



Written by [David Kelly](#) on March 1, 2023

“Street Takeovers” Pushing Limits of Law Enforcement

Since the pandemic began, “street takeovers” have become a popular underground activity in cities nationwide, leading to dangerous and serious situations for participants and law enforcement alike, and in some cases causing injury and death. Cities have ramped up enforcement to combat the illegal activity, and one state created a task force to bring to an end this growing public nuisance.

Racing cars has been a fun (although potentially dangerous) activity for generations. Drag racing and street racing as popularized with the [Fast and Furious](#) film series added to law enforcement’s difficulty in keeping public streets safe, and now things have escalated: “street takeovers” not only involve risky behavior with car stunts, but function as a cover for criminal activity in the form of flash mobs robbing businesses.

MotorTrend best [defined](#) street takeovers:

Unlike street racing (which is also highly dangerous and very illegal) which is effectively drag racing in business parks or on unobstructed-enough roadways after hours, street takeovers involve a large group of cars “taking over” an intersection or parking lot, and in most instances don’t involve racing at all.

Sometimes referred to as “side shows,” participants in street takeovers do donuts and burnouts with large crowds gathering dangerously close to the action. Sometimes tires explode, bystanders get hit by cars, fights break out, or even shootings occur, but none of that has stopped hundreds of people from taking part in or watching these unruly takeovers.

With police forces nationwide dealing with staffing issues caused by [defund the police](#) movements and leftist soft-on-crime social-justice policies, it has become nearly impossible for law enforcement to be a visible deterrent to street racing. In most cities, police departments rarely will engage in a chase to catch street racers, as pursuit could increase the potential for injury or death.

Frustration over the illegal and pre-planned street takeovers was apparent after last weekend’s events in Charlotte, North Carolina. WCCB [reported](#):

The “street takeovers” have been a problem across the city for years, but police say it’s become worse recently, including this past weekend.



YouTube
Street Takeover in Orange County, California



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“Literally hundreds of cars, in different groups, spread out across the city,” explains Major Dave Johnson, with Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police.

With the growing popularity of street takeovers and social media’s influence with instant sharing and even announcements of the next intersection flash mob, it is quite common for the street takeovers to last just long enough to give participants the thrill of the risky behavior — and then give them time to get away before police arrive.

These “sideshows” have also [reportedly](#) taken place recently in the Texas cities of Dallas, Houston, San Antonio, and Austin. *My San Antonio* [shared](#) this example from an incident earlier this year:

A viral TikTok [video](#) showed what it’s like to be caught in the middle of an illegal street car racing event that involved gunshots on a San Antonio highway on Sunday, January 15. The San Antonio Police Department said the “street takeover” resulted in a shooting and then a four-car crash on Interstate 10.

The increase of street takeovers in cities across Texas led Governor Greg Abbott to create a statewide street task force last week.

A [press release](#) stated:

The Governor directed the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) to address the recent street takeovers in several communities that have become increasingly violent and more frequent, resulting in injuries to law enforcement officers and endangering the public.

“Despite the foolish attempts by some local officials to defund and demoralize our brave law enforcement officers, Texas is and remains a law-and-order state,” said Governor Abbott.

“We must send a clear message that these reckless, coordinated criminal events will not be tolerated in Texas. This statewide task force will work closely with local officials and law enforcement to investigate, prosecute, and prevent these dangerous street takeovers. Working together, we can ensure Texans in communities large and small remain safe.”

“These street takeovers put the lives of Texans and Texas law enforcement officers at risk,” said DPS Director Steven McCraw. “We are seeing fireworks fired at officers in crowds, lasers pointed at aircraft, drivers driving upwards of 130 miles per hour with no lights on in the dark of night—all of it is reckless, and it needs to be stopped.”

Nationwide, cities are attempting to improve methods and strategies for preventing street takeovers. The Los Angeles Police Department has responded to numerous incidents over the years and, as [KTLA reported](#), has “groups from the traffic commands that are addressing the issue.”

One street takeover incident in the greater Los Angeles area led to the deaths of two young women. “A witness said the women were in a sedan that was drifting or swinging around the intersection during a street takeover. One of the women was apparently hanging out of the window while the other was driving when the sedan collided with an SUV,” reported KTLA.

Al Pasos, commander of the Los Angeles Police Department’s Traffic Group, gave street takeover participants a word of warning following the recent deaths: “I would just like for them to know that while they believe they’re just engaging in the practice of displaying their ability to maneuver a vehicle,



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this past tragedy should be a message to them that it's gonna happen to any of them as well as any spectators, and that they could be criminally and civilly liable for all these actions.”



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