

CASE STUDY

Crime Coding Audit & Reporting Modernization

A records supervisor's hunch about a few offense codes turned into a two-and-a-half-year data cleanup — and a reporting process that catches the next one.

The Situation

After joining the department, a new crime analyst noticed discrepancies in the categorization of several offenses. The department initially expected that only a handful of codes would require correction, but leadership wanted to address the issue proactively. They asked Insight Analytics to review the agency's statute and offense codes and determine whether its coding documentation, reporting practices, and training materials were accurate and up to date.

What We Found

The department's original statute list appeared to have been inherited during a prior system implementation rather than developed specifically for the agency. Some of its codes were inaccurate or not properly aligned with California Department of Justice reporting requirements. The audit was particularly complex because the primary CJIS classification code was not contained in the department's statute table — determining how individual incidents should have been classified required a forensic review combining statute records, offense tables, system relationships, and case narratives.

- Aggravated assaults and simple assaults incorrectly classified, including simple assaults overcoded as aggravated assaults
- Motor vehicle theft incidents more accurately categorized as embezzlement or fraud
- Vehicle-theft reports initiated locally though the vehicles were stolen elsewhere and recovered in the city
- A vendor-provided monthly reporting tool generating crime totals without applying CIBRS standards correctly

Because the state does not retroactively revise previously submitted figures in these circumstances, the department wanted to establish an accurate internal record, understand the extent of the problem, and prevent the same errors

The Outcome

Insight Analytics provided the department with a case-level correction list covering approximately two and a half years of records, along with a cleaned and updated statute table and supporting training documentation. The engagement also produced practical tools designed to improve accuracy and reduce the amount of manual work required each month:

- A push-button monthly crime report — expanded from a one-page report into a four-page analytical briefing
- Month-over-month and year-over-year comparisons, plus five-year crime trends
- An XML extraction tool converting system output into an audit-ready worksheet
- A searchable data dictionary showing Group A/B classification, correct CJIS coding, and reporting notes

Why It Matters

Crime statistics are only as reliable as the coding structure beneath them. An agency can submit reports consistently and still produce inaccurate results when inherited statute tables, system relationships, or vendor tools don't reflect current reporting standards.

This project gave the department a validated coding foundation, clearer training resources, stronger quality-control tools, and a repeatable reporting process — greater confidence in both its historical data and the numbers it uses to guide future decisions.

Wondering what your own coding would show?

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A small city police department. Identifying details have been withheld at the agency's request.