

What are the facts about robbery?



- In 1999, one robbery occurred every minute in the United States. (*Crime in the United States 1999*. Washington, DC: Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2000)
- The national loss due to robberies was an estimated \$463 million in 1999. According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, however, the impact of this violent crime on its victims cannot be measured in terms of monetary loss alone. (*Crime in the United States 1999*. Washington, DC: Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2000)
- In 1999, 40 percent of all robberies were committed with firearms. (*Crime in the United States 1999*. Washington, DC: Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2000)
- In 1999, 74 percent of male victims of robbery and 42 percent of female victims of robbery stated that the robber was a stranger. (*Criminal Victimization in the United States 1999*. Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2000)
- In 1999, 48 percent of all robbery offenses were committed on streets and highways, 24 percent occurred in commercial establishments, and 12 percent occurred at residences. (*Crime in the United States 1999*. Washington, DC: Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2000)
- Victims sustain some physical injury in 32 percent of all robberies. (*Criminal Victimization in the United States 1994*. Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1997)

- Fifteen percent of all persons arrested in 1999 for robbery were under age 18. (*Crime in the United States 1999*. Washington, DC: Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2000)
- During 1999, the average value of property loss for a single robbery was \$1,131, reflecting a 15-percent increase from the 1998 figure. (*Crime in the United States 1999*. Washington, DC: Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2000)

Resources for Information and Assistance

National Center for Victims of Crime
1-800-FYI-CALL or 1-800-394-2255
www.ncvc.org

National Organization for Victim Assistance
1-800-TRY-NOVA or 1-800-879-6682
www.try-nova.org

Office for Victims of Crime Resource Center
1-800-627-6872
TTY 1-877-712-9279
www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc/ovcres/welcome.html

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Robbery Victimization

Office for Victims of Crime
OVC
Advocating for the Fair
Treatment of Crime Victims

THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR
Victims of Crime

What is robbery?

Robbery is taking or attempting to take anything of value from the care, custody, or control of someone by force or by threat of force or violence. If a weapon is used, it is called armed robbery and is usually considered by the police and courts to be more serious than robbery without a weapon.

Robbery is not only a property crime but also a crime against a person—a crime that might result in violence.

Robbery involves not only the loss of property but also the threat or use of violence. Robbery occurs more frequently than either rape or homicide. Unlike victims of rape or other personal assaults, robbery victims seldom know their assailants. Victims know their robbers in only about 26 percent of robberies. Of all violent crimes, robbery is the most likely to be committed by more than one offender.

Robberies occur in many different settings. They may happen on the street, in the home, in a park, on public transportation, or in a business such as a bank, store, hotel, gas station, or restaurant. Anyone can become a victim of robbery—even a child.

Because victims encounter robbers face-to-face or in close proximity, robbery victims often feel total and immediate loss of control. When a weapon is involved, the sense of helplessness and the fear of death can be strong, which can lead to both short-term and long-term crisis reactions.

Most property stolen during a robbery is never recovered, and financial losses can be substantial. If the stolen property has unique or sentimental value for the victim, emotional reactions can be very intense.



If You Are a Robbery Survivor

A robbery can be a violent, life-threatening situation. As a robbery victim, you may have many feelings, thoughts, and reactions to what has happened.

You may feel angry at the robber or the police and court system for not doing enough. You may feel intense sadness and grief over possessions that you have lost. You may fear that the robber will return or that another robbery might occur. You may feel guilt that perhaps something you did led to the robbery, even though you did nothing wrong.

You may feel nervous in crowds or very suspicious when you are alone with someone you do not know. You may have nightmares or flashbacks about the robbery. You may find that you startle more easily at little noises or abrupt movements. You also may feel vulnerable and that you are not in control of your life.

How victims react to robbery varies from person to person. Your reaction may be immediate or delayed. Although you may feel as if you are the only one experiencing these feelings and that no one else can understand what you are going through, your reactions are normal. Some reactions may decrease within a few days; others may continue for some time or resurface after being triggered by another event.

It is important for you to deal with and resolve your crisis reactions at your own pace. Just as everyone reacts to a crisis differently, not everyone reassembles his or her life in the same way or within the same timeframe. Many victims say it is helpful to talk with others about the robbery experience and about their crisis reactions. As victims talk about their robbery, over time they



put the incident into perspective and begin to cope with its consequences.

Where can you get help?

Remember, as a robbery victim, you are not alone. Your community may have victim assistance programs, caring professionals, and support groups—all of which are there to help you with information, services, and referrals. Social services programs and trained professionals also can help you find out about crime victim rights in your state.

If the robbery involved an injury or threat of injury, you may be eligible for reimbursement by your state's crime victim compensation program for certain out-of-pocket expenses that are related to the robbery, such as medical or counseling expenses and lost wages. To be eligible for these funds, you must report the robbery to the police and cooperate with the criminal justice system. Victim assistance programs in your community can help you determine your eligibility and fill out compensation applications.

Remember, it is important to keep a record of expenses incurred as a result of the robbery. If the offender is arrested and convicted, you may request restitution by completing a victim impact statement and listing your losses. Restitution for certain losses may be ordered by a judge as part of the sentence imposed on the offender. However, in many cases, the defendant may not have sufficient assets or income to pay restitution. It is possible that even if an offender is convicted and ordered to pay restitution, a victim may receive no, or only partial, restitution for his or her losses.

No one has the right to commit a robbery against a person regardless of the circumstances.