# A Model for Crime Analysis and Real Time Crime Centers

The primary purpose of crime analysis is to support (i.e., assist) the operations of a police department in ongoing operational and crime-reduction efforts. These functions include criminal investigation, apprehension, and prosecution; patrol activities; crime-prevention and reduction strategies; problem solving; and the evaluation and accountability of police efforts. Through access to criminal and noncriminal data and accompanying software, crime analysis is performed to address short-term situations (e.g., several days to several weeks long) and problems occurring over a longer period of time (e.g., several months to several years).

The development of Real Time Crime Centers (RTCCs) is a response to the police community's desire to provide immediate information to officers during each call for service. RTCCs are intended to initially triage information from a call for service and provide information, such as suspect vehicle descriptions, victim or suspect criminal histories, and other pertinent information, on the fly to assist in furthering an officer's investigation during a call. Because of the vast quantity and limited quality of preliminary calls for service information, RTCCs are designed to assist only with certain types of calls for service with specific information that can be used within the time span of an initial call.

Upon completion of an officer's initial response and investigation, the information provided by the RTCC becomes agency data similar to call-for-service and official report data that are captured in the department's record management system. Subsequently, crime analysts correlate the RTCC information with other reported crimes and arrests to develop short-term patterns and long-term trends as part of their normal duties supporting investigation, apprehension, prosecution, patrol activities, crime prevention and reduction strategies, problem solving, and the evaluation and accountability of police efforts.

Operationally, while crime analysts and RTCC operators often access the same data systems and software, their functions are distinguished by the temporal nature in which they are assisting in an incident in real time, in clusters of incidents over a short time or aggregate crime in the long term. It is this distinction that is important in the development of a department's crime analysis and/or RTCC capabilities.