

FBI releases crime stats for 2017

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Statistics released Jan. 23 in the FBI's Preliminary Semiannual Uniform Crime Report revealed overall declines in the number of property crimes and violent crimes reported for the first half of 2017 when compared with figures for the first half of 2016.

The report is based on information from 13,033 law enforcement agencies that submitted three to six months of comparable data to the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program for the first six months of 2016 and 2017.

VIOLENT CRIME

Three of the offenses in the violent crime category — rape (revised definition), robbery, and aggravated assault — showed decreases when data from the first six months of 2017 were compared with data from the first six months of 2016. The number of rapes (revised definition) decreased 2.4 percent, robbery offenses fell 2.2 percent, and aggravated assaults were down 0.1 percent. The fourth offense in the violent crime category, murder and non-negligent manslaughter, increased 1.5 percent when data from the first six months of 2017 were compared with data from the first six months of 2016.

There were both increases and decreases in the overall number of violent crimes among the city population groups. Law enforcement agencies in cities with populations of 500,000 to 999,999 reported the largest increase, 1.2 percent. Law enforcement agencies in cities with populations of 1,000,000 and over reported the largest decrease, 3.3 percent.

Violent crime decreased 6.1 percent in non-metropolitan counties and fell 1.5 percent in metropolitan counties.

Violent crime decreased in three of the four regions of the nation. These crimes were down 4.1 percent in the Northeast, 0.7 percent in the Midwest, and 0.2 percent in the West. Violent crime increased 0.1 percent in the South.

PROPERTY CRIME

In the property crime category, offenses dropped 2.9 percent. Burglaries were down 6.1 percent, and larceny-thefts declined 3.0 percent. However, motor vehicle thefts increased 4.1 percent.

Among the city population groups, there were both increases and decreases in the overall number of property crimes. Law enforcement agencies in cities with population of 1,000,000 and over reported the largest increase, 0.5 percent. Law enforcement agencies in cities with populations from 10,000 to 24,999 inhabitants reported the largest decrease, 5.2 percent.

Property crime decreased 6.9 percent in non-metropolitan counties and 5.4 percent in metropolitan counties.

Property crime decreased in all four regions of the nation. Reports of these offenses declined 4.8 percent in the Northeast, 2.8 percent in the Midwest, 2.6 percent in the West, and 2.5 percent in the South.

Arson

In the UCR Program, arson offenses are collected separately from other property crimes. The number of arson offenses decreased 3.5 percent in the first six months of 2017 when compared with figures for the first six months of 2016. Three of the nation's four regions reported decreases in the number of arsons. Arsons were down 12.5 percent in the Northeast, 5.9 percent in the Midwest, and 4.4 percent in the South. However, arson offenses rose 2.0 percent in the West.

Arson offenses were down 6.9 percent in cities with populations under 10,000, the largest decrease within the city groupings. Cities with populations from 500,000 to 999,999 experienced the greatest increase of arson offenses, 4.8 percent. Arsons decreased 19.4 percent in non-metropolitan counties and 9.2 percent in metropolitan counties.

REVISED DEFINITION OF RAPE

In 2013, the FBI's UCR Program initiated the collection of rape data under a revised definition within the Summary Based Reporting System. The term "forcible" was removed from the offense name, and the definition was changed to "penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person, without the consent of the victim."

In 2016, the FBI Director approved the recommendation to discontinue the reporting of rape data using the UCR legacy definition beginning in 2017. Therefore, this report shows only the rape data submitted by those agencies using the UCR revised definition of rape.

Caution Against Ranking: When the FBI publishes crime data via its UCR Program, some entities use the information to compile rankings of cities and counties. Such rankings, however, do not provide insight into the numerous variables that shape crime in a given town, city, county, state, tribal area, or region. These rankings lead to simplistic and/or incomplete analyses that can create misleading perceptions that adversely affect communities and their residents.

Only through careful study and analyses into the range of unique conditions affecting each local law enforcement jurisdiction can data users create valid assessments of crime. The data user is, therefore, cautioned against comparing statistical data of individual reporting units from cities, metropolitan areas, states, or colleges or universities solely on the basis of their population or student enrollment.

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