



## Violent Crime

### ***Definition***

In the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program, violent crime is composed of four offenses: murder and nonnegligent manslaughter, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault. Violent crimes are defined in the UCR Program as those offenses that involve force or threat of force.

### ***Data collection***

The data presented in *Crime in the United States* reflect the Hierarchy Rule, which requires that only the most serious offense in a multiple-offense criminal incident be counted. The descending order of UCR violent crimes are murder and nonnegligent manslaughter, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault, followed by the property crimes of burglary, larceny-theft, and motor vehicle theft. Although arson is also a property crime, the Hierarchy Rule does not apply to the offense of arson. In cases in which an arson occurs in conjunction with another violent or property crime, both the arson and the additional crime are reported.

In 2016, the FBI Director approved the recommendation to discontinue reporting of rape data using the UCR legacy definition beginning in 2017. However, to maintain the 20-year trend in Table 1, the rape total for the legacy definition is used to calculate the violent crime total.

### ***Overview***

- In 2019, an estimated 1,203,808 violent crimes occurred nationwide, a decrease of 0.5 percent from the 2018 estimate. (See Tables 1 and 1A.)
- When considering 5- and 10-year trends, the 2019 estimated violent crime total was 0.4 percent above the 2015 level but 3.8 percent below the 2010 level. (See Tables 1 and 1A.)
- There were an estimated 366.7 violent crimes per 100,000 inhabitants in 2019, a rate that dropped 1.0 percent when compared with the 2018 estimated violent crime rate and fell 9.3 percent from the 2010 estimate. (See Tables 1 and 1A.)

- Aggravated assaults accounted for 68.2 percent of violent crimes reported to law enforcement in 2019. Robbery offenses accounted for 22.3 percent of violent crime offenses; rape (legacy definition) accounted for 8.2 percent; and murder accounted for 1.4 percent. (Based on Table 1.)
- Information collected regarding types of weapons used in violent crimes showed that firearms were used in 73.7 percent of the nation's murders, 36.4 percent of robberies, and 27.6 percent of aggravated assaults. (Weapons data are not collected for rape.) (See Expanded Homicide Data Table 7, Robbery Table 3, and the Aggravated Assault Table.)

***What you won't find on this page***

Clearance and arrest data for violent crime.



## Property Crime

### ***Definition***

In the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program, property crime includes the offenses of burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson. The object of the theft-type offenses is the taking of money or property, but there is no force or threat of force against the victims. The property crime category includes arson because the offense involves the destruction of property; however, arson victims may be subjected to force. Because of limited participation and varying collection procedures by local law enforcement agencies, only limited data are available for arson. Arson statistics are included in trend, clearance, and arrest tables throughout *Crime in the United States*, but they are not included in any estimated volume data. The arson section in this report provides more information on that offense.

### ***Data collection***

The data presented in *Crime in the United States* reflect the Hierarchy Rule, which requires that only the most serious offense in a multiple-offense criminal incident be counted. In descending order of severity, the violent crimes are murder and nonnegligent manslaughter, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault, followed by the property crimes of burglary, larceny-theft, and motor vehicle theft. Although arson is also a property crime, the Hierarchy Rule does not apply to the offense of arson. In cases in which arson occurs in conjunction with another violent or property crime, both crimes are reported.

### ***Overview***

- In 2019, there were an estimated 6,925,677 property crime offenses in the nation. The 2-year trend showed that property crime offenses declined 4.1 percent in 2019 when compared with the 2018 estimate. The 10-year trend showed that property crime offenses decreased 24.0 percent in 2019 when compared with the 2010 estimate. (See Tables 1 and 1A.)
- In 2019, the rate of property crime was estimated at 2,109.9 per 100,000 inhabitants, a 4.5 percent decrease when compared with the 2018 estimated rate.

The 2019 property crime rate was 15.6 percent less than the 2015 estimate and 28.4 percent less than the 2010 estimate. (See Tables 1 and 1A.)

