

APARTMENT MANAGERS' HOTLINE PRCHiKAM

Abstract

The Colorado Springs Police Department has policed with the Community Policing Philosophy since the 1970's. Problem Oriented Policing (POP) was incorporated into our Community Policing Strategy in 1992. One of the many POP Projects developed in 1996 with the assistance of the community was the Apartment Managers' Hotline, to assist apartment managers in obtaining information about incidents occurring on their property.

The Crime Prevention Unit of the Sand Creek Division, one of three Patrol Divisions within the Colorado Springs Police Department, has held monthly meetings with apartment managers since 1994 to address issues in apartment complexes. In 1996, the Crime Prevention Unit discovered from our POP computer data base that 73 apartment complexes were responsible for 19% of the total calls for service in the Division from August 28, 1995 to August 28, 1996. Apartment managers were confronted by crime prevention personnel about their lack of action regarding problem tenants, particularly those involved in illegal narcotic transactions, crimes of violence, or calls of a repetitive nature. The apartment managers responded that they were seldom made aware of criminal activity in their complexes. They were more than willing to take action if we would furnish them timely information.

The Neighborhood Policing Unit Sergeant brought this issue up at a meeting with the SAFE Multi-housing Coalition group. A member of the group suggested that a colleague with a telephone answering service might be able to provide a way for the Police Department to share information with apartment managers. The owner of the answering service was contacted, and volunteered to serve as a reference point for

officers to call after they responded to a call regarding drug or gang activity, or repetitive type calls at an apartment complex.

In September of 1996, the pilot project was implemented in the Sand Creek Division, which has 105 apartment complexes. The officers were given a phone number to call in information for apartment managers on all such calls. The answering service relayed the information to the apartment manager's answering machine, then faxed the information to the crime prevention officer at Sand Creek so he could follow up with the apartment manager after three days.

The one year pilot period produced a significant decrease in criminal activity for those apartments that used the hotline program. Of the 73 apartment complexes, 44 complexes where the hotline was used showed a 19% decrease in calls for service over the one year period (approximately 1325 CFS). Apartment complexes that did not use the program showed a 41% increase. Apartment managers acted on 168 calls, evicting 44 of the tenants, giving 45 verbal or written infractions and having 13 tenants move out on their own.

This cooperative effort between the community and the Colorado Springs Police Department shows the dedication and commitment we have to the community, and symbolizes true community policing using problem solving efforts involving the citizens of our community.

COLORADO SPRINGS POLICE DEPARTMENT APARTMENT MANAGER'S HOTLINE PROGRAM

A. Introduction

The Colorado Springs Police Department has been on the forefront of Community Policing for many years. We incorporated the Community Policing Philosophy into our department in the 1970's. In 1992, we took it one step further and adopted Problem Oriented Policing (POP) into our Community Policing efforts. Since then, we have had numerous POP projects in conjunction with the community which have resulted in a reduction in calls for service as well as enhanced the quality of life for the citizens.

B. Scanning

A large part of the citizens in our community are military employees, which tends to make the population transient. Our housing areas vary, from mobile homes, to apartment complexes, to housing developments. A large part of our population resides in apartment complexes.

In keeping with our Community Policing philosophy, the Crime Prevention Unit at the Sand Creek Division developed a partnership with apartment managers in Colorado Springs. In 1994, the Apartment Watch Program was established to enhance communications between the apartment managers and the police department. Annual apartment managers' training was held by the Colorado Springs Police Department to provide training to apartment managers in areas such as screening applicants, eviction procedures, and crime prevention through environmental design concepts.

In conjunction with the Apartment Watch Program, the Sand Creek Division established monthly meetings with apartment managers city-wide to discuss issues in their complexes. Information was shared between the police department and the community, showing a true community policing effort. It was discovered that there was a lack of information sharing

between officers and apartment managers about calls for services at apartment complexes.

Officers are often called repeatedly to an address at an apartment complex regarding drug, gang or noise activity. The traditional response to these calls for service has been to respond to the call, handle it, and then clear. It is not uncommon for officers to return two hours later to the same apartment for the same complaint. These calls consume a large amount of time and effort from the police department. Officers can only take criminal action and are left helpless regarding civil action.

