PROACTIVE POLICE RESPONSE TO
Domestic-Related Repeat Calls for Service

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Letter from the Director of the COPS Office

Colleagues:

Regrettably, domestic-related incidents—from relatively minor disputes to serious violence—are common causes of law enforcement calls for service. In addition to the harmful toll these events take on individuals, families, and communities, responding to such calls can be dangerous for officers. But early intervention in violent or abusive situations may be the best way to prevent additional violence and abuse. Social service and public health providers—as well as families, friends, and the community in general—are heavily invested in reducing and preventing domestic violence, and because they are often the very first to be called to a disturbance, law enforcement officers may be aware of and able to reduce the potential for violence in a home.

The COPS Office funded the Danville (Virginia) Police Department's efforts to develop, with Drs. Rachel and Roberto Santos of Radford University, a process for responding to domestic-related calls for service as part of Stratified Policing, a more general proactive crime reduction strategy. This approach aims to intervene early when domestic-related repeat calls for service occur, before they become major incidents requiring significant police response, and in so doing have more law enforcement resources available for agencies to focus on proactively addressing situations that can lead to domestic violence in the hope of preventing future incidents from occurring at all. Domestic violence is still handled by the criminal justice system, but this process complements those efforts with systematic attention paid to repeated minor noncriminal incidents before they can escalate to major criminal ones.

We are pleased to present this guide for the benefit of other agencies and communities. Together, we can continue to work to prevent domestic violence in homes and communities throughout the United States.

Sincerely,

Robert E. Chapman
Acting Director
Office of Community Oriented Policing Services

Introduction and Background

Domestic violence is an ongoing concern for both the police and the community, given its frequency, repeated nature, and seriousness. Research shows that the ability to intervene during early stages of emotional and verbal abuse or less physically injurious violence is critical to preventing future violence (Buzawa, Buzawa, and Starke 2017; Campbell et al. 2007; Campbell and Messing 2017). Domestic violence, which is also referred to as domestic abuse or family violence, is one or a pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening, degrading, or violent behavior. Intimate partner violence (IPV) occurs between current or former spouses or intimate partners or between individuals who have a child in common. Non-IPV occurs between individuals within a domestic circle—for example, immediate family members, other relatives, or caretakers. In any of these circumstances, the key is that there is a close relationship between the offender(s) and the victim(s).

As the first responders, police are uniquely poised to play a key role in assisting social service and public health efforts to prevent and reduce domestic violence. Police may see problematic relationships and families before victim advocates, doctors, and other service providers are even aware there is a problem. Importantly, when serious domestic violence crimes do occur and the results are severe, often the community and the media ask how many times the police responded to the address and what actions the police took to prevent the crime. Consequently, identifying potentially violent situations as well as connecting victims and their families to resources and victim services, including emergency housing and legal services, as early as possible is critical to preventing escalation of the violence.

Domestic-related calls for service are one of the most frequent categories law enforcement agencies respond to and are one of the most dangerous calls for officers. Yet many of these calls do not constitute a domestic violence crime or trigger an arrest. In law enforcement agencies around the United States, dispatchers use a "domestic disturbance" or "domestic violence" call type to alert responding officers to potential domestic violence issues based on the brief information provided by citizens who call 911. Once an officer arrives on scene and does an initial investigation, there may be no probable cause or even an allegation of violence, so no report is required to be taken. Because of this, the reality is that many domestic-related calls are cleared by officers without taking a report.[1] Because most proactive domestic violence responses are initiated by a crime report, identifying repeat occurrences of noncriminal calls for service presents an opportunity for police to respond proactively with the potential to prevent future incidents of domestic violence.

1. Importantly, the most dangerous time can be when victims reach out for help or take the first step to leave an abusive relationship, which might explain why they do not make direct allegations—because they have been threatened not to talk to the police.

This guide provides a process for proactive police response to short-term domestic-related problems that is encompassed within a larger proactive crime reduction approach called Stratified Policing. Stratified Policing is an organizational model that includes a framework and specific processes to accomplish the institutionalization of a multidimensional set of evidence-based proactive crime-reduction strategies (Santos and Santos 2020). Stratified Policing has been developed to (1) provide police leaders a clear path for implementation and institutionalization of proactive crime reduction modeled after current police processes; (2) incorporate practical theory and evidence-based practices from place-based, problem-solving, person-focused, and community-based approaches; (3) use crime analysis to identify and prioritize crime problems to be addressed realistically by different levels within the organization; (4) lay out a specific and adaptable framework for incorporating small changes by rank and division into daily activities that all contribute to the larger practical approach; (5) use time from individuals throughout the organization as a resource and become more efficient without requiring additional or specialized resources; (6) ensure that individuals and divisions within the organization contribute based on what is realistic and neither is overburdened with responsibility or the work being done; (7) incorporate multifaceted formal and informal accountability that is fair and transparent; and (8) raise the expectations for everyone in the organization to contribute to crime reduction (Santos and Santos 2020, 6).

The process described here is the application of one component of Stratified Policing for the short-term problem of repeat calls for service at residences, called domestic-related repeat incidents or DRRI. Although this guide focuses on a particular type of activity, the process can also be used for other types of repeat calls for service, such as suspicious activity, drug activity, and alarms.

A system of problem stratification provides the structural foundation for Stratified Policing to ensure the appropriate people are responsible for addressing problems that align with their job responsibilities, training, resources, and position in the police organization. Three levels include immediate problems (i.e., the most serious individual incidents), short-term problems (i.e., acute clusters of calls for service and crime), and long-term problems (i.e., chronic problem areas, places, and individuals). There are two categories of short-term problems, called repeat incidents and crime patterns. The topic of this guide is repeat incidents, which are defined as follows:

> Continuously occurring citizen-generated calls for service that are similar in nature and happen at the same place. They are clusters of calls for service that represent problematic situations occurring at a location. Repeat incidents are usually made up of common noncriminal calls, such as disturbances, suspicious activity, alarms, and domestic disputes, as well as some interpersonal crimes when they are relevant. As short-term problems, individual calls for service that make up a repeat incident happen within hours, days, and weeks of one another. (Santos and Santos 2020, 77)

Generally, the three main reasons for addressing repeat incidents are (1) to prevent a situation that appears to be minor from escalating into a crime, (2) to improve service to the community by resolving ongoing quality-of-life issues, and (3) to solve non–crime related incidents so officers have more uncommitted time to conduct proactive work. The domestic-related repeat incident (DRRI) process focuses on one type of activity and addresses all three reasons with the ultimate goal of contributing to the prevention of domestic violence. Importantly, it does not replace what police and the criminal justice system already do for individual domestic violence crimes and victims but provides a complementary strategy that fills a gap by systematically addressing repeat noncriminal incidents occurring at residences.

