

CAP Index CrimeCast Data

Crime Risk Indices



What is the CAP Index?

The CAP Index is a summary measure of crime risk expressed in numerical form where one represents a location having a very low risk and 10 a very high risk of crime. CAP Index, Inc. produces crime risk data for all types of serious crime (homicide, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny, auto theft and arson. However the “CAP Index” itself is a weighted average of homicide, rape and robbery. This summary measure, the CAP Index, provides a quick and easy to apply measure of crime risk, and has been shown in numerous validation studies to be the single most useful indicator of site-specific serious crime risk.

What is the Radius-Threshold Methodology?

Because law-breakers travel to attack desirable targets, the crime risk of a site is a function not only the crime-related conditions existent in the immediate vicinity of the location, but also of the criminogenic conditions existent in the relevant surrounding areas. CAP’s research has shown that the relevant distance out and around a target for determining the crime risk for that target varies as a function of the size and drawing power of the location. Thus a very large mega-mall or large stand-alone retailer would have a sphere of influence or target drawing power of up to six miles, a small convenience store of three miles and residence of only a mile.

Further, the crime risk of a site is not a simple aggregation of the risks of crime immediately around the site. Rather, the crime risk of a site is a complex function of distance and population density. CAP studies have shown that the crime risk of a residence is best determined by averaging the crime risks of the census tracts or the their appropriate proportions situated within a one mile radius around the site or a radius which includes a population of 25,000 people, whichever radius is first reached.

In a like manner small business crime risks are best estimated by aggregating the tract risks for an inner circle as above but then factoring in the crime risks enclosed within an additional area of up to a total of three miles or 100,000 population, whichever comes first.

Larger business targets have their crime risks determined in the same manner, but the inner circle is now two and the outer, six miles while the population thresholds are now 100,000 and 400,000 individuals, respectively.

Social Disorganization Theory and CAP Index, Inc.

Social disorganization theory is closely linked to the ecological perspective of human behavior which examines the correlates of place or geography to behavior. This view of human activity dates back to the 1920's and the work originally done at the University of Chicago and reported by many of the founders of modern criminology including W.I. Thomas, Ernest Burgess, Robert Park, Clifford Shaw, Henry McKay and many others. Essentially, ecology looks at the interaction between human beings and their environment to explain, or it least attempt to understand, how physical surroundings, living conditions and behavior affect and modify each other and even influence attitudes and values as well.

Although academic attention to and involvement with social disorganization theories and crime have waned and flourished over the years, certain realities persist. The distributions of criminal activity and other behaviors do vary by geography both in terms of type and quantity. Criminologists may agree and disagree about the causes of crime and the extent to which it is socially defined, it is apparent to those who study the extent and distribution of criminal acts that the environment is a crucial component in any crime explanation equation.

Further, in the areas of crime control and deterrence, police and security experts alike, recognize that certain local variables in particular neighborhoods are related to the levels of crime observed in those areas. Academic ideologists may argue that political influences on the definitions of what constitutes a criminal act are the most important factors for explaining criminal activities, but in the meantime, businesses and individuals must protect themselves against criminal intrusions at all levels. At this time, the geospatial/ecological approach offers the best fit between theory and experience for security and crime control objectives.

As a result of these considerations, the geography of crime (the ecological perspective) as a discipline began to receive renewed attention in the mid 1980's (see Figlio, Hakim and Rengert, ***Metropolitan Crime Patterns***, WillowTree Press, 1985 as an example) which has now blossomed into the extensive crime mapping initiatives of the Federal government and a very substantial literature in this area of study.

CAP Index, Inc. was (and still is) the pioneer organizational entity to operationalize this body of criminological theory to address the real-world concerns of crime control and security. The CAP model, which may be found on the CAP's website (www.capindex.com) in simplified form, displays the basic components of the CAP application of ecological theory. This structural model, linking neighborhood physical and demographic variables to criminal activity, has been in constant development for 15 years and now has a long track record of utilization and validation among a large number of corporations and security consultants.

