

Lesson Plan 5: Situational Crime Prevention I

Purpose of the lesson

This lesson is the first in a two-part series about situational crime prevention. Lesson 5 will outline the definition and theoretical basis of situational crime prevention as a response strategy within the problem-oriented policing initiative. Officers will be introduced to two situational crime prevention concepts: the Crime Triangle and the Broken Windows Theory.

Overview

Learning objectives	By the end of the lesson, officers will be familiar with: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the theoretical basis and definition of situational crime prevention• the Crime Triangle concept• the Broken Windows Theory.
Time	15 minutes
Instructional techniques	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presentation• Q & A with discussion
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lesson plan• PowerPoint CD (slides 1–10)• Flip chart or white board (optional)• Handout: Crime Triangle and Broken Windows Escalation Model

Procedure

Slide 1: Situational Crime Prevention I

Introduce yourself (if necessary).

- Describe your job and where you work (if you are not known in this detachment).
- Explain why it is important for members to understand and apply situational crime prevention as part of the framework of strategies within problem-oriented policing.

Slide 2: Overview of Lesson 5

Introduce the lesson.

Lesson 5 covers:

- the theoretical basis and definition of situational crime prevention
- the situational crime prevention concept of the Crime Triangle
- the situational crime prevention concept of Broken Windows Theory.

Ask: Is anyone familiar with situational crime prevention?

Allow the group to offer answers; guide as required.

Learning objective 1

Understand the definition and theoretical basis of situational crime prevention.

Slide 3: Situational Crime Prevention – Definition

Review the definition of situational crime prevention.

Situational crime prevention is a crime prevention strategy that addresses specific crimes by managing, designing and manipulating the environment in a manner that seeks to increase the risk to the offender, while reducing the offender's potential reward for committing the crime

The offender must evaluate whether the benefits of committing a crime will outweigh the risks.

Situational crime prevention places more emphasis on affecting attitudes and behaviours than on using traditional law enforcement.

Ask for an example of a risk-versus-reward situation.

Example: Most banks have adopted a centralized customer service representative (teller) system. Therefore, the robber must consider the risks associated with the fact that the “teller” does not have immediate access to money at their workstation. In order to obtain money, the teller must walk to a centralized cash dispensing location. This increases risk for the robber in at least three ways:

- the teller may institute various stall tactics
- the teller may have opportunity to alert other employees
- centralized stations require clearances for larger amounts of cash.

Overall, the robber has less control in this situation and must consider whether the reward will outweigh the risk.

Slide 4: Theoretical Basis

Explain the supporting theories of situational crime prevention and clarify as necessary.

Situational crime prevention is rooted in crime theory:

Crime Routine Activity Theory:

Crime requires the intersection of time and space, with respect to:

- a potential offender
- suitable target, and
- lack of a deterrent to prevent the crime.

Rational Choice Theory:

Offenders make conscious decisions to commit crime.

Crime Pattern Theory:

Criminal behavioural patterns form in familiar surroundings, based on:

- where people go
- how they decide to get there, and
- who they meet.

Slide 5: Crime Triangle

Learning objective 2

Be familiar with the situational crime prevention concept: Crime Triangle.

Explain the Crime Triangle concept. Distribute handout provided in lesson plan.

Components of the Crime Triangle:

- Desire – the cognitive desire to commit the crime
- Ability – not always based on motor skills (e.g., crime can be committed with computers)
- Opportunity – a situation that facilitates or presents the prospect for crime to occur

Emphasize that all three elements must be present in order for a crime to occur.

Slide 6: Broken Windows Theory

Learning objective 3

Be familiar with the situational crime prevention concept: Broken Windows theory.

Explain the Broken Windows theory.

- The Broken Windows theory was first introduced by James Q. Wilson and George Kelling in 1982.
- The basic idea is that messy or broken-down environmental surroundings invite social disorder and an associated level of criminal activity.

Slide 7: Broken Windows Escalation Model

Explain the escalation model, demonstrating how a broken-down environment can escalate into a criminal situation.