The guide is a result of the partnership between Chief Scott C. Booth and the Danville (Virginia) Police Department (DPD) and Dr. Roberto Santos and Dr. Rachel Santos from Radford University's Center for Police Practice, Policy and Research in Virginia (College of Humanities and Behavioral Sciences 2022). The objectives of the project were to do the following:

- Prevent domestic situations that appear to be minor from escalating into a crime, improve service to the community by resolving ongoing quality-of-life issues, provide safety and resources to victims and their families, and use time recovered from reduction in repeat calls for service for additional proactive work.

- Develop and refine a realistic operational process for implementing the repeat incident process, specifically for domestic-related incidents at residences.

- Incorporate proactive responses to repeat incident locations into the day-to-day work of patrol sergeants without overtime.

- Systematically implement the process for a set time period.

- Assess the DRRI process through observation and feedback from DPD personnel to provide specific guidance for replication in other police agencies.

DPD policy #311 "Domestic or Family Violence/Lethality Assessment Program" lays out the "legal mandates and the commitment of the City of Danville Police Department to take enforcement action when appropriate, to provide assistance to victims and to guide officers in the investigation of domestic or family violence (VA Code § 9.1-1300)."[2] As noted in the discussion, many of the

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2. "Policy 311 Domestic or Family Violence/Lethality Assessment Program," Policy Manual (Danville, VA: Danville Police Department, 2022).

citizen-generated[3] domestic disturbance calls for service to which the department responds do not meet the threshold for a criminal report or trigger an arrest because either no allegation was made or no evidence was established to support an allegation. For example, as shown in figure 1, from 2019 to 2021, just less than half of the agency's "disturbance domestic violence" calls for service resulted in a police report. This breakdown is not unique to Danville but is similar in law enforcement agencies across the United States.

Figure 1. Disposition of domestic disturbance violence calls for service to Danville (VA) Police Department, January 2019 – November 2021 (n=2,216)

Unable to locate, 3.7%

Report, 49.9%   No report, 46.4%

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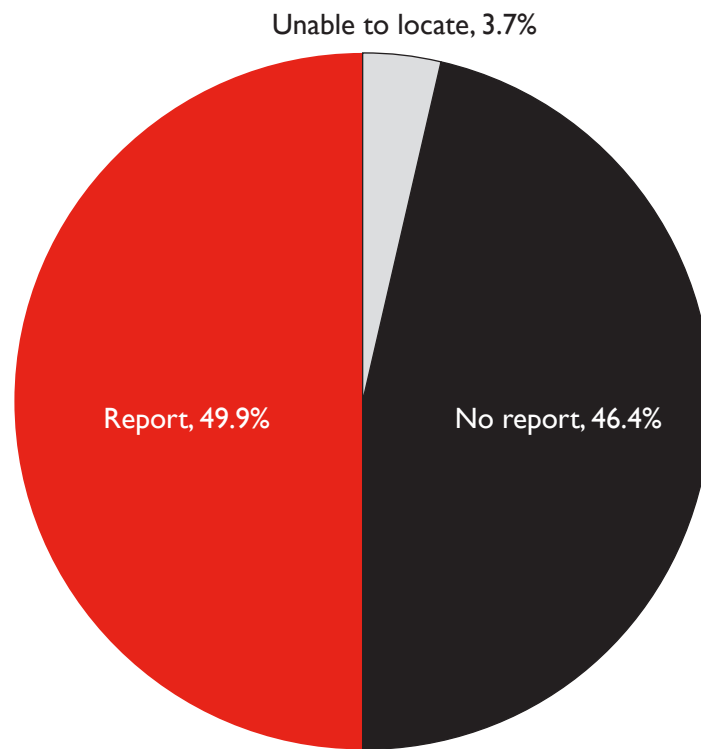
3.   Throughout this publication, *citizens* is used to refer to members of the community who are not sworn law enforcement officers. It should not be understood to refer only to U.S. citizens.

The following is an overview of the scope of work for the project:

Personnel

The DPD does not have dedicated personnel who handle repeat domestic-related calls or criminal cases. It has four platoons (shifts) in patrol with one sergeant each. Two patrol captains split management of four platoons by geography. The department breaks down the city into two commands (North and South) and four quarters (Northeast, Northwest, Southeast, and Southwest). The two patrol captains managed DRRI responses in their commands. Normally, in Stratified Policing, the rank immediately above sergeant would assign sergeants repeat locations and hold them accountable. In the DPD, this rank would have been patrol lieutenants. However, for this implementation, the DPD wanted the patrol captains to be directly involved and to facilitate the DRRI process. They felt not only that this involvement would help with making sure the process worked as well as it could in a short time frame but also that the captains would gain full knowledge of the process and could mentor the patrol lieutenants when the responsibility was passed to them. The four patrol sergeants were assigned DRRI locations within their assigned quarters, carried out the responses themselves, and documented them in an agency intranet system (i.e., SmartForce) (SmartForce Technologies, Inc. 2022). The crime analyst prepared the DRRI report each week and tracked each assigned location for additional calls and resolution. The two researchers helped develop the implementation plan, monitor the project, and evaluate the process.

Implementation

Social service, police, and other community partners were identified at the outset of the project to be available to the sergeants as they responded to the DRRI locations. Notably, the DRRI process is not a "program" that had to be established or required additional police personnel or resources. Rather, the response was folded into normal patrol operations, and if additional response or resources were necessary, the services were those already provided by the agency.[4] Partners worked with the sergeants and assisted whenever they were called.

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4. The DPD takes a report on all violent and nonviolent incidents of domestic-related disturbance. In addition, the DPD implemented the Lethality Assessment Program-Maryland Model (LAP) starting in early 2021 (Policy #311 "Domestic or Family Violence/Lethality Assessment Program"). The program is applied to the most serious "high danger" individual incidents and requires officers to complete a LAP form that screens for lethality and proactively addresses serious IPV by providing information for services or connecting the victim to the local shelter (or both). All instances of LAP screening are documented in a police report. The LAP form includes a detachable list of the local emergency and domestic violence services in Danville. All patrol officers, corporals, and sergeants carry these forms and also provide the list of services to individuals in what are screened as "non–high danger" situations. The list of resources was also used for the DRRI responses when appropriate. (Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence 2022).

The weekly crime analysis report was developed and the process for response was created. A specific module within SmartForce was implemented for distribution of the report; recording of responses; and for follow up, accountability, and tracking.

Patrol sergeants received one hour of training. Sergeants proactively responded to domestic-related repeat incidents for four months. Importantly, every individual citizen-generated domestic-related call for service received a response from patrol officers as part of normal police practice and when a crime was established a report and/or arrest was made as required by the department's Policy #311 "Domestic or Family Violence/Lethality Assessment Program."

Patrol captains held sergeants accountable and crime analyst evaluated effectiveness of responses. DRRI locations not resolved were discussed in the agency's weekly crime reduction accountability meeting.

Process assessment

The researchers met regularly with DPD patrol captains to ensure analysis was conducted, data collected, responses implemented, and resources were available.

They conducted interviews with the patrol sergeants and captains as well as the crime analyst after the response period and examined repeat incident and calls for service data as well as data to assess the overall implementation and accountability processes.

