
- <sup>45</sup> Papachristos (2009).
- <sup>46</sup> Elmquist et al. (2014).
- <sup>47</sup> Rosenfeld, Jacobs, and Wright (2003).
- <sup>48</sup> Wilkinson (2003).
- <sup>49</sup> Merseyside Police (2009).
- <sup>50</sup> Southern Nevada Counter-Terrorism Center (2012).
- <sup>51</sup> Kooi (2007).
- <sup>52</sup> For an example, see Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department (2008).
- <sup>53</sup> Karraker et al. (2011).
- <sup>54</sup> Ritter (2009).
- <sup>55</sup> PICO National Network (2016); Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department (2008).
- <sup>56</sup> Boston Police Department (2003).
- <sup>57</sup> Klofas and Hipple (2006); Hipple et al. (2017)
- <sup>58</sup> San Diego Police Department (2011).
- <sup>59</sup> El Paso Police Department (2002).
- <sup>60</sup> Matthews (2006).
- <sup>61</sup> Patton et al. (2016).
- <sup>62</sup> San Diego Police Department (2011).
- <sup>63</sup> Rosenfeld and Decker (1996).
- <sup>64</sup> Rosenfeld and Decker (1996).
- <sup>65</sup> Eck and Clarke (2013).
- <sup>66</sup> Cincinnati Police Department (2017).
- <sup>67</sup> Skogan et al. (2009); Webster, Frattaroli and Parker (2014); Ritter (2009).