

# CRIMES

## PART 1

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The California Department of Justice is contemplating the addition of theft (\$400 and over) and arson to the California Crime Index (CCI) beginning with *Crime & Delinquency in California, 2002*. Data for arson are available since 1980 and theft (\$400 and over) data have been collected since 1983.

These changes would result in a more representative presentation of crime in California as indicated by the California Crime Index. They will also bring California and FBI crime indexes closer together.

Questions or comments should be referred to the Criminal Justice Statistics Center at: P.O. Box 903427, Sacramento, CA 94203-4270 or [CJSC@doj.ca.gov](mailto:CJSC@doj.ca.gov).

## WHAT IS A CRIME?

A crime is an act specifically prohibited by law, or failure to perform an act specifically required by law, for which punishment is prescribed (15 P.C.).

## HOW ARE CRIMES COUNTED?

The **Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program** was inaugurated in 1930 and is administered on the national level by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). It provides criminal statistics for use in law enforcement administration, operation, and management. In California, this program is administered by the Department of Justice (DOJ).

As part of the UCR Program, law enforcement agencies throughout the state report summary information to the DOJ on "selected" crimes. Reported crimes are classified by UCR definitions designed to eliminate differences among the various states' penal code definitions of crimes.

The crimes, selected because of seriousness, frequency of occurrence, and the likelihood of being reported to the police, are homicide, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson. These eight offenses are known as Part I crimes. Except for larceny-theft, UCR does not count misdemeanors and infractions.

The California Crime Index (CCI) comprises homicide, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, and motor vehicle theft. When a 1983 California law raised the lower limit of felony theft from \$200 to over \$400, the DOJ dropped theft (\$200 and over) from its measure of crime. Law enforcement agencies began submitting arson crime data in 1979; 1980 was the first year of complete reporting. To maintain long-term felony trend data in the CCI, the DOJ excluded larceny-theft and arson. As indicated, we are considering inclusion of theft over \$400 and arson.

The UCR Program accounts for Part I crimes only; however, some Part I crimes go undetected and therefore unreported. This, along with the hierarchy rule, accounts for a certain amount of underreporting in the system. Most crimes occur singly as opposed to more than one crime being committed within the same incident. The hierarchy rule assigns a value to each crime and requires that only the single most serious offense be reported. For example, if a person were to enter a bar, rob eight patrons, and kill the bartender, only the homicide would be reported. Arson is the exception. Since arson frequently occurs in conjunction with other crimes, it is felt that valuable information could be lost using the hierarchy rule. Therefore, arson is counted along with the other most serious offense.

## WHAT IS A RATE?

A rate describes the number of events that occur within a given population. Crime rates and clearance rates are used in this section. Formulas for calculating both can be found in the Appendix.

## WHAT IS THE VALUE OF THE UCR PROGRAM?

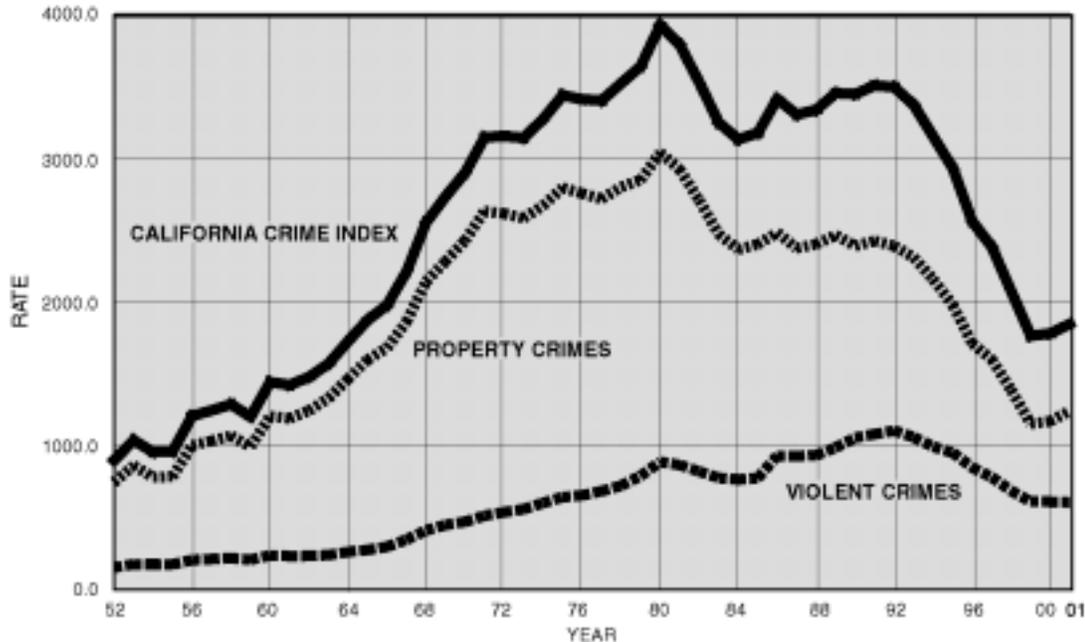
Since its inception in 1930, UCR has become a nationwide program. All California law enforcement agencies participate. Quality control surveys conducted by the DOJ staff have shown a high level of compliance with UCR reporting standards. The number of participants and the amount and quality of data collected under the stringent rules of the system make UCR a valuable program. In California, because of the high quality of its law enforcement agencies and their close cooperation with the DOJ, UCR data are, and have been for many years, an extremely good *indicator* of the extent of, and fluctuation in, crimes reported to law enforcement.