The rest of the guide lays out the crime analysis products, response implementation, and accountability processes that can be implemented by other agencies. Throughout the guide, impressions of DPD personnel are used to illustrate the concepts, and examples are provided for law enforcement professionals to consider when implementing and adapting the process to their own needs.

Domestic-Related Repeat Incident (DRRI) Process

Supervisors in patrol are assigned the ownership and responsibility to carry out DRRI responses for a few key reasons. Because of the nature of calls for service and police work, usually by the time a location has had repeat issues, several different patrol officers from different shifts have already responded to the individual domestic-related calls for service. Patrol supervisors have more control over how they use their time during a shift than line-level officers, so they can allocate the appropriate amount of time needed to address the DRRI. As supervisors, they should have the experience to navigate through these sometime complicated situations while working with community partners and victim service providers.

The DPD carried out all activities for the DRRI response within its normal police business without specialized personnel or units or overtime pay. Importantly, the patrol captains started by assigning a limited number of locations so that the sergeants were not overwhelmed. Once the sergeants became familiar with the process, they were assigned more locations that were reasonable within their other day-to-day responsibilities.

> *"It was helpful that I was able to control the workflow based on how effective the sergeants were in addressing their assigned repeat incident locations. It didn't take long for the process to improve and become pretty efficient."*
>
> — Captain Ernest Thompson

Supervisors' personal involvement with domestic violence crime prevention incentivizes them to take a more active role in mentoring officers to resolve individual domestic-related calls more effectively. The fact that a supervisor is responsible for addressing these type of repeat call locations stresses the importance of the process to the officers as well.

DPD sergeants felt it made sense that they be the ones to lead the effort and noticed that officers paid more attention to repeat domestic-related calls at addresses than they had done before the process was implemented. The sergeants felt their communication was better with officers to help resolve the issues at the DRRI locations.
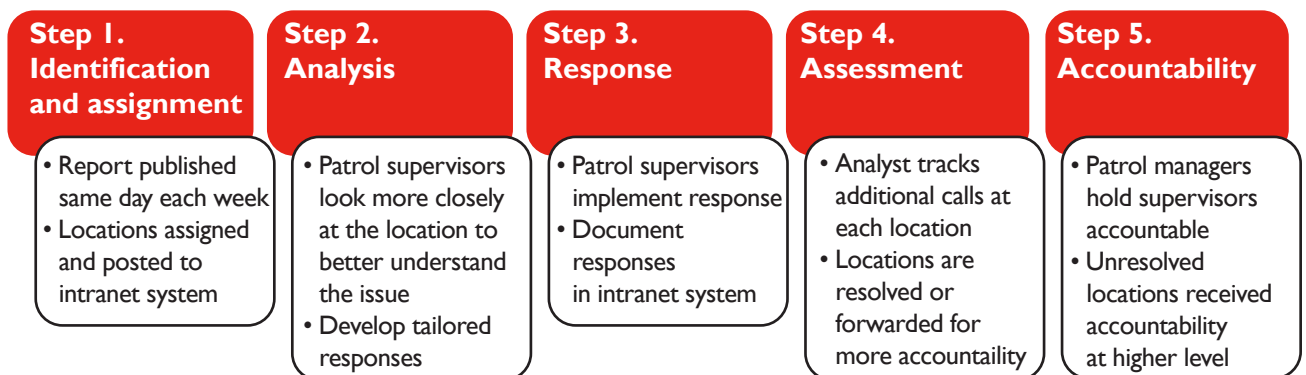
"I think it was good that I played a larger role because it made the officers communicate better with me in helping to address a particular repeat location."

— Sergeant Evan Wilson

The circumstances underlying each DRRI are different, and patrol supervisors take a problem-solving approach to tailor each response to the situation. They develop and implement the responses themselves, and when necessary, coordinate with officers.

There are five steps in the DRRI process, shown in figure 2:

Figure 2. Domestic-related repeat incident process

Step 1. Identification and assignment	Step 2. Analysis	Step 3. Response	Step 4. Assessment	Step 5. Accountability
• Report published same day each week • Locations assigned and posted to intranet system	• Patrol supervisors look more closely at the location to better understand the issue • Develop tailored responses	• Patrol supervisors implement response • Document responses in intranet system	• Analyst tracks additional calls at each location • Locations are resolved or forwarded for more accountaility	• Patrol managers hold supervisors accountable • Unresolved locations received accountability at higher level

Step 1. Identification and assignment

To systematize identification and assignment of DRRI locations, an agency creates a DRRI report. Each agency's report may be slightly different based on level of activity, patrol resources, and priorities of the agency, but there are five standard analytical components:[5]

1. Type of location addressed

2. Type of activity examined

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5. The components and subsequent discussion adapted from Santos and Santos 2020, chapter 7.

3. Geography covered

4. Time period

5. Threshold of citizen-generated calls for service per location

Type of location. DRRI location identification focuses on residential addresses. This is not to say that domestic-related issues or domestic violence does not occur at nonresidential locations. But because the time spent with intimate partners and family as well as the opportunity for violence is greatest in the home, repeat incidents at a residential location are a realistic way for police to identify potentially problematic domestic situations involving the same individuals. Residential location types can include single family homes, multifamily homes (e.g., duplexes), apartment complexes, mobile home parks, extended stay motels, long-term campgrounds, vacation rentals, and college student housing. Depending on the nature of the community, the agency decides what types of residences the report should include based on the overarching goal of the process.

The DPD's DRRI report included the following location types:

• Single-family homes

• Multi-family (duplex/triplex) homes by individual unit

• Apartment complexes by individual unit

• Extended stay hotels

Type of activity. DRRI location identification uses citizen-generated calls for service. Using call for service data considers incidents of nonphysical coercive control tactics, such as verbal and emotional abuse, that are missed when only crime report and arrest data are used to identify problematic domestic situations. This is a realistic and sustainable way to identify repeat call locations since all police departments collect electronic calls for service data (with addresses) through a computer-aided dispatch (CAD) system.

To focus the report on domestic-related issues, a set of specific citizen-generated call types are used. The "domestic disturbance" call type is used in nearly all CAD systems to dispatch officers to indicate potential domestic violence problems, so that call type is always included. Police also respond to calls that are not coded as a domestic disturbance but may indicate domestic issues occurring at a residence. Police practice and experience show that different types of calls occurring at

one address may all be related to the same issue. Thus, the report includes more than just domestic disturbance calls. Additional types of calls will depend on the agency and how their calls are dispatched and coded. Call types should be selected for the report based on whether they are related to and potentially indicate problematic domestic-related activity.[6]

The DPD uses the following call types for its DRRI report. These are the labels used in the computer-aided dispatch system:

- Abduction
- Abuse
- Animal cruelty
- Assault
- Attempted suicide
- Burglary
- Check welfare
- Custody issue
- Damage vandalism mischief
- Disturbance
- Domestic disturbance violence
- Fight
- Harassment
- Home invasion
- Hostage situation
- Intoxicated chemically impaired
- Keep the peace
- Loud party music

- Mental disorder behavior problem
- Missing person
- Neglect
- Nuisance
- Noise complaint
- Parental custodial abduction
- Runaway
- Stabbing
- Stab gunshot penetrating trauma
- Stalking
- Suspicious circumstances
- Suspicious person
- Threat
- Threatening suicide
- Trespassing unwanted
- Violation of order
- Weapons firearms incident

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6. The National Housing Law Project's fact sheet on nuisance ordinances may also be helpful to determine the appropriate calls for service to include in the report. (NHLP 2019).

