Crime Patterns

Recognizing crime patterns is an important component of supporting effective law enforcement operations and improving community safety. By identifying similarities among incidents, including times, locations, targets, and methods, emergency communications personnel can help connect information that may otherwise go unnoticed.

This course introduces learners to the nature and types of crime patterns and distinguishes patterns from crime trends and chronic crime problems. Learners will examine crimes commonly associated with patterns, characteristics that can signal related criminal activity, and questioning techniques for gathering relevant caller information. The course also explores how crime-pattern information can support law enforcement investigations, resource allocation, and proactive response strategies.

Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this course, learners will be able to:

1. Differentiate between crime patterns, crime trends, and chronic crime problems.
2. Explain how key factors such as location, time, target, and behavior indicate the presence of a crime pattern.
3. Identify crimes commonly associated with crime patterns and describe their defining characteristics.
4. Apply appropriate questioning techniques to gather information that may support crime-pattern identification.
5. Analyze the seven types of crime patterns and explain how they can influence law enforcement response strategies.

Module 1: What is a Crime Pattern

This module introduces the concept of crime patterns and establishes how they differ from crime trends and chronic crime problems. Learners examine the relationships among incidents and the factors that may indicate multiple crimes are connected.

Module Objectives

Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:

1. Define a crime pattern in the context of law enforcement operations.
2. Differentiate between a crime pattern, crime trend, and chronic crime problem.
3. Identify similarities among incidents that may indicate a crime pattern.
4. Explain the importance of recognizing crime patterns in supporting community safety.
5. Describe how crime-pattern information can assist law enforcement decision-making.

Content/Activities

- Introduction to Crime Patterns
- Crime Patterns, Crime Trends, and Chronic Crime Problems
- Identifying Connections Between Incidents
- Role of Emergency Communications Personnel

Module 2: Crime Pattern Bulletins

This module examines crime pattern bulletins and their role in communicating information about potentially related incidents. Learners explore the types of information that can help emergency communications personnel recognize connections and support law enforcement operations.

Module Objectives

Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:

1. Explain the purpose of a crime pattern bulletin.
2. Identify information within a bulletin that may be relevant to emergency communications personnel.
3. Recognize similarities between caller information and previously identified crime activity.
4. Explain how timely information sharing can support law enforcement investigations.
5. Describe the role of emergency communications personnel in communicating potentially relevant pattern information.

Content/Activities

- Purpose of Crime Pattern Bulletins
- Reviewing Pattern-Related Information
- Connecting Caller Information to Known Activity
- Information Sharing and Law Enforcement Support

Module 3: Crime in Progress

This module focuses on gathering information during reports of crimes in progress. Learners examine questioning techniques that can capture details useful for immediate response while also identifying characteristics that may connect an incident to a broader crime pattern.

Module Objectives

Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:

1. Identify critical information to gather during a crime-in-progress call.
2. Apply appropriate questioning techniques to obtain relevant caller information.
3. Recognize details related to location, time, targets, and behavior that may indicate a crime pattern.
4. Explain how caller-provided information can support responding law enforcement personnel.
5. Relate information from a current incident to characteristics of potentially connected crimes.

Content/Activities

- Crime-in-Progress Information Gathering
- Appropriate Questioning Techniques
- Identifying Pattern-Related Details
- Supporting Law Enforcement Response

Module 4: Types of Crime Patterns

This module introduces the seven types of crime patterns and examines how different forms of patterned criminal activity can affect law enforcement response strategies. Learners consider the characteristics that distinguish one pattern type from another.

Module Objectives

Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:

1. Identify the seven types of crime patterns presented in the course.
2. Describe the distinguishing features of each crime pattern type.
3. Classify criminal activity according to relevant pattern characteristics.
4. Compare different types of crime patterns based on their defining features.
5. Explain how the type of crime pattern may influence law enforcement response strategies.

Content/Activities

- Seven Types of Crime Patterns
- Distinguishing Pattern Types
- Classification of Patterned Criminal Activity
- Crime Patterns and Response Strategies

Module 5: Crime Pattern Characteristics

This module examines the characteristics used to recognize potential crime patterns, with emphasis on location, time, target, and behavior. Learners explore crimes commonly associated with patterns and consider how multiple characteristics can reveal connections among incidents.

Module Objectives

Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:

1. Identify location, time, target, and behavior as key crime-pattern factors.
2. Explain how similarities across multiple factors can indicate related criminal activity.
3. Identify crimes commonly associated with crime patterns.
4. Describe defining characteristics that can connect separate incidents.
5. Analyze incident information for characteristics that may indicate the presence of a crime pattern.

Content/Activities

- Location Characteristics
- Time Characteristics
- Target Characteristics
- Behavioral Characteristics
- Crimes Commonly Associated with Patterns
- Connecting Characteristics Across Incidents

Module 6: Conclusion

This module reinforces the major concepts presented throughout the course. Learners review the identification and classification of crime patterns and the importance of gathering and sharing relevant caller information to support effective law enforcement operations.

Module Objectives

Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:

1. Summarize the defining features of crime patterns.
2. Differentiate crime patterns from trends and chronic crime problems.
3. Recall key characteristics used to identify potentially related incidents.
4. Explain the importance of effective questioning and information sharing.
5. Describe how emergency communications personnel can support crime-pattern recognition and law enforcement response.

Content/Activities

- Course Concepts Review
- Crime Pattern Identification Review
- Emergency Communications Role Review
- Preparation for Course Quiz

Course Completion Criteria

To successfully complete this course and earn continuing education hours, learners must achieve a minimum score of 75%. The quiz must be completed within one hour.

- CE hours awarded: 1
- Certificate duration: 12 Months

Technical Requirements

- Desktop, laptop, or mobile device
- Speakers or headphones
- High-speed Internet access
- A current web browser