# CRIME TRENDS, 1952-2001

## CALIFORNIA CRIME INDEX, 1952-2001

By Category

Rate per 100,000 Population



Source: Table 1.

Data depicting crime in California have been published continuously for 49 years. The first *Crime in California* publication was issued in 1953 and reported data for the 1952 calendar year.

### Comparing 1952 to 2001:

- The California Crime Index (CCI) rate increased 105.5 percent (from 898.1 to 1,845.6).
- The violent crime rate increased 295.6 percent (from 153.1 to 605.6).
- The property crime rate increased 66.4 percent (from 745.0 to 1,240.0).

The CCI rate increased almost continuously from 1952 through its peak year of 1980. Since then, with the exception of several increases between 1984 to 1991, the rate has been in a general decline. In 1999, the CCI rate dropped to a 34-year low of 1,763.3 per 100,000 population. The 2001 rate of 1,845.6 marked the second consecutive annual increase since the 1999 low.

The violent crime rate reached its highest level in 1992 (1,103.9). In 1952, reported violent crime accounted for

17.0 percent of the CCI. In 2001, reported violent crime accounted for 32.8 percent.

The property crime rate, like the CCI, peaked in 1980. In 1952, reported property crime accounted for 83.0 percent of the CCI. In 2001, reported property crime accounted for 67.2 percent.

Since 1952, there have been changes in laws and data collection procedures. For instance, in 1986 legislation was enacted which required reporting domestic violence as criminal conduct. As a result, the aggravated assault rate increased over 35 percent in one year. These types of changes should be considered when comparing data.

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These changes would result in a more representative presentation of crime in California as indicated by the California Crime Index. They will also bring California and FBI crime indexes closer together.

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## California Crime Index

**California Crime Index (CCI)** - homicide, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, and motor vehicle theft.

### Comparing 1996 to 2001:

- Reported California Crime Index offenses decreased 27.9 percent in rate.

### From 2000 to 2001:

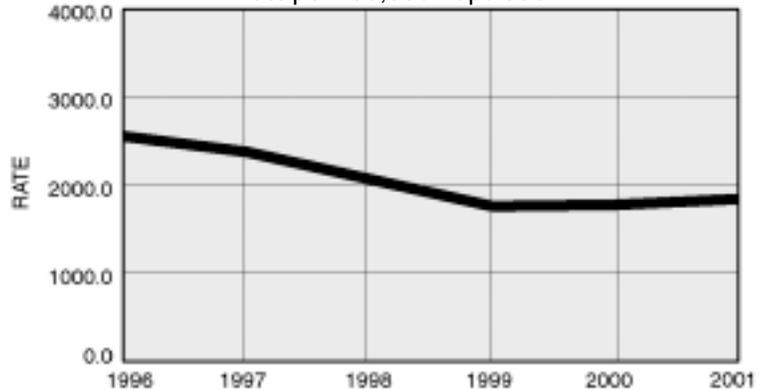
- The California Crime Index rate increased 3.7 percent.

In 2001, of 641,506 California Crime Index offenses reported:

- Violent crimes accounted for 32.8 percent (210,510).
- Property crimes accounted for 67.2 percent (430,996).