Geography. Depending on the size of the agency, the report may cover the entire jurisdiction or a specific geographic area. In either case, the report is broken down by smaller geographic areas (e.g., districts, beats, zones) and then sorted by address to assist with assigning the addresses to patrol supervisors.

The DPD's report was broken down by command (North and South) and then by quarter (Northeast, Northwest, Southeast, and Southwest) so that the DRRI locations could be assigned to patrol sergeants who were assigned to each quarter of the city.

Time period. The DRRI report is produced the same day every week and covers a short-time period in which the repeat calls are evaluated. Most repeat incident reports cover calls occurring in the previous four weeks (i.e., 28 days). The analysis uses a "rolling" time period, which means each week the report includes data from the previous four weeks (Santos and Santos 2020).

The DPD's report is created and disseminated every Wednesday morning and covers the previous 28 days.

Threshold. This component of the DRRI report dictates how many locations are identified each week as it is the minimum number of calls (i.e., threshold) a location must have had to be on the report. Thresholds can vary by agency, but this component is used to ensure that a realistic number of locations are identified for response by patrol supervisors. There are no clear rules for setting a threshold for DRRI, as it depends on a myriad of things. Typically, agencies use thresholds of between three and five calls per address.

The DPD used a threshold of a minimum of three calls per address. This threshold was used in conjunction with unit numbers for apartment complexes and extended stay hotels. There had to be at least three calls at an individual unit within the 28 days for the address to be on the report.

The format of the DRRI report is standard and the information provided is limited to what is available from the calls for service database (Santos 2022). The information for each address on the report includes the following:

- Address of the call

- Location type (single family, apartment, etc.) or location name

- Call incident number

- Call type

- Date, time, and day of week of the call

- Duration of the call (time when the first officer arrived to when the call was closed)

- Disposition of the call

- Police report number (if a report was generated and different than the call incident number)

- Call sign of the primary officer who responded

Figure 3 shows excerpts of locations taken from different DPD reports.

Figure 3. Excerpts from DPD reports

Each week when the report is published, DRRI locations are assigned to patrol supervisors based on their geographic responsibilities. To streamline the process, criteria are developed to ensure that individuals are assigned DRRI locations fairly. Criteria might include that individuals are only assigned DRRI locations in their geographic responsibility or that each person would be assigned no more than five locations at a time.

The DPD had patrol captains review the report and assign DRRI locations to sergeants. They found that this was a cumbersome and difficult practice as they were not always able to review the report, and there were some inconsistencies of assignment across command areas. At the end of the implementation period, they suggested that criteria be used by the crime analyst to assign the locations. They felt this adjustment would ensure the assignment process is consistent and fair across command areas and shifts.

DPD captains found that assigning DRRI locations to sergeants was an effective way of spreading responsibility for repeat incidents. These repeat locations tended to be more serious or complicated, so it worked out well to make higher-ranked personnel responsible as these individuals have more experience to develop responses and more committed time (i.e., not tied to the radio) to respond.

"Assigning domestic repeat call locations to supervisors just makes sense to me. I see if an officer or officers were not able to resolve the issue in the time given, then a supervisor can help by stepping in and evaluating if something else can be done differently."

— Captain Jerry Pace

For transparency and accountability, all DRRI location assignments are posted to an intranet site so the patrol supervisors are immediately aware of their responsibilities and others in patrol are aware of the assignments in order to assist (i.e., officers may provide insight and recommend responses) or for accountability (i.e., patrol managers are aware of the addresses assigned).

The DPD uses SmartForce, a Criminal Justice Information Services–compliant intranet platform, for its internal communications about proactive crime reduction and other aspects of the department's operations. All police employees have access to the system. While not enabled for this project, SmartForce has the capacity to provide specialized and secure access to selected external partners for reviewing and entering data. Figure 4 on page 14 is a screenshot of the home page.

Figure 4. Screenshot of DPD SmartForce home page

The DPD created a specific DRRI process in SmartForce in which the locations were entered into each quarter's page (i.e., Northeast, Northwest, Southeast, and Southwest) as they were assigned. Sergeants entered their responses. The patrol captains monitored the responses and held the sergeants accountable. While the sergeants and captains primarily used this component, all patrol officers, detectives, and other police employees had access to the DRRI information in SmartForce. Figure 5 on page 15 is a screenshot of the home page for the Northeast quarter.

Figure 5. Screenshot of the DPD SmartForce home page for the Northeast quarter
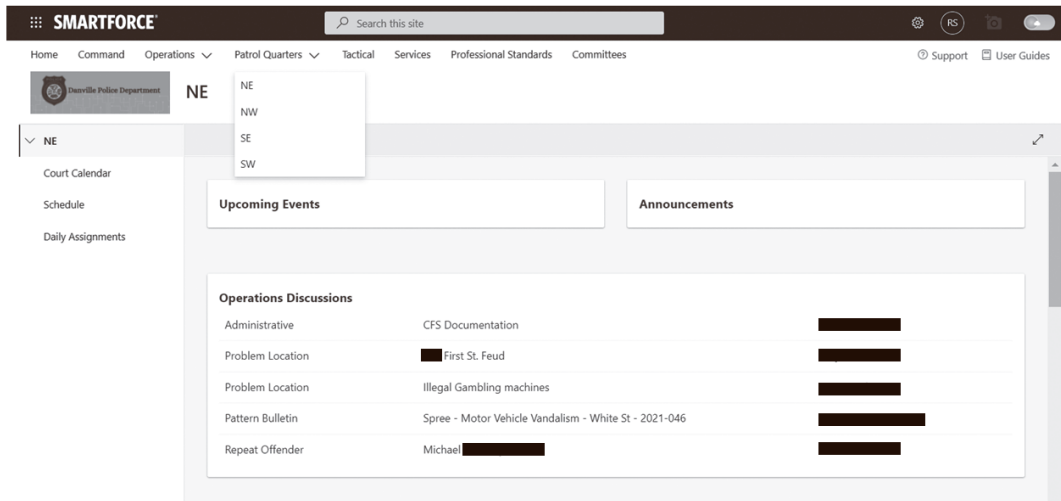
The DPD posted DRRI locations in the quarter's daily assignments. The captains reviewed the report each Wednesday and assigned new locations to the sergeants by entering them into the system on this page as shown in figure 6 on page 16.

"Having a hub where locations can be assigned and I can track the progress really played a significant role in addressing these repeat locations more efficiently."