- Larceny-theft accounted for 73.4 percent of all property crimes in 2019. Burglary accounted for 16.1 percent, and motor vehicle theft for 10.4 percent. (Based on Table 1.)
- Property crimes in 2019 resulted in losses estimated at \$15.8 billion. (Based on Tables 1 and 23.)

***What you won't find on this page***

Clearance and arrest data for property crimes.



## Uniform Crime Reporting Statistics: Their Proper Use

---

Since 1930, participating local, county, state, tribal, and federal law enforcement agencies have voluntarily provided the nation with a reliable set of crime statistics through the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program. The FBI, which administers the program, periodically releases the crime statistics to the public.

### Usefulness of UCR Data

---

UCR crime statistics are used in many ways and serve many purposes. They provide law enforcement with data for use in budget formulation, planning, resource allocation, assessment of police operations, etc., to help address the crime problem at various levels. Chambers of commerce and tourism agencies examine these data to see how they impact the particular geographic jurisdictions they represent. Criminal justice researchers study the nature, cause, and movement of crime over time. Legislators draft anti-crime measures using the research findings and recommendations of law enforcement administrators, planners, as well as public and private entities concerned with crime problems. The news media use the crime statistics provided by the UCR Program to inform the public about the state of crime as it compares to the national level.

### Pitfalls of Ranking

---

UCR data are sometimes used to compile rankings of individual jurisdictions and institutions of higher learning. These incomplete analyses have often created misleading perceptions which adversely affect geographic entities and their residents. For this reason, the FBI has a long-standing policy against ranking participating law enforcement agencies on the basis of crime data alone. Despite repeated warnings against these practices, some data users continue to challenge and misunderstand this position.

Data users should not rank locales because there are many factors that cause the nature and type of crime to vary from place to place. UCR statistics include only jurisdictional population figures along with reported crime, clearance, or arrest data. Rankings ignore the uniqueness of each locale. Some factors that are known to affect the volume and type of crime occurring from place to place are:

- Population density and degree of urbanization.
- Variations in composition of the population, particularly youth concentration.
- Stability of the population with respect to residents; mobility, commuting patterns, and transient factors.
- Economic conditions, including median income, poverty level, and job availability.
- Modes of transportation and highway systems.
- Cultural factors and educational, recreational, and religious characteristics.
- Family conditions with respect to divorce and family cohesiveness.

- Climate.
- Effective strength of law enforcement agencies.
- Administrative and investigative emphases on law enforcement.
- Policies of other components of the criminal justice system (i.e., prosecutorial, judicial, correctional, and probational).
- Citizens' attitudes toward crime.
- Crime reporting practices of the citizenry.

Ranking agencies based solely on UCR data has serious implications. For example, if a user wants to measure the effectiveness of a law enforcement agency, these measurements are not available. As a substitute, a user might list UCR clearance rates, rank them by agency, and attempt to infer the effectiveness of individual law enforcement agencies. This inference is flawed because all the other measures of police effectiveness were ignored. The nature of the offenses that were cleared must be considered as those cleared may not have been the most serious, like murder or rape. The agency's clearances may or may not result in conviction, the ultimate goal. The agency may make many arrests for Part II offenses, like drug abuse violations, which demonstrate police activity but are not considered in the clearance rate. The agency's available resources are also critical to successful operation, so its rate of officers to population and budget should be considered. The UCR clearance rate was simply not designed to provide a complete assessment of law enforcement effectiveness. In order to obtain a valid picture of an agency's effectiveness, data users must consider an agency's emphases and resources; and its crime, clearance, and arrest rates; along with other appropriate factors.

Because of concern regarding the proper use of UCR data, the FBI has the following policies:

- The FBI does not analyze, interpret, or publish crime statistics based solely on a single-dimension interagency ranking.
- The FBI does not provide agency-based crime statistics to data users in a ranked format.
- When providing/using agency-oriented statistics, the FBI cautions and, in fact, strongly discourages, data users against using rankings to evaluate locales or the effectiveness of their law enforcement agencies.

## **Promoting Responsible Crime Analysis**

---

For more information about the UCR Program, visit <https://ucr.fbi.gov>. For web assistance, please contact the FBI's Crime Statistics Management Unit at (304) 625-4830.