

SEMINOLE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE GENERAL ORDER	NUMBER: G - 43
	RESCINDS:
SUBJECT: Problem Solving	
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I. PURPOSE:

The Sheriff's Office is committed to timely complaint response, effective problem resolution and establishing partnerships with our communities. Embracing the philosophy of Seminole Neighborhood Policing (SNP) and exercising the values to which we are dedicated, encourages the formulation of a sound alliance with the community. Establishing a partnership with open communications is an integral element for the successful achievement of our mission. Problem solving is a core component of SNP. It is essential for each employee to embrace this process.

II. SCOPE:

The fundamental process for attaining our projected goals and objectives is focused upon problem solving. The prescribed mechanism for deploying this process is the SARA Model.

III. DEFINITIONS:

- A. **SARA:**
An acronym for Scanning, Analysis, Response and Assessment.
- B. **Scanning:**
The identification and acknowledgment of a problem in the community either observed by law enforcement or conveyed to law enforcement by concerned citizens.
- C. **Analysis:**
An analysis of the problem reveals issues and conditions relevant to the complaint that may reveal underlying causes.

- D. *Response:*
A strategy, determined by the complexity of the problem, to develop and implement solutions by means of a collaborative effort between the Sheriff's Office and the community.
- E. *Assessment:*
An evaluation of the overall process that is conducted to determine the success/results of our approach to the problem.
- F. *Problem:*
Two or more incidents that are similar in nature, capable of causing harm, and issues that the public expects law enforcement to do something about or an extended investigation to solve a problem that may take several outside agencies to assist with the solution.
- G. *Incident:*
One or more of the following: location, suspect, victim group, behavior, and time.
- H. *Problem Solving:*
The process of looking beyond individual incidents to the underlying patterns and reasons.

IV. PROBLEM RECOGNITION:

- A. All employees are expected to recognize and document community problems or concerns and to take a team approach to their elimination.
- B. Problem solving and community partnerships are the key components in community policing. An in-depth focus on crime, the fear of crime, and disorder problems are essential to the success of Seminole Neighborhood Policing.
- C. It is important to visualize crime, the fear of crime, and disorder as a combination of factors connecting the victim, offender, and location. The SARA Model is used to focus on the different steps of problem solving.
- D. Collaboration between law enforcement, community members and other government agencies should be stressed, since solutions are more likely to be effective and sustainable if "stakeholders" are included in the problem solving effort. Conveying information from citizens' organizations to the appropriate division or section should also be documented in the initiative.

V. THE PROBLEM SOLVING PROCESS:

- A. Problem solving is a process of continuously looking at crime and disorder problems, analytically understanding those problems, drawing from a range of solutions (not just criminal justice and not just arrest) to address the problems, and assessing and reassessing over time the effectiveness of solutions applied to impact the problems. To do problem solving well requires training, skills, and tools.
- B. Problems need to be analyzed thoroughly so that solutions are tailored to the exact parameters of the problem being addressed. Analysis is information drawn from many sources including the people being affected by the problem (law enforcement, crime analysis, information from surveys, calls for service), other government agencies (code enforcement, probation, parole, planning), neighborhood associations, county laws and codes, environmental laws and codes, and other areas. Analysis should include both quantitative and qualitative data/information.
- C. *Scanning:*

1. A problem consists of two or more incidents similar in one or more ways that are a problem to the community and a concern for the Sheriff's Office.
2. A problem is different from an individual or isolated incident. Much of the crime, fear of crime, and disorder in our communities are connected, not individual or random incidents.
3. Sheriff's Office employees should look for patterns or persistent problems in our community. By focusing our problem solving efforts on things that happen more than once, we are likely to have a substantial impact on crime in our communities.
4. Employees should develop a "laundry list" of problems that are in his/her area of responsibility. This list should be long and comprehensive, and should not include only crime issues. The list should also include community concerns, which may be very different from those of the employee. Employees should actively seek community input at this stage and include citizen-identified problems on their list.
5. Employees should not rely solely on their own observations to identify community crime problems. There are many ways community crime problems can be identified:
 - a. Citizen surveys;
 - b. Community meetings (homeowner's associations, Neighborhood Councils);
 - c. Individual conversations with citizens;
 - d. Community forums;
 - e. Conversations with county workers;
 - f. Information/data from other agencies;
 - g. Complaints or calls for service (citizen, Deputy Sheriff, and Field Service Officer);
 - h. Crime analysis / MapInfo Analysis (including repeat calls for service analysis reports);
 - i. Conversations with agency Detectives;
 - j. Review of information captured in agency records;
 - k. Information from Sheriff's Office staff and county government; and
 - l. The media.