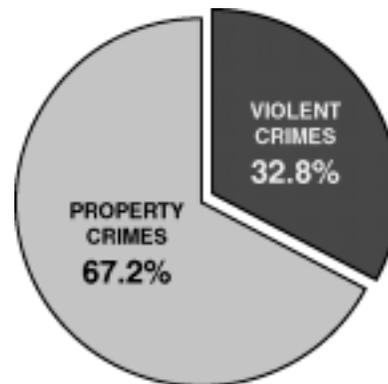
*The CCI rate increased for the second consecutive year in 2001. The rate increase was seen in four of the six major offenses (see Table 1).*

CALIFORNIA CRIME INDEX, 1996-2001  
Rate per 100,000 Population

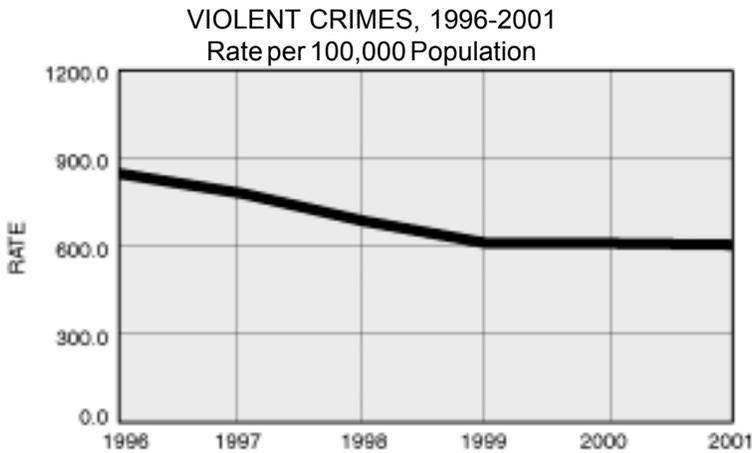


Source: Table 2.

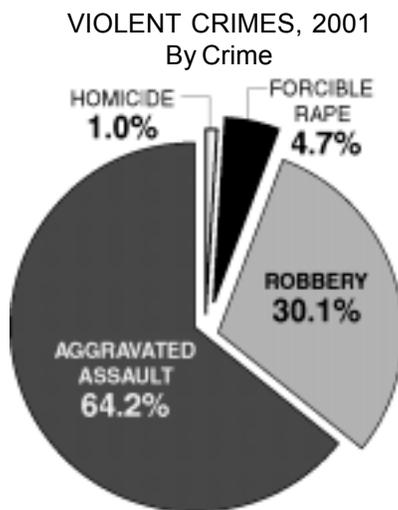
CALIFORNIA CRIME INDEX, 2001  
By Category



Source: Table 3.



Source: Table 2.



Source: Table 3.

## Violent Crimes

**Violent Crimes** - homicide, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault.

### Comparing 1996 to 2001:

- The rate of reported violent crimes decreased 28.6 percent.

### From 2000 to 2001:

- The violent crime rate decreased 0.8 percent.

### In 2001, of 210,510 violent crimes reported:

- Homicide accounted for 1.0 percent (2,201).
- Forcible rape accounted for 4.7 percent (9,882).
- Robbery accounted for 30.1 percent (63,299).
- Aggravated assault accounted for 64.2 percent (135,128).

*The violent crime rate continued its nine-year decline (down 0.8 percent) for the year 2001.*

## Homicide

**Homicide** - The willful (nonnegligent) killing of one human being by another. Murder and nonnegligent manslaughter comprise this category.

### Comparing 1996 to 2001:

- The rate of reported homicides decreased 30.0 percent.

### From 2000 to 2001:

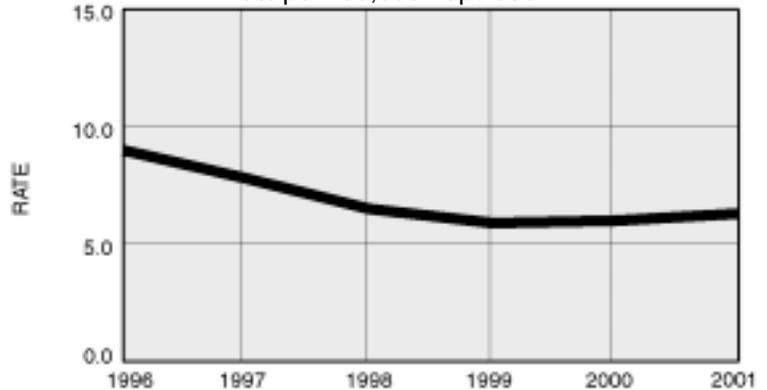
- The homicide rate increased 5.0 percent.