Apartment managers have lease agreements that tenants sign which allows the managers to take action against the tenants for specific reasons, of which criminal activity or police related calls is often included. Oftentimes these calls are after hours and no management is on the property, so they remain unaware of the problem.

POP Projects are often like putting together a puzzle. There is usually one part of the puzzle, but finding the rest of the pieces to make it complete can be difficult. Calls for service data showed that apartment complexes in Sand Creek comprised a large amount of the total calls for service in a one-year period. It was apparent that there was a missing piece to the puzzle with apartment complexes responsible for 19% of the total calls for service. There had to be a way to connect apartment managers and the police department together to join forces against the problem tenants. Finding that missing piece can be the most challenging part of any problem.

C. Analysis

In 1996, the Crime Prevention Unit assessed the calls for service from August 28, 1995 to August 28, 1996, for the Sand Creek Division, located in the southeast part of Colorado Springs. This division has several areas with prevalent drug and gang activity. The calls for service data, retrieved from the police department's POP database (see printout, Attachment A) showed that

of the 54,035 calls for service, 10,057 of these calls, or 19% of all calls for service, came from 73 apartment complexes (see chart 1).

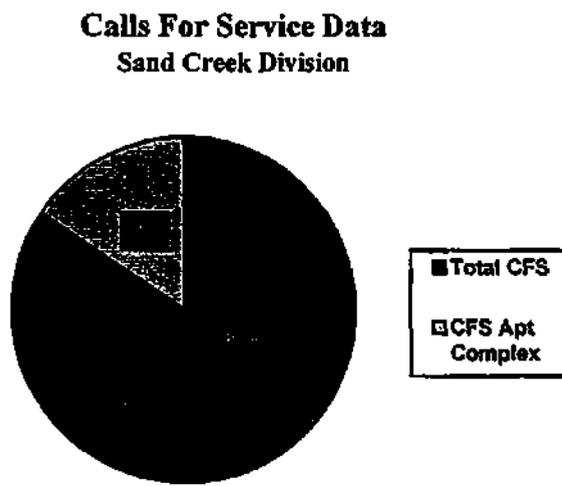


Chart 1

Because of the large amount of calls for service at apartment complexes, the nature of the calls, and the impact on the community, the Crime Prevention Unit determined that a POP project should be created.

Part of the ongoing dedication to problem-oriented policing is the continuous assessment of calls for service to determine repeat calls at specific locations. The Crime Prevention Unit, in conjunction with the Crime Analysis Unit, determined from this data that there were several apartment complexes that were responsible for a large portion of calls for service in the Sand Creek Division. Many of the calls were drug, gang or noise related.

Traditionally, when the police department received a call for service at an apartment complex, for example a noise complaint, the officers would respond and often issue a verbal warning. As is often the case, once the police leave a call, the offenders continue their criminal activity. This band-aid, reactive policing approach to the problem did not discontinue the disruptive behavior, leaving the other tenants to live with the continuing problem and affecting over-all quality of life. The victims in the apartment complex, usually neighbors with families,

often bear the brunt of the criminal activity and are typically afraid to get involved because of the fear of retaliation against their families.

At one of the apartment managers' monthly meetings in 1996, apartment managers were presented with the calls for service statistics. There was concern from our crime prevention personnel that there was no follow up by the managers regarding problem tenants, particularly those involved in illegal narcotic transactions, crimes of violence, or calls that were repetitive in nature. It was apparent that having the police department respond to the situation was not eliminating the problem, and was only one piece of the puzzle.

The apartment managers responded that they were very seldom made aware of criminal activity in their complexes. The police department usually received calls from tenants who were not willing to get involved in the situation. These "victims" did not feel comfortable informing management of the situation for fear of retaliation. It was amazing they were calling the police at all, as the problem tenant usually remained on site. The apartment managers were more than willing to take action on problem tenants and asked for our assistance in providing them information about these incidents.

