Burglary, Theft, Robbery

Burglary, theft, and robbery each amount to billions of dollars in total monetary losses each year. Larceny-theft (or simply “theft”) is defined as the unlawful removal of property. Burglary, a property crime, is defined as theft from an unoccupied dwelling. Robbery, unlike theft or burglary, is considered a violent crime and occurs when an individual is present during a theft or attempted theft.

Trends

Rates of personal and household burglary, theft, and robbery have decreased consistently over the past two decades. The national rate of personal robbery has decreased 67%, from 6.3 victimizations per 1,000 individuals in 1995 to 2.1 per 1,000 in 2015. Similarly, the rate of personal theft dropped 84% (from 1.9 to 0.3), while household burglary and household theft* have declined 60% and 65%, respectively. The rate of motor vehicle theft has also declined 75% (from 17.1 to 4.3).*

From 1995 to 2015, the rates of robbery, burglary, theft, and motor vehicle theft known to law enforcement have declined. Robbery has decreased from 2.2 per 1,000 individuals to 1. Burglary decreased 50%, from nearly 10 per 1,000 individuals to about 5. Similarly, larceny-theft and motor vehicle theft decreased by 41% and 61%, respectively. It is important to note that the Uniform Crime Report (UCR) includes commercial crimes in these estimates, while the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) does not. Despite this difference, the UCR and NCVS have reported comparable changes over the years. The convergence of these numbers indicates that victims of burglary, robbery, and theft, on average, report their victimization to law enforcement.²

Did You Know?

In 2014, 60.9% of robberies were reported to the police, up 10% since 2005.³

32% of men robbed in 2014 were robbed by a stranger; 23% of women were robbed by someone they knew.³

41% of robberies involve the use of strong-arm tactics, while 38% involve the use of firearms.³³

31 out of 1,000 individuals were victims of burglary by forcible entry; 19 out of 1,000 were victims of burglary by unlawful entry.⁸
**Current Data on Burglary, Theft, Robbery**

Burglaries are more likely to occur at residential dwellings, compared to stores, offices, or other non-residential locations. Residential dwellings are also at a greater risk during the day, while most non-residential burglaries occur at unknown times throughout the day.\(^8\)

In 2015, 46% of larceny-theft known to law enforcement was worth over $200. The most commonly reported types of theft include motor vehicle theft and shoplifting, as well as other forms of larceny-theft not categorized by the UCR. The category “other” includes pick-pocketing, purse-snatching, coin-operated thefts, thefts involving items from behind a fenced enclosure, the theft of animals, outdoor furniture and machinery, boats, jet skis, and airplanes.\(^8\)

Of the 284,722 robberies known to law enforcement in 2015, 40% occurred on public roads, 23% occurred within businesses, including gas stations, service stations, and convenience stores; and 19% occurred at other locations, such as within houses of worship, on public transportation, at schools, and within government offices.\(^8\)

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**Location of Burglary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Residence</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residence</td>
<td>71.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-residence</td>
<td>28.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Burglary by Time of Day**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time of Day</th>
<th>Residence</th>
<th>Non-residence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Day</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Night</td>
<td>20.7%</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>13.4%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Larceny-Theft by Type**

- Motor vehicle (24%)
- Shoplifting (22%)
- Buildings (12%)
- Motor vehicle accessories (7%)
- Bicycles (3%)
- Other (35%)

**Location of Robbery**

- Public road (40%)
- Business (23%)
- Residence (23%)
- Bank (2%)
- Other (19%)

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**NOTES**

* Household theft is categorized as the taking (attempted or completed) of property by an individual who has a right to be in the house. Household burglary is categorized as the taking of property by an individual who has no right to be in the house.

** The FBI defines strong-arm tactics as the use of hands, arms, feet, fists, or teeth as a weapon.

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**SOURCES**