In 2001, of 2,201 homicides reported, the type of weapon was known in 2,174 cases (98.8 percent). Of these:

- Firearms accounted for 72.1 percent (1,568).
- Knives or cutting instruments accounted for 13.7 percent (298).
- Blunt objects (clubs, etc.) accounted for 4.4 percent (95).
- Personal weapons (hands, feet, etc.) accounted for 4.7 percent (103).
- Other weapons accounted for 5.1 percent (110).

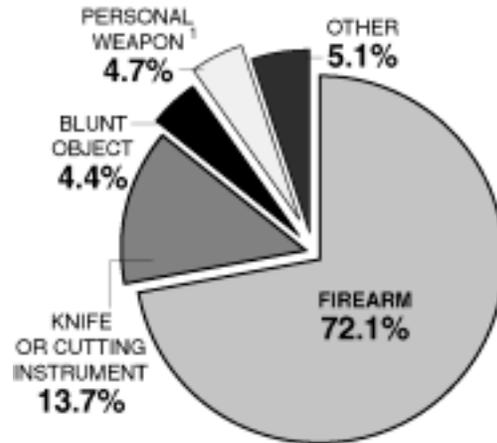
*Homicides increased in number and rate for the second consecutive year in 2001.*

HOMICIDE CRIMES, 1996-2001  
Rate per 100,000 Population



Source: Table 2.

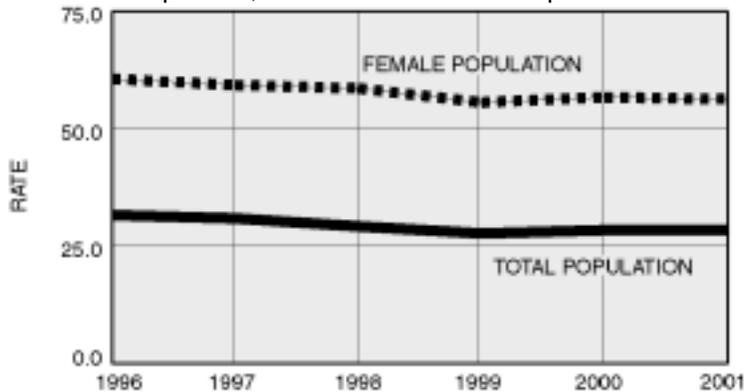
HOMICIDE CRIMES, 2001  
By Type of Weapon Used



Source: Table 4.

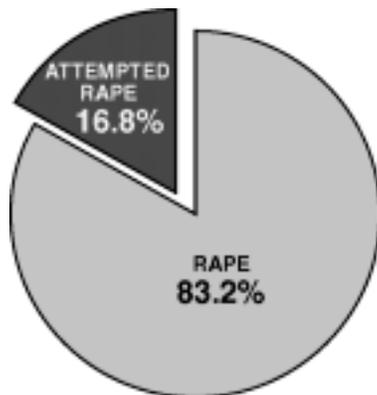
<sup>1</sup>Personal weapons include hands, feet, etc.

**FORCIBLE RAPE CRIMES, 1996-2001**  
Rate per 100,000 Total and Female Populations



Sources: Tables 2 and 5.

**FORCIBLE RAPE CRIMES, 2001**  
By Type of Rape



Source: Table 5.

## Forcible Rape

**Forcible Rape** - *The carnal knowledge of a female forcibly and against her will. Assaults or attempts to commit rape by force or threat of force are included.*

The UCR definition of forcible rape states that only females can be victims; therefore, a forcible rape crime rate based exclusively on the female population is included. **The following discussion is based on the rate of occurrence for both female population and total population** (see Tables 2 and 5).

### Comparing 1996 to 2001:

- The rate of reported forcible rapes (female population) decreased 7.1 percent.
- The rate of reported forcible rapes (total population) decreased 10.1 percent.

### From 2000 to 2001:

- The forcible rape rate (female population) decreased 0.7 percent.
- The forcible rape rate (total population) remained unchanged.

