



Department of Justice

Office of Justice Programs



ADVANCE FOR RELEASE AT 4:30 P.M. EDT
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2006
www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs

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VIOLENT CRIME RATE UNCHANGED DURING 2005 **THEFT RATE DECLINED**

WASHINGTON — The violent crime rate in 2005 was unchanged from the previous year, the Justice Department's Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) announced today. However, the property crime rate declined from 2004 to 2005 because of a decrease in theft.

Last year's criminal victimizations included an estimated 18 million property crimes (burglaries, motor vehicle thefts and household thefts); 5.2 million violent crimes (rapes or sexual assaults, robberies, aggravated assaults and simple assaults); and 227,000 personal thefts (picked pockets and snatched purses). Measured offenses include those reported to police as well as those that go unreported. With the exception of theft, victimization rates for every type of crime measured were unchanged from their 2004 levels.

Violent crime and property crime rates in 2005, as estimated by BJS's National Crime Victimization Survey, are at the lowest levels recorded since 1973 — the first year that such data were available. The rate of every major violent and property crime measured by the survey fell significantly between 1993 and 2005. The violent crime rate fell 58 percent during that period, and the property crime rate declined by 52 percent. The number of violent crimes decreased from an estimated 11 million in 1993 to 5.2 million in 2005.

The survey compared two-year average crime rates, 2002-03 vs. 2004-05, and found no changes in the rates for the major types of violent and property crime. However, there was some indication that the average annual rates of attempted or threatened violence, completed robbery with injury, and simple assault without injury declined from 2002-03 to 2004-05. Annual data on criminal victimization for 2005 are available on the BJS Web site at: www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pubalp2.htm

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Most demographic groups examined did not experience a change in violent or property crime rates from 2002-03 to 2004-05. Among the groups that experienced declines in violent crime rates were females, persons who have never been married, 16-19 year olds, persons residing in households earning less than \$7,500 per year, and those residing in suburban areas. Households in the Northeast experienced a decline in property crime. No demographic group that was examined experienced an increase in violent or property crime during this time period.

Between 1993 and 2005 the overall rate of firearm violence declined from 5.9 per 1,000 persons age 12 or older to 2 per 1,000. In 2004 the rate was 1.4 per 1,000 and in 2003 it was 1.9 per 1,000. During 2005 offenders armed with a firearm accounted for nine percent of all non-lethal violent crimes.

The percentage of violent and property crimes reported to the police remained unchanged between 2004 and 2005. In 2005, 47 percent of violent crimes and 40 percent of property crimes were reported to police. Thirty-eight percent of rapes and sexual assaults were reported to the authorities, as were 42 percent of simple assaults, 52 percent of robberies and 62 percent of aggravated assaults. About 83 percent of motor vehicle thefts were reported.

The report, "Criminal Victimization, 2005" (NCJ-214644) was written by BJS statistician Shannan M. Catalano. Following publication, the report can be found at www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/abstract/cv05.htm.

For additional information about the Bureau of Justice Statistics statistical reports programs, please visit the BJS Web site at: www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs.

The Office of Justice Programs (OJP) provides federal leadership in developing the nation's capacity to prevent and control crime, administer justice and assist victims. OJP is headed by an Assistant Attorney General and comprises five component bureaus and an office: the Bureau of Justice Assistance; the Bureau of Justice Statistics; the National Institute of Justice; the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention; and the Office for Victims of Crime, as well as the Community Capacity Development Office, which incorporates the Weed and Seed strategy and OJP's American Indian and Alaska Native Affairs Desk. More information can be found at www.ojp.usdoj.gov.

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