

# SPD Blotter

Seattle Police Department

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## SeaStat: What Is It? And How Are Police Using It to Disrupt Crime Trends?

Written by [Public Affairs](#) on September 17, 2014 7:11 pm

The Seattle Police Department on Wednesday **released new figures showing overall crime** in the city is up 13 percent so far this year compared to 2013.

The biggest drivers are motor vehicle thefts, up 44 percent, and other thefts such as car prowls — up 15 percent. Violent crimes are up 8 percent overall compared to last year, largely because of an increase in aggravated assaults.

The Department is using the crime data as part of a new program it’s launched, called SeaStat, that’s aimed at quickly addressing crime hotspots based on analysis of crime data and community reports of incidents. A recent spike in crime in the Capitol Hill area put the program to its first test. SPD has boosted patrols there and is closely monitoring the area to see if crime is reduced.

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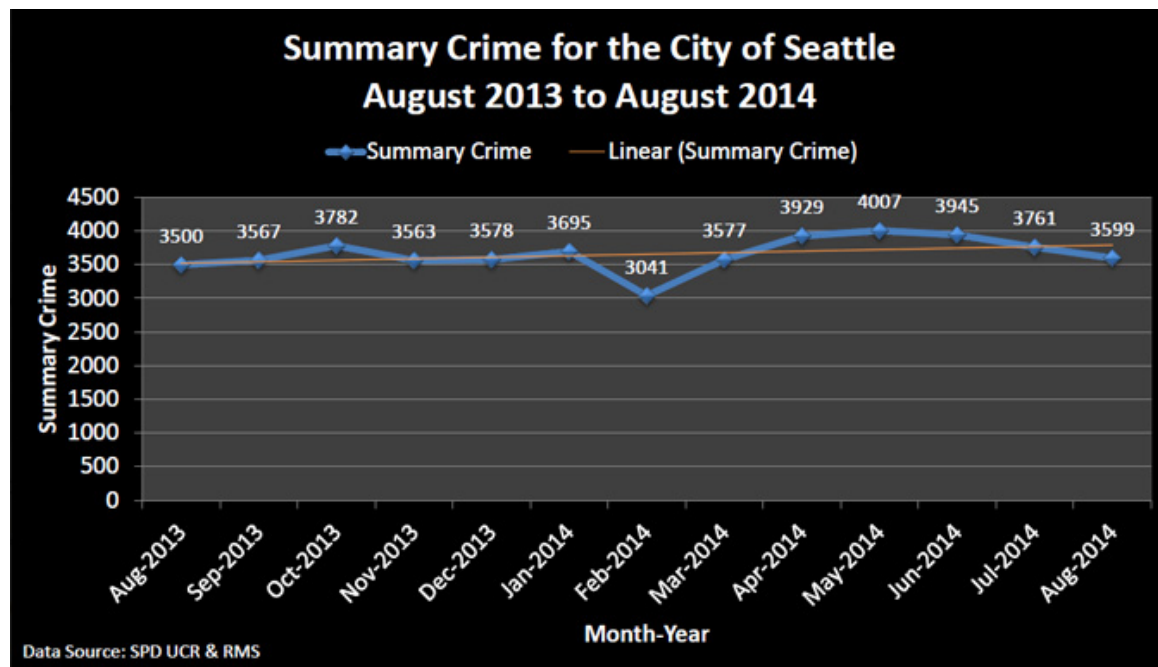
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"We're in the crime fighting business," said SPD's Chief Operating Officer (COO) Mike Wagers. "We've identified the trends and are working hard with our many partners to reverse them."

Citywide numbers released by the department Wednesday show 29,554 crimes reported overall during the first eight months of 2014 compared to 26,152 during the same time period last year, an increase of roughly 3,400 crimes, or 13 percent.



Larceny, thefts other than motor vehicle, account for more than two-thirds of the overall increase. They include crimes such as car prowls and pickpockets. There were 18,483 crimes in that category this year compared to 16,140 last year, up 2,343.

In terms of violent crimes, 17 homicides have been reported so far this year compared to 14 in the same period last year, up 21 percent. There've been 84 rapes, compared to 81 in 2013, up 4 percent. The report shows 1,502 aggravated assaults, up 183 from last year, a 14 percent increase.

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The department, as part of SeaStat, is drilling down into the numbers to get real-time information on murders, assaults, burglaries and other serious crimes to help identify emerging trends. It's also using community feedback on neighborhood crime.

In the case of Capitol Hill, both community reports and data analysis indicated a significant increase in crime.

East Precinct Captain Pierre Davis has assigned officers to walk foot patrols on Capitol Hill and put additional officers on bikes, focusing on the areas between Broadway and Pike and Cal Anderson Park. Several arrests were made as a result.

The chief and several members of her command staff have patrolled the area as well. The Capitol Hill plan will continue to be assessed at the SeaStat meetings and adjusted if needed.

Michael Wells, executive director of the Capitol Hill Chamber of Commerce, said he likes what he's seen so far, noting there've been several arrests recently. "We're pleased there has been a response," he said.

Wells said he's looking forward to seeing how the SeaStat program works out. Taking community concerns into account is a smart move, he said. That, along with the data analysis, "provides a one-two punch."

Variations of SeaStat are used by police departments around the country including New York and Los Angeles, to combat serious crime. Other areas commonly refer to the process as Compstat (short for computer statistics). Chief Kathleen O'Toole said she started SeaStat as part of her pledge to bring best business practices to the department.

The Department is holding meetings every two weeks, involving staff throughout the department and other agencies, to discuss the latest numbers and come up with strategies to reduce crime. The most recent meeting was held Wednesday.

The aim is to use the SeaStat process to quickly tackle problems as they're detected. The regular meetings are intended to help department staff assess if solutions are working, and develop other strategies if they're not.

SeaStat also takes community views into account through regular meetings where the department can hear directly from residents if its efforts are working. The community feedback, and analysis of crime data, will be used to adjust the precinct community policing plans now under development.

The meetings also hold SPD employees accountable because they're being asked if their efforts are reducing crime, and to explain what happened if the solutions aren't working.

SPD COO Wagers said that regularly gathering officers and staff through the department to discuss the latest crime information improves communication through the ranks and increases collaboration.

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