D. Response

It was clear from the analysis that there was a lack of communication and information sharing between the police department and the apartment managers. The initial response to the issue was to ask officers responding to calls at apartment complexes to contact the on-site apartment manager after they cleared the call. In May of 1996, a memo was issued to all Sand Creek officers asking them to call apartment managers if they responded to a call of a violent or repetitive nature, or one that involved gangs or drugs (see Attachment B).

This approach helped improve communication between officers and apartment managers, but it was only a small step towards completing the puzzle. It increased the time an officer had

to spend on a call attempting to locate an on-site manager. Officers were often unable to locate on-site managers at apartment complexes in which no manager information was posted.

The Neighborhood Policing Unit (NPU) Sergeant discussed this issue at a meeting with the SAFE Multi-housing Coalition group, another joint partnership between the Police Department and the community. A member of the group suggested that a colleague with a telephone answering service might be able to provide a way for the Police Department to share information with apartment managers.

The owner of the answering service was contacted. She was very willing to provide assistance, and volunteered to serve as a reference point for officers to call anytime they responded to a call for service regarding drug or gang activity, or repetitive type calls at an apartment complex. The missing piece to the puzzle had been found. Now it was just a matter of putting all the pieces together.

The logistics of the program were developed in conjunction with the answering service and the crime prevention unit. The first critical component was the officers responding to calls for service at apartment complexes. It was determined that once an officer cleared a call related to drug, gang, violent or repetitive criminal activity, the officer would call the answering service number and leave a message for the apartment manager regarding the call. Information was provided such as the date, time, name of parties involved, the nature of the call, and the disposition of the call. The answering service would, in turn, call the apartment manager's answering machine and leave the message. The answering service would fax a copy of the message to the crime prevention officer so that he could contact the apartment manager after three days to find out what follow up was done.

In September of 1996, the initial pilot test phase was implemented in the Sand Creek Division, which has 105 apartment complexes. With all the pieces in place, the next step was to

get buy-in from the officers and apartment managers, who were the key parts of the program.

The answering service phone number was given to the officers and was also posted in each police cruiser. The NPU and crime prevention personnel attended line ups to discuss the program with the officers and obtain officers' input. A memo was issued to all officers from the Captain of the division asking for their cooperation in this program (see Attachment C). Officers were asked to call and leave information for the apartment manager anytime they responded to a call at an apartment complex that involved gang, drug or repetitive activity.

The next essential component of the program was the apartment manager follow up. Apartment managers were contacted through apartment watch meetings, in person, and by phone and asked to use the information provided to them to assist them in issuing warnings, changing rules, adding precautions, and starting eviction procedures on problem tenants. They were asked to provide a disposition to the crime prevention officer when he contacted them so that he could track the impact of the program on criminal activity and calls for service.

The third and essential key to the success of the program was the answering service. It was important for the employees to understand the purpose of the calls so they could forward complete information to the apartment managers. Without this piece of the puzzle, the program could not exist. The answering service, a community organization, was able to provide a solution to a problem that the police department could not solve alone.

The goals of the program were two-fold. The first and foremost was to improve the quality of life for the apartment complex community. The second goal was to reduce calls for service for officers, making officers available for other calls for service that may need immediate attention.

f. Assessment

The key to determining the success or failure of a POP project is to see if it is producing the desired outcomes or goals of the program. In this case, the second goal of reducing calls for service was easily measured. Calls for service to apartment complexes were assessed during the one year pilot period. Statistics showed that there was a significant decrease in criminal activity for those apartments that used the apartment manager hotline program. Forty-four (44) of the apartment complexes used the hotline, resulting in a 19.2% decrease in calls for service (see chart 2).

Calls for service to apartment complexes were reduced by 1325 over the one year period compared to the year before. Apartment managers acted on 168 calls, evicting 44 of the tenants, giving 45 verbal or written infractions and having 13 tenants move out on their own (see chart 3). Those apartments that did not participate in the program had an overwhelming 41% increase in calls for service. It was clear from these statistics that the apartment manager's hotline was reducing calls for service and making officers available for other calls.

