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NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF JUSTICE FIVE THINGS

LAW ENFORCEMENT EXECUTIVES CAN DO TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE



1. Crime is rarely random; patrols shouldn't be either.

Focusing on small geographic locations and times when crimes occur and targeting specific, high-impact repeat offenders can decrease crime.

2. Quality is more important than speed.

In most cases, thorough investigations, problem solving and careful forensic evidence collection contribute more to arresting suspects than shaving a few seconds off of initial response times.

3. DNA works for property crimes, too.

Collecting and using DNA evidence substantially increases the likelihood of solving property crimes — leading to twice as many arrests and twice as many cases being accepted for prosecution than in non-DNA “traditional” investigations.

4. In police work, perceptions matter.

When people see the police as fair, lawful and respectful, officers are safer and citizens are more likely to obey the law and comply with police orders. For example, the way an officer treats a stopped motorist influences the motorist's opinion about law enforcement more than whether the officer issues a citation.

5. Make officer safety and wellness a priority.

Safety training, certain shift lengths and using body armor can prevent injuries and save lives. For example, the “Shift Length Experiment” study showed that officers who worked 10-hour shifts (compared to 8- and 12-hour shifts) made fewer errors and worked less overtime, saving money for the jurisdiction.

Use the Five Things to make your community and officers safer and your leadership more dynamic. Following the guidance in the Five Things will heighten your impact and lower your costs overall.

The Five Things in this flyer come from years of research, analysis, testing and evaluation.

To learn more, visit NIJ.gov, keyword “Five Things.”

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The Police Foundation advances policing through innovation and science.