D. *Analysis:*

1. Analysis is the most difficult part of the SARA Model. Law enforcement has a tendency to skip this process in their enthusiasm to develop timely solutions. Without understanding the targeted problem, there is high risk of developing solutions that don't work in the long term. The problem will likely persist because responses are based on guesses, not facts, or other reliable information.
2. Problems rarely develop overnight and quick solutions rarely eliminate them. If analysis is not done, there is a tendency to apply standard solutions to problems (directed patrol). Law enforcement presence alone, is rarely the best solution to a problem and generally indicates that full analysis was not done.
3. Sheriff's Office employees should be seeking:
 - a. What conditions or events preceded the problem?
 - b. What events were happening concurrently with the problem?

- c. What are the consequences of the problem behavior (both positive and negative outcomes of the problem behavior)?
- d. What harm results from the problem?
- e. What environmental factors allowed the problem to occur in that location, and what efforts were made to identify what can be changed?

E. *Response:*

- 1. Five Ways of Impacting Problems:
 - a. Eliminating the problem;
 - b. Reducing the harm from the problem;
 - c. Reducing the number of incidents;
 - d. Improving the handling of the problem; and
 - e. Referring the problem to the proper authority.
- 2. Conditions may be intolerable to those affected by the problem. Although short-term relief may be imperative, long-term solutions should be pursued as well.
- 3. Problems will likely persist if long-term solutions are not tailored to key causative factors. To be effective, solutions must be developed.
- 4. Impact of the problem on the community should influence the types of solutions selected. Solutions are best if they leave the community more capable of handling similar problems that occur in the future.

F. *Assessment:*

- 1. Assessment should be considered during the analysis stage because there may be some baseline data that should be collected so that differences can be discerned at a later time. The specific assessment measures depend on the problem being addressed.
- 2. To accurately assess whether or not an employee properly responded to the problem, the following questions should be asked:
 - a. Was the plan implemented as designed?
 - b. What was the goal and was it attained?
 - c. How do you know the plan was effective?
 - d. What is likely to happen if the plan is discontinued?
 - e. What is likely to happen if the plan remains in place?
 - f. Were any new strategies identified to increase the plan's effectiveness?
 - g. How can the plan be monitored in the future?

NOTE: In problem solving, it may not always be possible to fully eliminate a problem. When an employee is involved in the SARA process, he or she will frequently need to move back and forth among the stages. For example, analysis may reveal that the problem identified in scanning is not the main issue. The employee may need to rescan to determine the nature of the true problem.

VI. RESPONSIBILITIES OF A DEPUTY SHERIFF/FIELD SERVICE OFFICER:

- A. Identify potential problems within their Community Service Area (CSA).
- B. A Cafe SARA (SA) report is the appropriate means of documentation for every problem solving initiative that requires more time than *one shift rotation* to resolve (shift rotation is defined as normal contiguous work days; Ex: Monday/Tuesday or Friday/Saturday/Sunday), conduct additional research, or the use of and coordination of internal/external resources. The Café SARA report must include a thorough description of the problem, dates and times of occurrence, biographical details of known individuals, and other relevant details. All involved employees must keep the Café SARA report up to date with pertinent events and details.
- C. Employees must meet with their immediate supervisor at least once per month to discuss and review the problem solving initiative. All documentation will be reviewed and discussed during the conference.
- D. It is important for the deputies that are assigned to the Community Service Area where the problem is occurring to communicate and collaborate on a regular basis, so that the problem solving initiative is both monitored and led by those who police that area. Deputies and all involved employees are encouraged to utilize all means of communication to ensure efficient problem solving measures are delivered.
- E. Prior to closing a problem solving initiative, the employee must meet with their direct supervisor to discuss the initiative and determine if any additional measures should be taken, including but not limited to rescanning the problem within a few months of the resolution date.

VII. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE IMMEDIATE SUPERVISOR:

- A. Supervisors are required to take active roles in their subordinates' problem solving initiatives, ensuring that throughout the initiative all responses are consistent with the Sheriff's Office mission, values, and philosophy.
- B. Supervisors will continually communicate with the employee(s) involved in a problem solving initiatives. At the discretion of the supervisor, conferences may be scheduled. If more than one subordinate is involved in the same problem solving initiative, the supervisor may elect to schedule a conference with all involved employees at the same time.
- C. Supervisors will ensure that the deputy is documenting the information properly in Cafe. This documentation may include a review of the MICAD calls impacting the employee's assignment area (if it applies to the problem solving initiative).
- D. Supervisors must keep their lieutenant or manager informed of ongoing or resolved problem solving initiatives on a frequent basis. Before a problem solving initiative reaches disposition, a supervisor must review the Café SARA report and supporting documentation.

VIII. LIEUTENANTS/MANAGERS:

- A. Lieutenants/Managers will monitor problem solving initiatives on a frequent basis. As necessary, lieutenants or managers will provide guidance and feedback as it relates to crime trends or community problems in the immediate or surrounding area.
- B. Lieutenants/Managers will review all problem solving initiatives with their Captain/Director on a frequent basis.

IX. TRAINING:

All full time employees will receive problem solving training during the Field Training Program.