CAP Index Data Uses

Shortage/Shrinkage Reduction and Prediction

CAP's data married with sales volume and existing shortage/shrinkage help companies predict new store losses and optimally allocate security resources at existing locations

Security Resource Allocation

CAP's data are used to establish thresholds for different security packages

Site Selection

CAP's data provide the downside cost of locating in a given area to be examined in conjunction with the upside market potential

Ranking and Comparing Locations

CAP's data are consistent and comparable for any location in the U.S. and Canada.

Executive Protection

CAP's data are used to assess the risk at key employees' homes and travel itineraries

Route Planning

CAP's data help guide shipments or deliveries using the least dangerous routes.

Fraud Reduction and Prediction

CAP's data correlate strongly with bank, credit card, debit card, checking and other types of fraud. CAP scores can help show businesses where they need to be particularly vigilant about potential fraud.

Litigation Defense

Premises Liability lawsuits cost companies millions of dollars a year. Using CAP's data allows companies to use objective data to create policies and procedures that are defensible in court. CAP's data have been used in thousands of cases and most recently passed a Daubert challenge for use in Federal Court.

Targeted Marketing

CAP's data are used to identify areas at high risk for credit card and other types of fraud which should be avoided in a marketing campaign, and areas of low risk where such campaigns should be conducted. CAP's data are also, used to identify areas where crime-related products (e.g., burglar alarms, "the Club") can be marketed most successfully.

Human Resources

Locations tend to hire people who live nearby. Therefore, locations with high crime risk tend to be more prone to workplace violence, internal theft, fraud, workers compensation claims. Such locations may need to conduct background checks on all employees rather than just on upper management.

Targeted Hiring

For example, a location may have a relatively high crime risk towards the west and a low one towards the east. Such a location may want to direct hiring activity towards publications or other resources that serve the eastern community.

ATM Compliance

Some jurisdictions require by law that a crime risk assessment be conducted at each ATM location. CAP's data provide a fast, objective and consistent way of meeting such requirements.

ATM Procedure Management

In certain high risk areas, it may be best to service ATM's only during daylight hours or to send guards along for such maintenance or refill. CAP's data are used to identify such locations.

Bank Fraud Prediction

CAP's data strongly correlate with bank fraud. Banks can use CAP data to identify branch locations where they need to be especially vigilant.

Parking Lot Security

There are a significant number of lawsuits related to inadequate security in parking lots. CAP's data provide parking lot managers with an objective measure of the foreseeability of crime at their locations.

Credit Card Fraud Prediction

Billions of dollars are lost each year to credit card fraud. CAP's data identify areas and merchants that are more prone to fraudulent activity.

Bankruptcy Prediction

Personal bankruptcies result in significant losses for business. As with credit card fraud, personal bankruptcies are more likely to occur in certain areas. CAP's data identify those areas.

Lease Negotiations

High-risk locations require more security. Companies use CAP data to identify such high risk areas to demand successfully greater security from the lessor or to negotiate lower rents.

Credit Card Marketing

CAP's data are used to identify areas with lower risk of credit card fraud for credit card marketing campaigns.

Real Estate Investment

Crime and other types of risk significantly affect the value of real estate. CAP's data are used to assure wise real estate investments.

General Liability Prediction

Fraudulent general liability claims are significantly higher in high-crime locations. CAP's data are used to identify locations where general liability claims should be investigated more thoroughly.

Workers Compensation Prediction

Fraudulent workers compensation claims are significantly higher in high-crime locations. CAP's data are used to identify locations where workers compensation claims should be investigated more thoroughly.

Insurance Underwriting

For over a decade, insurance underwriters have used CAP's data to determine policy rates related to crime and other types of risk.

Protection of Traveling Employees

Companies must be concerned about their personnel assets. CAP's data are used to determine areas that employees should avoid while they are on the road, because of the relatively high risk of crime and violence.

Delivery Management

CAP's data are used to determine the least dangerous routes to use in delivering merchandise. Also, delivery to high risk areas should be made during daylight hours.