— Captain Jerry Pace

Figure 6. Screenshot of the daily assignment interface

Step 2. Analysis

It is the patrol supervisor's responsibility to analyze the location to determine the nature of the issue and determine potential responses. In doing so, the supervisor can do a number of things, including the following:

- Reviewing the calls for service listed on the DRRI report as well as any other calls that occurred in the last 28 days

- Reviewing the CAD notes for all calls at the locations. Note: CAD notes are typically not included in the DRRI report to keep it succinct. Sergeants are well versed in an agency's CAD system, so it is reasonable and realistic for them to quickly look up their assigned locations as part of their analysis process

- Discussing the location with patrol officers

- Making contact with the residents living at the location (Note: The first contact by a sergeant can be more informal to seek information to determine the cause of the repeated calls to the police; to use limited resources of social service providers as efficiently as possible, the sergeant would not engage additional services until it was determined they were necessary and appropriate to the situation)

- Making contact with neighbors

In some cases, to get a full picture of criminal justice and social service system involvement, the sergeant, potentially assisted by the crime analyst, may look at data from the courts (protective orders, hearing notices, other filings), probation/parole visits, and child protective service visits, which would allow them to see the fuller picture of the issues facing the family at the location. Ultimately, following a problem-solving process, the goals of the supervisor's analysis are to determine the true nature and potential causes of the issue and develop meaningful and realistic responses based on the situation.

DPD sergeants initially approached their locations a variety of ways:

- Immediately looked up the location and its calls for service in CAD, read the CAD notes, and talked to the responding officers

- Went to the location right away and talked to the residents as well as the neighbors when they were there, especially if the calls came from them

- At the outset of the project, immediately called the resident on the phone, but that was not usually successful[7]

> *"I know this goes without saying, but I found that a quick review of the calls in more detail before contacting the residents helped my approach to better deal with the situation."*
>
> — Sergeant Clarence Goins

Step 3. Response

Because these prearrest situations often have many nuances, it is difficult to create one standardized response for DRRI locations. A response to a non-IPV situation may be as simple as the supervisor having a straightforward conversation with the involved parties during a time when they have not called the police for help. In any case, the DRRI responses should seek out more permanent solutions than what officers have implemented on individual calls, because the issue was not resolved. Supervisors might recommend residents seek help from others (e.g., family members,

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7. It is important to note that in IPV situations, this lack of success could be due to the victim's reluctance to discuss over the phone the underlying reasons for the repeat calls for service if they feel unsafe or worry that their conversation is being overheard.

clergy) or non–law enforcement entities, such as counseling, mental health, and social services. Prior to implementation of the DRRI process, an agency should identify specific resources that can be provided to sergeants for potential responses. Because these are "pre-arrest" situations, an agency should think creatively, identify local resources, and develop ongoing partnerships that support their DRRI process. Once this is done, it is important to train sergeants on the agency's DRRI process, but just as important is training on how to problem solve these repeat-call-for-service situations—for example, discussing ways of analyzing and understanding a situation as discussed in the previous section as well as talking about available local resources and ways to apply them. Last, it is very important that the training emphasize that DRRI will likely require non–law enforcement, creative, and focused responses that might be unique based on the immediate circumstances.

The DPD identified and established strong relationships with the local domestic violence shelter, local clergy, and nonprofit county counseling services as well as incorporated police chaplains. Their services were recommended or used (or both) by patrol sergeants as they deemed necessary. The partners were available and provided services as they normally did, so this was not established as a "program" but, in fact, was a seamless process that occurred day to day and did not require overtime or additional resources by the police or the service providers.

> *"One of the things that this process did was make me think about possible solutions which pushed us to identify and partner up with as many outside resources we could find."*
>
> — Captain Ernest Thompson

To help in the process of developing and brainstorming responses, patrol supervisors should consult problem and response guides that have been developed for police problem-solving efforts (Center for Problem-Oriented Policing 2022; COPS Office 2022). Some examples of the problem, response, and tool guides that support domestic-related problems include guides on domestic violence, stalking, animal cruelty, child abuse and neglect in the home, juvenile runaways, people with mental illness, and physical and emotional abuse of the elderly. Another important resource is the Office on Violence Against Women's (OVW) National Violence Against Women Law Enforcement Training and Technical Assistance Consortium (LETTAC), a single, streamlined point of entry to request law enforcement training and technical assistance. (LETTAC 2022).

DPD sergeants reported paying increased attention to the radio to catch these types of calls and going out to their assigned locations if and when there was a call. The sergeants also felt like there was a "team" approach to resolving these addresses. Even though the sergeants were responsible and took the lead, officers were very helpful in discussing the situation and coming up with solutions. This was especially important when sergeants came back to work after being off for several days. Officers would brief them on the activity at their locations and help develop ideas for responses.

> *"I don't normally show up on this type of call unless the officer needs me. But once we started this process, I made sure that I went and took a personal interest in resolving the repeat problem with my officers."*
>
> — Sergeant Valerie Jennings

While the goal of response is to resolve the issue at the residence itself, a secondary benefit is the proactive community engagement that the responses often engender. When the community sees that the police department sends out a patrol supervisor to a location with a repeat problem, it shows that the police are invested in helping the members of their community. By contacting specific neighbors who called about the issue or have seen the police multiple times at the DRRI location, the police can talk to community members about their commitment to resolve issues proactively as well as keep them informed of other police activity in their own neighborhoods.

DPD personnel and community members responded positively to the DRRI program's implementation. All sergeants found that there was an advantage to contacting residents proactively outside a citizen-generated call for service when things were not emotional and heated. They felt their proactive contacts had the potential to be more positive than when officers were called by the residents, and they found those conversations went better because the residents were calmer when they were contacted. The sergeants observed that community members were more likely to listen and appreciated the police department's attention at trying to resolve their concerns. Sergeants received positive feedback from residents who felt that the police were there because they cared, not because they "had to" after someone called 911. Finally, residents also noticed and appreciated that it was a sergeant that spoke to them—someone with "rank."

> *"Showing up to these types of calls when things were calm was huge! I was able to have actual conversations and work through some things with them. . . . They seemed to really like that as a supervisor, I was there to help them."*
>
> — Sergeant Clarence Goins

It is important for those responding to document their responses for tracking, resolution of domestic-related repeat incidents, and accountability. Documentation should occur as responses are implemented day to day. The process should ensure that documentation can be done quickly, easily, and realistically in the context of the supervisors' other duties. Individual patrol supervisors keep track of their own responses, and managers document in whatever way they think is appropriate to hold supervisors accountable. Although there are different and simple ways to create a process of documentation and accountability, intranet system is recommended for this purpose.

DPD sergeants documented their responses in SmartForce in succinct language. Once a DRRI was assigned in the system, the sergeants would click on the address to enter in their responses. As illustrated in the SmartForce screenshots shown in figure 7 on page 21, multiple entries could be made as needed.