### In 2001, of 9,882 forcible rapes reported:

- Rape accounted for 83.2 percent (8,219).
- Attempted rape accounted for 16.8 percent (1,663).

## Robbery

**Robbery** - The taking or attempting to take anything of value from the care, custody, or control of a person or persons by force or threat of force or violence and/or by putting the victim in fear.

### Comparing 1996 to 2001:

- The rate of reported robberies decreased 37.4 percent.

### From 2000 to 2001:

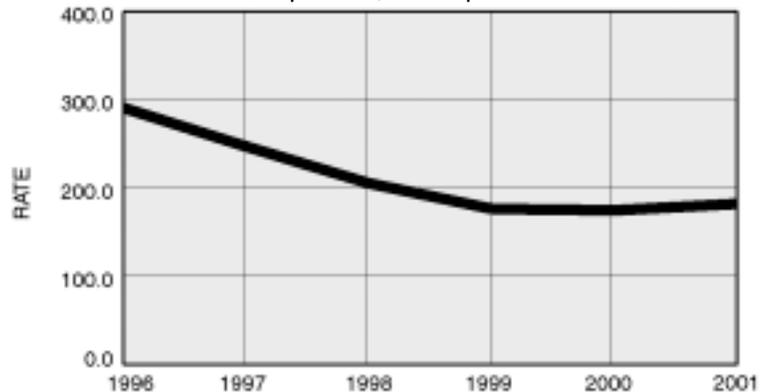
- The robbery rate increased 4.2 percent.

In 2001, of 63,299 robberies reported:

- Highway robbery (streets, parks, parking lots, etc.) accounted for 45.8 percent (29,000).
- Commercial robbery accounted for 24.6 percent (15,549).
- Residential robbery accounted for 8.4 percent (5,333).
- Bank robbery accounted for 2.4 percent (1,540).
- Robberies that occurred in other locations (churches, schools, trains, etc.) accounted for 18.8 percent (11,877).

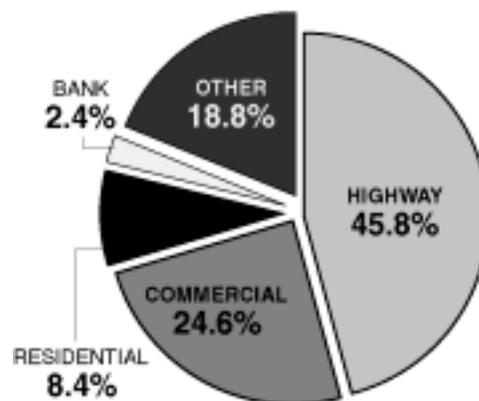
*The 2001 robbery rate increased for the first time since 1992 (up 4.2 percent).*

ROBBERY CRIMES, 1996-2001  
Rate per 100,000 Population



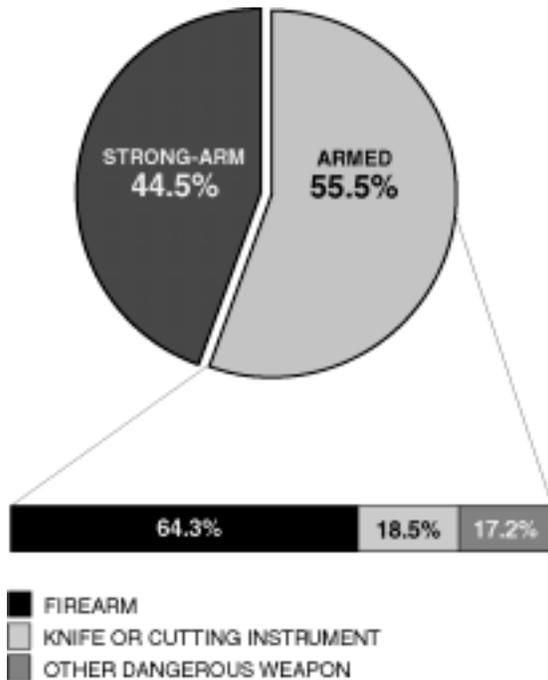
Source: Table 2.

ROBBERY CRIMES, 2001  
By Location



Source: Table 6.

ROBBERY CRIMES, 2001  
By Type of Robbery and Type of Weapon if Armed



Source: Table 6.

## Robbery (continued)

In 2001, of all robberies reported:

- Armed robbery accounted for 55.5 percent (35,152).
- Strong-arm robbery accounted for 44.5 percent (28,147).

