

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

RETALIATORY VIOLENT DISPUTES

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About This Guide

About the Problem-Specific Guides 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 prevention and to improving the overall response to incidents, not to investigating offenses or handling specific incidents. Neither do they 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 decide how best to analyze and address a problem they have already identified. (A companion series of *Problem-Solving Tools* guides has been produced to aid in various aspects of problem analysis and assessment.)
- **Can look at a problem in depth.** Depending on the complexity of the problem, you should be prepared to spend perhaps 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 to 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 succeeded in having laws and policies changed, improving the response to the problem. (A companion series of *Response Guides* has been produced to help you understand how commonly-used 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. This 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. To have done so would have overwhelmed and distracted the reader. The references listed at the end of each guide are those drawn on most heavily; they are not a complete bibliography of research on the subject.

- **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 with others 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 a stronger position to address problems and that police ought to shift some greater responsibility to them to do so. Response Guide No. 3, *Shifting and Sharing Responsibility for Public Safety Problems*, provides further discussion of this topic.

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 a world that is becoming increasingly interconnected, it is important that police 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 practice, and each guide is anonymously peer-reviewed by a line police officer, a police executive, and a researcher prior to publication.

For more information about problem-oriented policing, visit the Center for Problem-Oriented Policing online at www.popcenter.org. This website offers free online access to:

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

Phyllis Schultze conducted research for the guide at Rutgers University's Criminal Justice Library.

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 and what is known about them from evaluative research and police practice.^p

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 robbery

For the most up-to-date listing of current guides, see 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 may be appropriate for attention? And second, what are the characteristics of a retaliatory violent dispute and its participants that should raise concern over the potential for additional violence?

For police, many things, and perhaps almost everything that they get involved with, 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. And 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

^p Although the guide draws heavily on the authors' research and practice findings from Rochester, New York, the information is also supported by the broader body of research and practice on retaliatory violent disputes.

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 below:

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 period. At least two events are required so that a pattern is established. Single events can appropriately 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. Authorities made several attempts to intervene in the dispute, but were unsuccessful. The ensuing dispute lasted over 10 years and resulted in several deaths. It did not officially end until eight disputants on the Hatfield side were convicted of murder and received life sentences.¹

In the United States, arguments are well-known as the most frequent cause of homicide.² In Rochester, New York, for example, as many as 75% of homicides in any given year are the direct result of a violent dispute.³ Many of these disputes stem from a minor altercation subsequently erupting into violence.⁴ 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;⁵ however, those stages are just as likely to play out over months as seconds.⁶ Police require time to learn of the dispute, conceive, and execute intervention tactics, so disputes that immediately turn fatal 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 time, involving multiple events and acts of retaliation, offer police the time necessary to identify a dispute and then execute an appropriate response.

A disproportionate number of violent retaliatory disputes occur in socially disadvantaged neighborhoods.⁷ 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.⁸ Under these circumstances, many residents in these communities become more fearful of crime⁹ and are more likely to carry guns for self-protection.¹⁰ These residents come to view violence as a legitimate form of self-help.¹¹

A “code of the street” operates in these neighborhoods that further contributes to retaliatory violence.¹² 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 responded to 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 Case of Retaliatory Violence in Rochester, New York

Disputes that escalate to violence over time, rather than immediately, accounted for nearly 20% of all 2010 homicides in Rochester, New York. In 2010, the motive in 21 of 41 Rochester homicides (51%) was an argument of some type. Of those 21 murders, eight involved a violent retaliatory act (six 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 at the location 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 while he 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

A significant proportion of the retaliatory violence that occurs in socially disadvantaged areas is between disputants engaged in some type of criminal enterprise.¹³ 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.¹⁴ Direct retaliatory violence helps the

retaliator maintain his or her reputation, recover lost property, and exact personal vengeance.¹⁵ This fact presents two challenges for police. First, addressing dispute-related violence may require providing services to individuals who are both 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 to 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 to police.