> *"Having a system that gave everyone an ability to see what type of responses were being done in real time was important. This gave me and others a chance to better communicate with each other as well as holding everyone accountable."*
>
> — Captain Ernest Thompson

> *"Most important for me was that the entries were not too time-consuming but easy to do. . . . I found it to be very helpful to track what officers and I were doing at a particular location without writing long drawn-out police information reports."*
>
> — Sergeant Ronald McCormick

Figure 7. DPD SmartForce screenshots
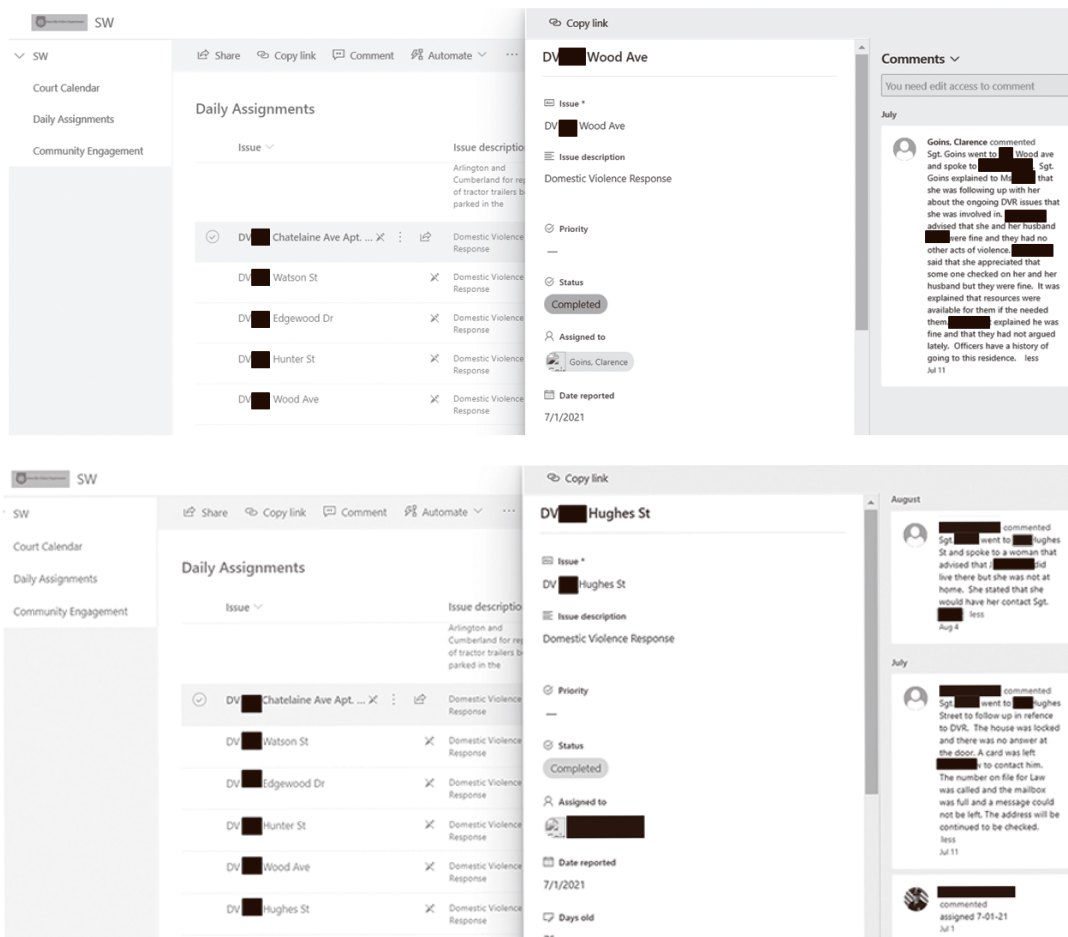
DPD sergeants had very positive feedback on the requirements for the documentation. They mentioned that filling out yet "another form" would have been too much, and SmartForce allowed them to write some "quick notes" that satisfied the tracking requirements. The following are examples of entries that illustrate the succinct, direct way the sergeants communicated the work they were doing:

> ~On 9/19/21 I opened my evaluation of this repeat domestic incident by reviewing past domestic calls at this address. I determined that the ongoing issues are between [name, female] and [name, male]. The two of these individuals, [female] being the resident have an instance of trespassing and of one non-violent domestic encounter afterwards. After reviewing the incidents, I attempted to contact [female] via phone

(PH# XXX-XXXX). I left a voicemail requesting a return call. I also came by her residence and did not make contact with anyone. I will attempt contact again and keep a watch for additional service calls at this address.

~10/15/2021: Spoke to [name] she advised that she had taken out a CHINS petition on [name] and that they have not had any further problems. She appreciated that someone checked on her.

~10/15/2021: Spoke to [resident] she advised that things were better with her son. She stated that she didn't need services and she appreciated that she was checked on.

~On 09-15-21, I responded to the address with Officers XXX and YYY. The victim obtained a protective order against the suspect, and has since had the order extended in domestic court. [Second entry] On 10-08-21, I with Officer XXX and Officer ZZZ responded to XXX Halifax St. in reference to a trespasser. Warrants were obtained on [Name] for trespassing and protective order. A foot chase ensued when [name] was spotted on E Thomas St. [Name] was captured/had a concealed Glock on his person. He is a convicted felon/felony concealed weapon.

~[Resident] at this address has called for police services five times since 7/30/21. There were no reports taken on any of the calls for service. It appears to me after reading CAD reports that [resident] is suffering from mental illness. I will make contact with [resident] and attempt to refer her to mental health services but I do not see where she would benefit from any domestic violence resources.

~August 15: This case involves three calls for service all surrounding [name] and an ongoing non-violent feud with her daughter [name]. At no point was there a documented factual domestic violence issue. [Resident] has appropriate court orders in place to limit/ forbid contact with the mother of the concerned child. The orders are not followed and should be addressed in court. I will make an effort to contact [resident] when working day rotation to determine any additional assistance that I can provide. [Second entry] September 8th: Confirmed that [daughter] is in custody of the DCJ.

Step 4. Assessment

The department's assessment of the issues occurring at identified DRRI locations should be short-term and systematic. The crime analyst is responsible for the weekly report used to identify the DRRI locations, oversees location assignment, and tracks locations to determine success (i.e., resolution) or need for follow-up and accountability of the sergeants. To determine whether a DRRI location is resolved successfully, the department sets the number of weeks the assigned locations should be without another call for service related to the problematic issue. Since responses are meant to improve the problem in the immediate short term and reduce the chance of it becoming a more serious long-term problem, the time frame to determine resolution is also relatively short (e.g., two to four weeks).

The DPD used the criterion that if there were no more related calls for four consecutive weeks, the location would be resolved and no more proactive response by the sergeant was required. Any additional calls for service were answered by patrol officers as part of standard operations. However, if there was another related call within that four-week time period, the sergeant would follow up with the residents and adjust the response as necessary. The assessment "clock" would begin again, which would require another four consecutive weeks with no related calls for the location to be considered resolved.