Of the 35,152 armed robberies reported:

- Firearms were involved in 64.3 percent (22,606).
- Knives or cutting instruments were involved in 18.5 percent (6,512).
- Other dangerous weapons were involved in 17.2 percent (6,034).

*In 2001, over half of all robberies involved the use of a weapon. Over six out of ten times that weapon was a firearm.*

## Aggravated Assault

**Aggravated Assault** - The unlawful attack or attempted attack by one person upon another for the purpose of inflicting severe or aggravated bodily injury. This type of assault is usually accompanied by the use of a weapon or by means likely to produce death or great bodily harm.

### Comparing 1996 to 2001:

- The rate of reported aggravated assaults decreased 24.8 percent.

### From 2000 to 2001:

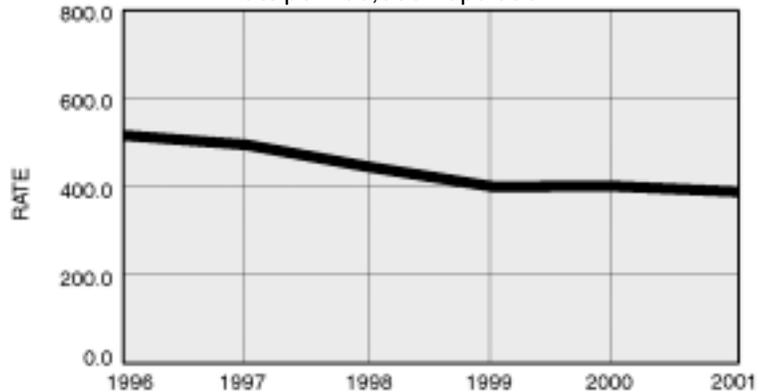
- The aggravated assault rate decreased 3.1 percent.

In 2001, of 135,128 aggravated assaults reported:

- Firearms were involved in 15.9 percent (21,545).
- Knives or cutting instruments were involved in 13.5 percent (18,295).
- Other dangerous weapons were involved in 32.6 percent (44,028).
- Personal weapons were involved in 37.9 percent (51,260).

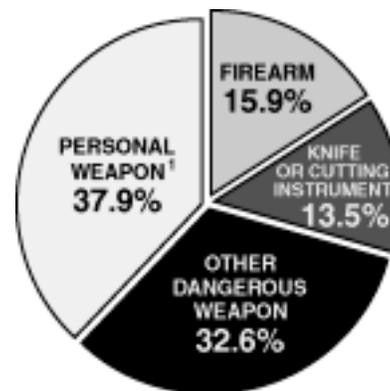
*The 2001 aggravated assault rate fell to a level not seen since the 1986 law change which required reporting domestic violence as criminal conduct (388.8 in 2001 and 388.2 in 1985) (see Table 1).*

AGGRAVATED ASSAULT CRIMES, 1996-2001  
Rate per 100,000 Population



Source: Table 2.

AGGRAVATED ASSAULT CRIMES, 2001  
By Type of Weapon Used



Source: Table 7.

<sup>1</sup>Personal weapons include hands, feet, etc.

Note: Percentages may not add to 100.0 because of rounding.

## Property Crimes

**Property Crimes - burglary and motor vehicle theft.**

### Comparing 1996 to 2001:

- The rate of reported property crimes decreased 27.5 percent.

### From 2000 to 2001:

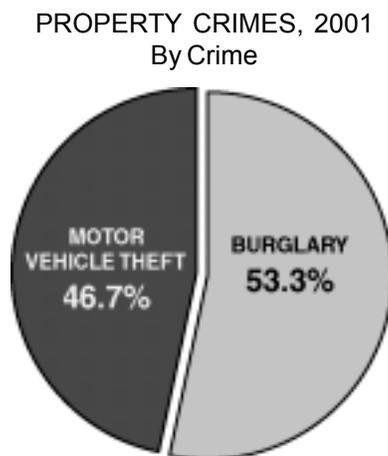
- The property crime rate increased 6.0 percent.

**In 2001**, of 430,996 property crimes reported:

- Burglary accounted for 53.3 percent (229,922).
- Motor vehicle theft accounted for 46.7 percent (201,074).



Source: Table 2.



Source: Table 3.

*The property crime rate increased for a second consecutive year in 2001.*