- The escalation begins with evidence of deterioration.
- Residents' level of ownership decreases and fear increases.
- Residents begin to withdraw and care less about their community.
- Offenders notice the lack of concern, and move into the area.
- Offenders vandalize and move into the area.

Slide 8: Situation I (Picture of unkempt public walkway)

Ask: How does this public walkway display social disorder and criminal opportunity? (Refer back to escalation model if necessary.)

Answer: There are various levels of deterioration, suggestive of abandonment – at the municipal level (lack of maintenance of public walkway) and at the homeowner level (unkempt yards suggest lack of interest in maintaining private space).

Ask: What are some local examples of “broken window” environments within our community?

Examples: Could include graffiti, derelict buildings, broken down/abandoned vehicles, unkempt property, etc.

If time permits, ask: What are some strategies that police could promote within the community that could reduce the social/environmental disorder and the potential for crime?

Possible answers: Area clean-up promoted with waived landfill fees; graffiti removal program; tax donation incentives for abandoned vehicles, etc.

Slide 9: Situation II (Picture of messy yard)

Ask: What message does this yard convey?

Possible answers: Lack of ownership, lack of pride, lack of boundaries – a general “I don't care” message.

Slide 10: Next Lesson

Introduce the next lesson.

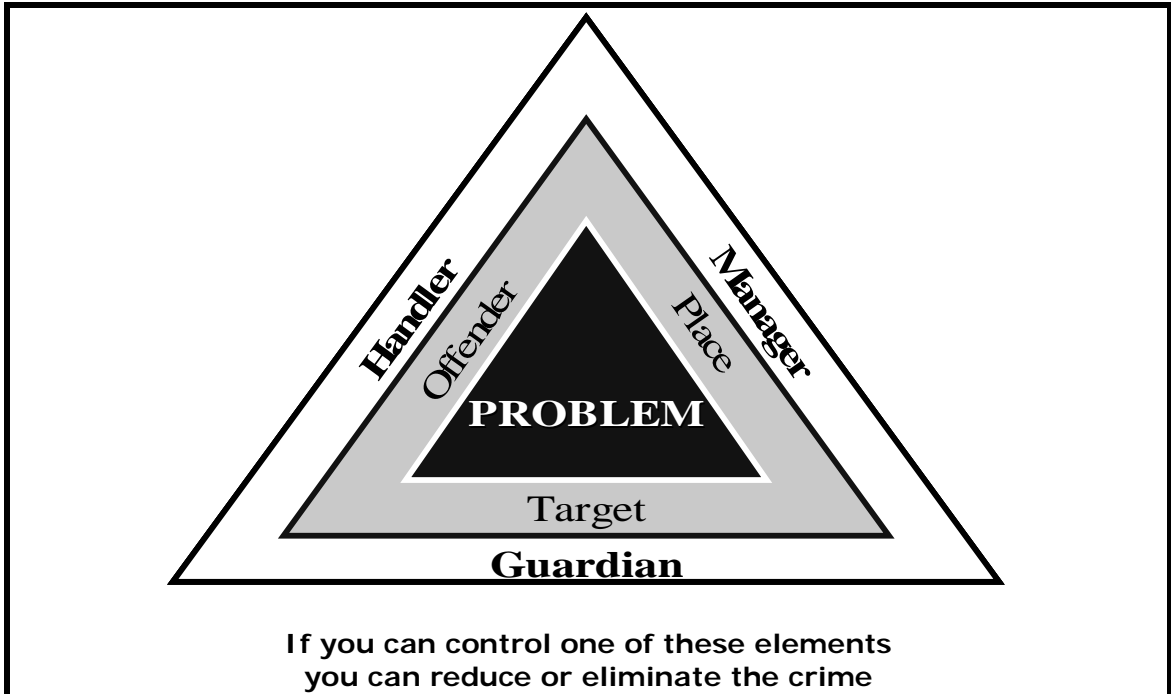
Situational Crime Prevention II:

- Crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED)
- An applied exercise

HANDOUT

Crime Triangle and Broken Windows Escalation Model

Crime Triangle



Broken Windows Escalation Model