Once a location is assigned to a supervisor, the crime analyst looks in CAD for additional calls each week. The crime analyst creates a way to track calls for service at the DRRI locations over time and alerts the patrol supervisors and managers of additional calls or resolution of the address.

Figure 8 is an excerpt from the table used by the DPD crime analyst for tracking. The gray boxes indicate when each response was closed. While some locations are resolved after four weeks, those that have additional calls are resolved only after four consecutive weeks without calls.

Figure 8. Sample of DPD crime analyst tracking table

Location Address	Date Assigned	Assigned	# First Report	Date Closed	7/7-7/13	7/14-7/20	7/21-7/27	7/28-8/3	8/4-8/10	8/11-8/17	8/18-8/24	8/25-8/31	9/1-9/7	9/8-9/14	9/15-9/21	9/22-9/28
Stokes St	7/1/2021	▇	3 calls	8/4/21	0	0	0	0	▓							
New Ingram St	7/1/2021	▇	3 calls	9/15/21	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	▓	
Hughes St	7/1/2021	▇	4 calls	9/1/21	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	▓			
Clay St	7/1/2021	▇	3 calls	9/22/21	2	1	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	▓
Hunter St	7/15/2021	▇	4 calls	8/11/21		0	0	0	0	▓						
Sunset Dr	7/15/2021	▇	3 calls	9/1/21		0	2	1	0	0	0	0	▓			
Claiborne St	7/21/2021	▇	3 calls	8/18/21			0	0	0	0	▓					

"I found the process to be pretty straightforward and once the criteria were set, it was simple to identify, track and evaluate repeat calls for service locations."

— Crime Analyst Megan Thompson

Step 5. Accountability

For DRRI response to be implemented consistently and sustained, an accountability process is important. An effective accountability structure should be automatic and carried out in a way that creates incentives at every level for individuals to do the work effectively and efficiently.

To begin, the report automatically identifies DRRI locations based on set criteria established by the leadership, which should be transparent and known to everyone. The locations are assigned to patrol supervisors systematically and fairly, also on the basis of set criteria determined by the leadership. Because of the transparency of the process, patrol officers become more aware of domestic-related calls for service because their supervisors will be assigned and held accountable for repeat locations. Thus, there is incentive for officers to seek more permanent solutions at the individual call level, when possible. In addition, patrol supervisors become more aware of their officers' responses to individual domestic-related calls for service and seek to hold officers accountable as well as assist and mentor them on individual calls before a location meets the agency's threshold for DRRI assignment to them.

The DPD incorporated the accountability for DRRI locations into its current Stratified Policing accountability structure.[8] When a location is resolved after four weeks, no further accountability is necessary. However, when a location is not resolved, it is discussed in their weekly agency-wide accountability meeting where the patrol captains discuss the DRRI location and the issues and the chief holds them accountable for success.

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8. For more discussion of accountability for proactive crime reduction, see Santos and Santos 2020, chapter 10.

"We all know the importance of addressing domestic violence calls, be it for the safety of the parties involved or my officers. This is why it is imperative for the agency to incorporate this process in our current accountability meetings. I find that having a multi-tiered accountability approach gives those assigned to address the repeat locations some autonomy to resolve them while giving me the confidence that if locations are not addressed adequately in a timely manner, it automatically gets moved to our agency-wide accountability meetings to discuss."

— Deputy Chief Dean Hairston

When assigned a location, patrol supervisors are held accountable by patrol managers. During the response, the crime analyst alerts everyone when there are additional calls or the location is resolved based on set criteria. Finally, if a DRRI location is successfully resolved, no additional accountability is necessary. However, if unresolved, additional and more formal accountability at higher levels of the organization occurs, which incentivizes the supervisor to respond effectively and the patrol manager to hold the supervisor accountable for doing so.

Implementation Summary Chart and Final Thoughts

The implementation of the DRRI process is straightforward, as explained in this guide. Figure 9 is a summary of the key aspects of the process that must be tailored based on the agency's level of domestic-related activity, patrol resources, and overall approach to crime reduction.

Figure 9. Summary of domestic-related repeat incident implementation

DRRI Weekly Report	Response Responsibility	Systematic Response	Tracking and Resolution	Accountability
• 28-day time period • Select call types and location types • Determine threshold and day of week for dissemination	• Assigned to patrol supervisors • Criteria for assignment	• Identify resources for responses • Outline expectations for response and resolution	• Response documentation mechanisms and requirements • Tracking process • Criteria for resolution	• Determine chain-of-command for accountability • Incorporate into agency-wide crime reduction accountability meeting(s)

There are specific lessons to be learned here about the operationalization of response to DRRIs that resulted from the DPD's implementation. The following are based on the researcher's observations and the feedback from DPD sergeants, captains, and the crime analyst:

- Stratified Policing is a comprehensive proactive approach for addressing immediate and short- and long-term problems. Applying its process for repeat incidents in the department provided a realistic and meaningful structure to address domestic-related repeat calls for service.

- The chief and executive staff should approve how the DRRI process is carried out and approve set criteria to ensure it aligns with the agency's crime reduction goals and resources.

- For consistency and fairness of assignment of DRRI locations, it may be more effective to have one person, arguably the crime analyst, oversee this process. The analyst should be provided specific criteria set by the leadership to carry out assignments so they are consistent and equitable.

- Geographic deployment makes this process more effective, as the patrol supervisors take ownership of locations in their areas and work with the same officers who answer the individual calls for service.

- When geographically deployed or where there are a large number of DRRI locations, separate reports by geographic area can be created to avoid information overload.

- Patrol supervisors should not be allowed to close the responses and decide whether the DRRI location is resolved. This should be done based on set criteria approved by the leadership.

- Using an intranet system for this process is effective, particularly for communication across shifts and ranks. Documentation of responses, resolution, and accountability should be succinct and realistic.

- Because this process is new, patrol managers and commanders holding their supervisors accountable must make it a priority and demonstrate their support from the very beginning for implementation to be successful and sustained.

- At the outset of the implementation, specific efforts should be taken to establish relationships and partnerships with non–law enforcement entities in the local community to identify and coordinate a broad spectrum of resources and social services for families.

- At the outset of the implementation, the agency should develop a list of potential responses for more common types of situations that might arise and provide training on how to problem solve these situations so that those responsible can think more creatively about potential responses.

- By engaging supervisors in proactive response to repeat calls for service to which officers have already responded, the process can create opportunities for teaching, mentoring, and teamwork between supervisors and officers as well as among officers themselves to improve overall response to individual calls for service.

- While departments may consider assigning DRRI locations to a specialized domestic violence or community service unit or officers not in uniform, this process creates an opportunity for positive interaction between uniformed police and community members. It is an important aspect of improving trust and legitimacy that community members see uniformed officers (in this case patrol supervisors) in their neighborhoods providing support, listening to community needs, and attempting to improve people's lives.