Harms 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.¹⁶ Research in Rochester revealed that 60% 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.¹⁷ For instance, one retaliatory dispute in Rochester accounted for seven percent of the gun assaults and five 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 have an impact on perceptions of violence and fear of crime. The occurrence of dispute-related violence in shared public spaces, such as parks and transportation centers, increases fear of violence and leads people to avoid such places.¹⁸ Violence victims suffer pain, fear, posttraumatic distress, and other mental symptoms.¹⁹ 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.²⁰

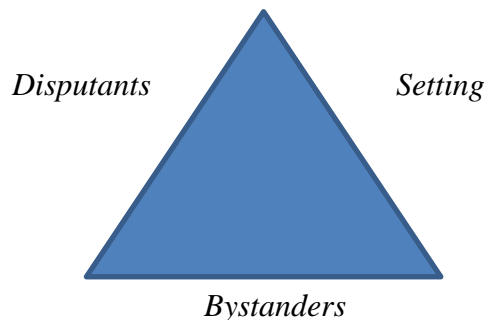
Examples of the Impact of Retaliatory Violence on Community Perceptions in Rochester, New York

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 and draws more than 500,000 attendees from the Rochester region. In 2013, sixteen 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.²¹ Additionally, engaging in violence can protect disputants from being viewed as weak or easy prey; thereby decreasing their risk of victimization.²² For gang members, engaging in retaliatory violence helps them establish prestige within the group.²³ 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.²⁴

Disputants' likelihood of committing acts of retaliatory violence is shaped by the presence of *bystanders*.²⁵ Bystanders are present in about two-thirds of violent victimizations,²⁶ 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.²⁷ Efforts to discourage violence might be carried out by associates of the disputants, established community members who have credibility among disputants²⁸ or designated groups of so-called street interrupters who actively engage disputants and mediate disputes.²⁹ 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.³⁰

The *setting* provides the context where the violence is carried out.⁹ In places with high levels of crime, violence often becomes an institutional feature of street life.³¹ 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 are supportive of violence.³² 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.³³ 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.³⁴ Drug-market activity in particular neighborhoods influences perceptions about the use of violence and facilitates dispute-related violence.³⁵ Importantly, not all drug conflicts result in violence. In some circumstances drug dealers choose toleration, avoidance, and negotiation rather than retaliation.³⁶ This suggests that steps can be

⁹ See Problem-Solving Tools Guide No. 6, *Understanding Risky Facilities*, for further discussion of why some places are especially prone to crime and disorder.

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.³⁷ 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 pressure³⁸ 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 him- or herself become a target for further retaliation, thus contributing to the cycle of violence.

Transgressor and Retaliator Characteristics

There is not a 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.³⁹ 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 South in the United States.⁴⁰

Times and Locations

Retaliatory dispute incidents mirror other types of street violence as it relates to 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, but 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% 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.[†] 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 violence⁴¹ and have a greater risk of violent victimization.⁴² This is partially due to gang membership, but also due to the criminal lifestyle of individual gang members.⁴³ This lifestyle increases the risk of interpersonal disputes with both gang members and non-members 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

[†] 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.

resources 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.⁴⁴ These disputes contribute to the contagion of violence as rival gangs will respond to retaliation with further violence.⁴⁵

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%

Theft of drugs/personal property disputes

These disputes occur as a result of the theft of or conflict over drugs or other property.⁵ 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.

⁵ 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.

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 transgression, such as inappropriate behavior or infidelity.⁴⁶

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.

Witness-intimidation disputes

Witness-intimidation disputes involve intimidation of witnesses who have testified in a criminal trial or are considering testifying.⁴⁷ Those who cooperate with authorities risk violent retaliation.⁴⁷

Family-retaliation disputes

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

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^u and non-violent^v retaliation occurs in retaliatory disputes.^w
- 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.⁴⁸ Most disputes in Rochester lasted about a month,^x 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.

⁴⁷ See Problem-Specific Guide No. 42, *Witness Intimidation* for further information.

^u Violent events include homicide, assault shootings, shots fired, robbery, fights (with or without a weapon) and menacing.

^v Most property incidents involve damage or destruction of property in retaliation for an attack or perceived affront.

^w See Jacobs and Wright (2006) for further discussion of the use of non-violent retaliation in retaliatory disputes.

^x Median values were reported here because outliers unduly inflated the calculation of the mean.

- 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.

Understanding Your Local Problem

The above discussion provides a general description of retaliatory violent disputes. In order to understand your local problem, you will need to consider both general knowledge about retaliatory violence, as well as 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 will facilitate identifying the nature and characteristics of retaliatory violence in your community and developing strategies to reduce it. Research partners, many of whom are affiliated with local colleges or universities can supplement work done by in-house crime analysts to identify disputes, assess their risk of further violence and measure the impact of violence-reduction interventions.