Calls for Service to Apartment Complexes in Sand Creek

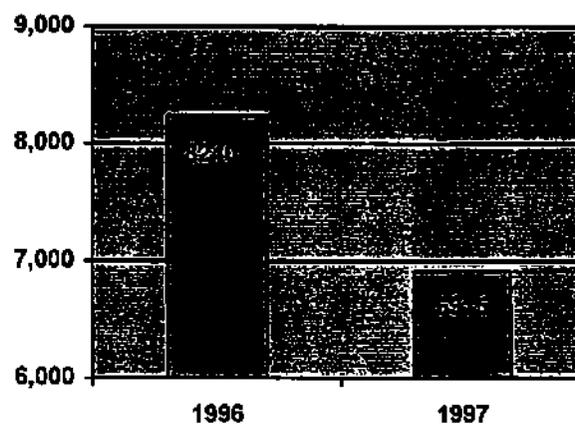


Chart 2

Apartment Manager Dispositions

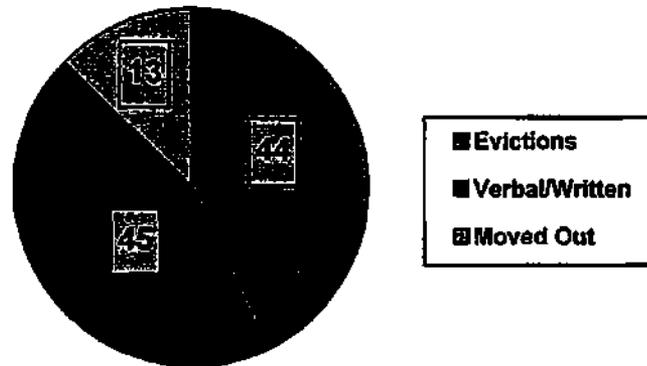


Chart 3

It was somewhat more complex to measure the effect the program had on the quality of life at apartment complexes. Apartment managers were contacted by a volunteer to determine if they wanted to continue to participate in the program. The pilot program was so well received by apartment managers that 100% of the managers wanted the program to continue, felt it was very valuable, and agreed to participate.

Because of the overall success of the program, the Apartment Manager's Hotline was adopted by all three of the divisions for the Police Department in 1997. Each division has been given a separate number for the answering service so the answering service knows which crime prevention officer to send the information to. A volunteer was used at Sand Creek to contact each apartment manager and ask for their participation in the program.

The program will be continuously assessed to determine if it is being used appropriately, how often that it is being used, and the results of the program citywide. If there are any deficiencies in the program, changes will be made accordingly.

This cooperative effort between the community and the Colorado Springs Police Department shows the dedication and commitment we have to the community, and symbolizes true community policing using problem solving efforts involving the citizens of our community.

E. Agency and Officer Information

The Colorado Springs Police Department has been using Community Policing for many years. We developed department directives on Community-Oriented Policing in 1988. This procedure was amended in 1992 to reflect our emphasis on problem solving as a strategy for ongoing community-policing philosophy. These directives contain definitions, problem-solving models, information on resource availability and use, and a generic survey instrument designed to gather information and promote positive and proactive contacts between the public and the police.

In 1992, Sand Creek, one of three geographically defined divisions of CSPD, began the implementation of a pilot project and nine months later CSPD adopted its *Total Problem-Oriented Policing* strategy. The program began with the dissemination of CSPD empowerment cards and entails a diverse set of problem-oriented tactics, organizational decentralization, and community involvement activities.

In 1994 The Colorado Springs Police Department's Community-Oriented Policing Strategy was studied by an assessment team for the **Jefferson Institute for Justice Studies**, which reports on community policing programs across the nation. The Institute's Executive Director, Joan E. Jacoby, stated:

"The Colorado Springs Police Department has developed one of the best integrated community policing strategies in the United States. By giving all police officers and personnel a broader and more positive responsibility to their duties, neighborhood problems are more quickly identified, and more flexible solutions are possible. "

In January, 1995, Herman Goldstein (author of *Problem-Oriented Policing*, 1990) wrote a letter to Police Chief Lome Kramer complimenting him on our community-based, problem-oriented policing strategies:

I was especially impressed by the monograph (Problem-Oriented Policing in the CSPD) that you and Deputy Chief Pat McElderry authored. It presents a very comprehensive picture of your program, and reflects a superb grasp of the many issues and the concepts with which some of us have been struggling for years... I was struck by the varying levels of problems to which you are applying the POP concept.