This project was not an "impact" evaluation of the DRRI response but rather sought to develop a practice-based process to carry out responses in a structured way.[9] Figures 10 and 11 show that overall a majority of the DRRI locations were resolved after eight weeks, and there were many fewer calls for service once responses began. This is a small number of locations, but the DPD will continue to respond to DRRI, and additional analysis with comparison locations will be done when there are more cases.

Figure 10 shows that of 29 DRRI locations, around 40 percent had no more calls in four consecutive weeks after being assigned for response and so were resolved. Even further, around one half of the locations were resolved after five weeks, almost 60 percent after six weeks, and slightly more than 80 percent of the DRRI locations were resolved in eight weeks.

**Figure 10. Cumulative number of locations resolved (n=29)**
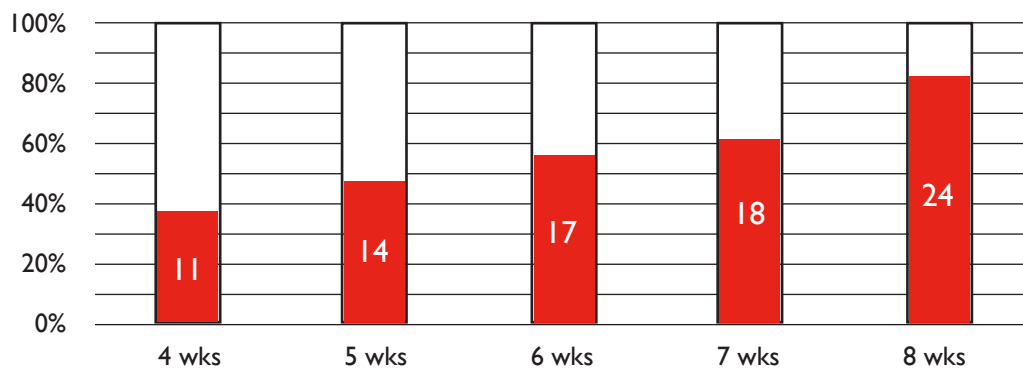
Each DRRI location had to have 4 consecutive weeks with no related calls to be resolved, so this was the earliest they could be resolved.

Figure 11 on page 30 shows that in total there were 96 calls for service at all 29 DRRI locations when they were identified for response (i.e., threshold for the report was at least 3 calls within 28 days). In the first four weeks after they were assigned, the 29 locations had 47 additional calls: 51 percent fewer than they had when they were identified. In the second four weeks following assignment, the locations had 83 percent fewer calls.

9.   While it was not in the scope of this project, analysis of the call history at the DRRI locations in this study as well as comparisons to locations without response will be conducted for a more in-depth assessment of the impact of this process. Future research on the effectiveness of response to DRRI in the future should consider a longer implementation period and comparing locations with response to those that did not receive response, ideally through an experimental model.

Figure 11. Total calls at DRRI locations (n=29)
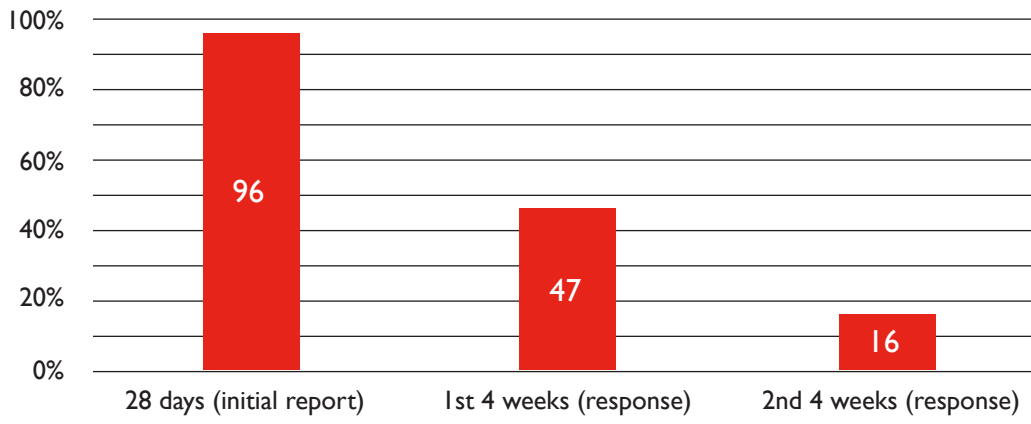
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About the COPS Office

The **Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office)** is the component of the U.S. Department of Justice responsible for advancing the practice of community policing by the nation's state, local, territorial, and tribal law enforcement agencies through information and grant resources.

Community policing begins with a commitment to building trust and mutual respect between police and communities. It supports public safety by encouraging all stakeholders to work together to address our nation's crime challenges. When police and communities collaborate, they more effectively address underlying issues, change negative behavioral patterns, and allocate resources.

Rather than simply responding to crime, community policing focuses on preventing it through strategic problem-solving approaches based on collaboration. The COPS Office awards grants to hire community policing officers and support the development and testing of innovative policing strategies. COPS Office funding also provides training and technical assistance to community members and local government leaders, as well as all levels of law enforcement.

Since 1994, the COPS Office has been appropriated more than $20 billion to add community policing officers to the nation's streets, enhance crime fighting technology, support crime prevention initiatives, and provide training and technical assistance to help advance community policing. Other achievements include the following:

- To date, the COPS Office has funded the hiring of approximately 130,000 additional officers by more than 13,000 of the nation's 18,000 law enforcement agencies in both small and large jurisdictions.

- More than 800,000 law enforcement personnel, community members, and government leaders have been trained through COPS Office–funded training organizations and the COPS Training Portal.

- Almost 500 agencies have received customized advice and peer-led technical assistance through the COPS Office Collaborative Reform Initiative Technical Assistance Center.

- To date, the COPS Office has distributed more than eight million topic-specific publications, training curricula, white papers, and resource CDs and flash drives.

- The COPS Office also sponsors conferences, roundtables, and other forums focused on issues critical to law enforcement.

COPS Office information resources, covering a wide range of community policing topics such as school and campus safety, violent crime, and officer safety and wellness, can be downloaded via the COPS Office's home page, https://cops.usdoj.gov.

Domestic violence is an ongoing concern for both the police and the community. Research shows that the ability to intervene during early stages of emotional and verbal abuse or less physically injurious violence is critical to preventing future violence. As the first responders, police are uniquely poised to play a key role in assisting social service and public health efforts to prevent and reduce domestic violence. Police often see problematic relationships and families well before victim advocates, doctors, and other service providers are even aware there is a problem. Domestic-related calls for service are one of the most frequent categories law enforcement agencies respond to, even though many of these calls may not lead to an arrest. This guide provides a process for proactive police response to the short-term problem of repeat calls for service at residences, called domestic-related repeat incidents or DRRI. Importantly, the process does not replace what police and the criminal justice system already do for individual domestic violence crimes and victims but provides a complementary strategy that fills a gap by systematically addressing repeat noncriminal incidents occurring at residences with the aim of forestalling more serious violence and keeping individuals, families, and the community safer.