To recognize an ongoing dispute and to assess the level of risk for further violence, the focus must be on the links among events. That may seem obvious but it can require a major change in thinking, from an incident-based 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 assist in developing and implementing responses to retaliatory violence.⁴⁹
- *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.⁵⁰ 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 in developing and implementing educational programs that discourage youth from engaging in retaliatory violence.

- *Transit officials.* Transit centers can often serve as a staging area for retaliatory violence when it becomes a location where disputants are likely to converge.⁵¹ 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 neighborhood⁵² 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 interventions⁵³ and provide post-release referrals.^y 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 do work related to reducing 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.⁵⁴
- *Religious officials.* Ministers and other religious officials can condemn and discourage violence by virtue of their moral standing in the community.⁵⁵
- *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 violence 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?

^y 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.

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 (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 (gang outreach workers, mediation centers, etc.)?
- 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 to what degree 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

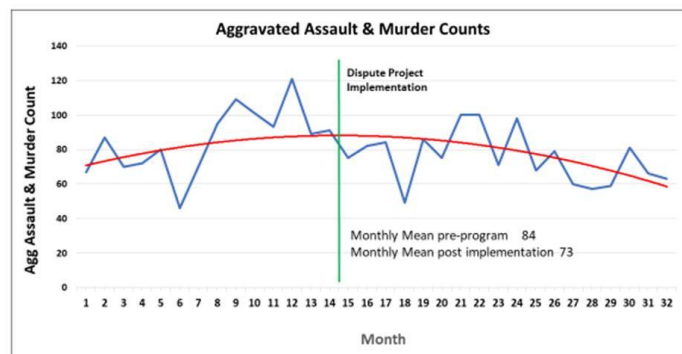
- Clear delegation of responsibility for addressing violent disputes.
- Adequate staffing (e.g., crime analysts, dispute investigators) to identify and intervene in potentially violent disputes.
- Improved data and communication systems for identifying, classifying and monitoring retaliatory disputes.
- 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.

Aggravated Assault and Murder Counts in Rochester, New York

The graph below shows aggravated assault and murder counts for pre- and post-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 risk assessment occurs, however, you must establish a protocol to determine how and when risk assessments occur.^z

You should establish protocols for when risk assessments are performed. The exact mechanism through which this would occur should take into consideration 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 that more thoroughly gathers 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

^z 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).

Taking into account the above factors, 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? Once the risk assessment is conducted, if you conclude that there is a substantial threat of retaliatory violence, preventive strategies should be implemented and documented.

You should also consider if 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 ability of this unit to be successful, however, will be contingent upon their cooperation with other sections within the department and with outside agencies. Both of these approaches have been shown to be effective.^{aa} The option that you choose should depend on the needs of your department.

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.⁵⁶ 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 of current response tactics.^{bb} 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.⁵⁷ 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.

^{aa} 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.

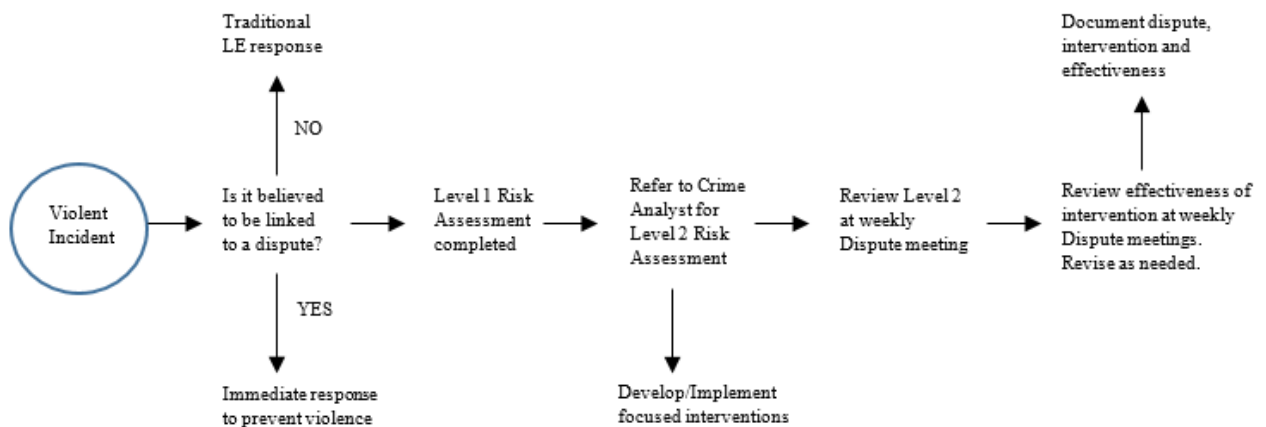
^{bb} See Gangs Action Group (2011) for an example of the critical role that crime analysts can play in a retaliatory violence intervention.