The Colorado Springs Police Department has adopted Community Oriented Policing as our overall philosophy (what we believe) and Problem-Oriented Policing as a strategy (how we put this philosophy into practice). Our five-year strategic plan, updated each year, incorporates Community-Oriented Policing goals and objectives.

In 1993, a sixteen-hour course was developed on Problem-Oriented Policing. A team of department managers conducted two "train the trainer" courses for all supervisors and Master Patrol Officers. The supervisors then trained all personnel in their respective Divisions in the principles of problem solving.

Recruit officers are given 14 hours of training on the Department's Problem-Oriented Policing concept in the Colorado Springs Police Department's Police Academy. During the Field Training Program recruits are required to utilize community oriented policing strategies in problem solving.

In the Colorado Springs Police Department's SOP on Community /Problem-Oriented Policing (see Attachment D), problem solving is the primary strategy of Community/Problem-Oriented Policing. Attention is directed towards finding a permanent solution to a problem by identifying the underlying conditions and correcting causes instead of just responding to calls for service and handling the specific situation. A four-step decision-making model is used by the Colorado Springs Police Department officers: 1) Scanning, 2) Analysis, 3) Response, 4)

Assessment. This model serves as a systems approach to identify a problem, conduct quantitative and qualitative analysis, formulate and implement a solution, and evaluate its effectiveness through feedback.

A Problem-Oriented Policing Computer Database was created and placed at each Division Command. This database assists officers in analyzing calls-for-service and identifying problem locations. Analysis allows officers to apply problem-solving tactics with community members to targeted areas.

The Colorado Springs Police Department is decentralized into three Division Commands: Gold Hill, Sand Creek and Falcon. Each Division has a Neighborhood Policing Unit (NPU) that focuses on specific community problems. All NPU officers' primary duties are to initiate close citizen contacts through walking beats, business liaison, bicycle patrol and other methods to interdict emerging crime problems. The Department has experienced remarkable success with these units in reducing gang, vice, prostitution, drug and other crime problems. There is a crime prevention officer assigned to each NPU unit to provide education to citizens, as well as help develop solutions to issues that arise in the community.

On November 25, 1994, the Falcon Division Cellular Phone Demonstration Project was initiated by the Colorado Springs Police Department. This project was designed to explore the uses of Cellular Phone technology in the delivery of police service to the public. Officers were instructed that they could use the phone for any purpose related to their officer duties. Cellular phone numbers were prominently displayed on the back of the police cars so that citizens could call the officers. This project was another community oriented policing approach in providing another link between the community and the patrol officer. Officers are able to use these phones to contact the answering service and provide information about calls at apartment complexes.

The Colorado Springs Police Department was one of the original ICAP (Integrated Criminal Apprehension Program) sites in the late 1970's, and has a strong philosophy of using data and analysis to guide decisions, both managerial and operational. A decentralized Crime Analysis Unit, linked to central computer information databases, tracks target crimes, conducts traffic analysis, identifies crime trends, and provides modus operandi information to support police patrol and investigations.

A networked database, updated daily, provides patrol officers and crime analysts with calls-for-service information for identifying crime and disorder areas, high frequency calls-for-service, and allows for problem-solving analysis as well as for follow-up evaluation of completed Problem-Oriented Policing projects. The Crime Analysis Unit works in conjunction with NPU to determine calls for service that deplete manpower and reduce quality of life in the community.

All of these resources were used to address the high calls for service at apartment complexes. It is important in problem solving that officers are able to use internal as well as external resources when assessing a community issue. In this project, there was little manpower used other than those existing units already in place for community policing efforts. The Colorado Springs Police Department remains committed to the citizens we serve. Involving the citizens in issues that affect the community benefits the police department as well as the community. We recognize that together we can make our community a place where people are proud to call home.

Project Contact Person:

Name: WyattMcBride

Position/Rank: Crime Prevention Officer for Sand Creek Division

Address: 4125 Center Park Dr.

City/State: Colorado Springs, CO 80916

Phone: (719)444-7276

Fax: (719)574-3131

E-mail: none