The dispute analyst should develop dispute bulletins to help command staff track violence associated with particular disputes.^{cc} 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 circumstances of each incident tied to the dispute. Each bulletin should include investigative documentation for why incidents are connected. Examination of 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.

Figure 2: Dispute-related Violence: Identification, Risk Assessment, Intervention Model



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.

^{cc} See Appendix C for a sample dispute bulletin.

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.

Training Line Personnel

It is imperative that your staff are adequately trained to reduce retaliatory violence. Patrol officers should be trained how 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 your local legal counsel as to 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.⁵⁸ 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 can lead to the development of new intelligence related to the dispute. A key element to accomplishing this involves securing the crime scene, particularly to ensure that all witnesses are interviewed about the potential for retaliatory violence.⁵⁹

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.⁶⁰

5. Monitoring dispute participants' social media. Social media has become an important forum for tracking dispute-related activity.⁶¹ 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. School resource officers 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.⁶² 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 for collection of intelligence relevant to the investigation.

11. Searching homes for weapons and dispute intelligence. Searches can help find guns or other weapons and can provide important intelligence that might help in the investigation of dispute-related violence. Often times 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. 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 of juvenile disputants, spouses, and roommates may wish to cooperate with law enforcement, particularly when it is believed that continuation of the dispute will result in their child, spouse, roommate, or themselves being harmed or that carrying out violence might result in their incarceration. Consent searches can help find guns or other weapons and can provide useful intelligence for the investigation of dispute-related violence.⁶³

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 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 eligibility for any services disputants and their families receive as a way to leverage incentives 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.⁶⁴ 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/or deterrence.^{dd}

17. Executing emergency detentions of mentally ill, violent disputants. A proportion of disputants may have mental-health issues. Making a mental-health detention can lead to the temporary incapacitation of 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.⁶⁵ 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.⁶⁶

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.⁶⁷

20. Referring disputants to local community, legal or religious organizations that specialize in mediation or dispute resolution. In many cities there are 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. Often times, disputants wish to end the violence, but have no place of refuge that can shield them from potential retaliation.

^{dd} See *Focused Deterrence of High-risk Individuals*, Response Guide No. 13 for further information.

Providing relocation assistance can remove disputants from the theatre of operations and decrease the likelihood of subsequent retaliatory violence.^p

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.

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.^{ff}

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.^{gg} The extent that 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. Collection and analysis of 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, as well as their impact.

^p For further information, see Problem-Specific Guide No. 42, *Witness Intimidation*.

^{ff} See *Focused Deterrence of High-risk Individuals*, Response Guide No. 13 for further information.

^{gg} See *Focused Deterrence of High-risk Individuals*, Response Guide No. 13 for further information.

- 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.
- Establish a mechanism to assess the implementation of the project and determine what is going well and what changes need to be made to fit the unique needs of your jurisdiction.

Appendix A: Level 1 Dispute Assessment Form

Dispute Violence Risk Assessment Level 1 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 2 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 2 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				
	Yes	No	Unknown	<i>Check all that apply. Add comments when needed.</i>
1	Current Event (the event that brought the issue to the officer's attention)			
				Event involved confirmed violence
				Event involved confirmed threat of violence
				Comments:
2	Past Events Linked to Current Event			
				There is one or more linked past event which involved violence
				There is one or more linked past event which involved threats of violence
				Comments:
3	Involvement with Weapons in this Dispute			
				Current or prior events in this dispute involved weapons
				Recent Reckless Endangerments (RE) involved participants or their property
				Recent Prohibited Use of a Weapon (PUW) involved participants and/or associates
				Participants or associates recently stopped for Criminal Possession of a Weapon (CPW)
				Comments:
4	Participants Prior Violence			
				Someone on one side has a prior record involving violence
				Someone on both sides has a prior record involving violence
				Comments:
5	Participants Reputation			
				Someone on one or both sides has a reputation for being "out of control"
				Comments:
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				

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 in 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 flee 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 side tires of the Pontiac were slashed. R.O spoke to Pk who states that he was 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-xxxxxxx) **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-xxxxxxx) **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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