



# Bureau of Justice Statistics National Crime Victimization Survey

July 1999, NCJ 176353

## Criminal Victimization 1998 Changes 1997-98 with Trends 1993-98

By Callie Marie Rennison, Ph.D.  
BJS Statistician

Americans age 12 or older experienced approximately 31 million violent and property victimizations according to National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) data. Overall criminal victimizations included about 22.9 million property crimes (burglary, motor vehicle theft, and household theft), 8.1 million violent crimes (rape or sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, and simple assault), and about 0.3 million personal thefts (pocket picking and purse snatching).

The 31 million criminal victimizations in 1998 represent a decline from 35 million victimizations in 1997 and continue a downward trend that began in 1994. Criminal victimization estimates from 1998 are the lowest recorded since 1973, when approximately 44 million victimizations occurred.

Between 1993 and 1998 violent crime rates fell 27%, from 50 to 37 per 1,000 persons age 12 or older. The 1998 personal theft rate was equal to the 1997 rate but lower than the 1993 theft rate.

Property crime decreased 12% from 1997 to 1998 and 32% from 1993 to 1998. The 1998 rate of 217 property

### Highlights

- National Crime Victimization Survey violent crime rates declined 7%, and property crime rates fell 12% from 1997 to 1998. The 1998 rates are the lowest recorded since the survey's inception in 1973.\*
- Based on preliminary FBI data, the number of murders dropped about 8% between 1997 and 1998.
- The overall 1-year decline in violent crime resulted from a slight yet significant decline in aggravated assault rates. From 1997 to 1998 no significant changes in rates of rape or sexual assault, robbery, or simple assault occurred.
- Every major type of crime measured — rape or sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, simple assault, burglary, theft, and motor vehicle theft — decreased significantly between 1993 and 1998.
- For virtually every demographic category considered, violent victimization decreased between 1993 and 1998. Male violent victimization rates fell 39%, and black violent victimization rates fell 38%.
- Property crime rate declines occurred across all demographic groups between 1993 and 1998. Property crime rates declined 31% for white, black, urban, and suburban households.
- In 1998 males were victimized at significantly higher rates than females, and blacks were victimized at somewhat higher rates than whites. Non-Hispanics and Hispanics were victimized at about the same rate.
- About half the violent crime victims knew the offender(s) in 1998. Over 7 in 10 rape or sexual assault victims knew the attacker(s), and 5 in 10 aggravated assault victims knew the offender(s).
- Offenders used a weapon in about a fourth of violent victimizations in 1998. About 4 in 10 robbery victims faced a weapon, as did fewer than 1 in 10 rape or sexual assault victims.
- From 1993 to 1998, almost half of all violent victimizations were reported to the police. Females and blacks reported violent victimizations in higher percentages than males and whites, while no reporting differences emerged between non-Hispanics and Hispanics during the same period.

\*After adjusting rates following the 1992 NCVS redesign.

crimes per 1,000 households is lower than both the 1997 and 1993 levels.

Every major NCVS violent and property crime rate fell from 1993 to 1998. Almost every demographic group had lower rates of violent and property victimization during the same period.

### Criminal victimization, 1997 to 1998

#### Violent crime

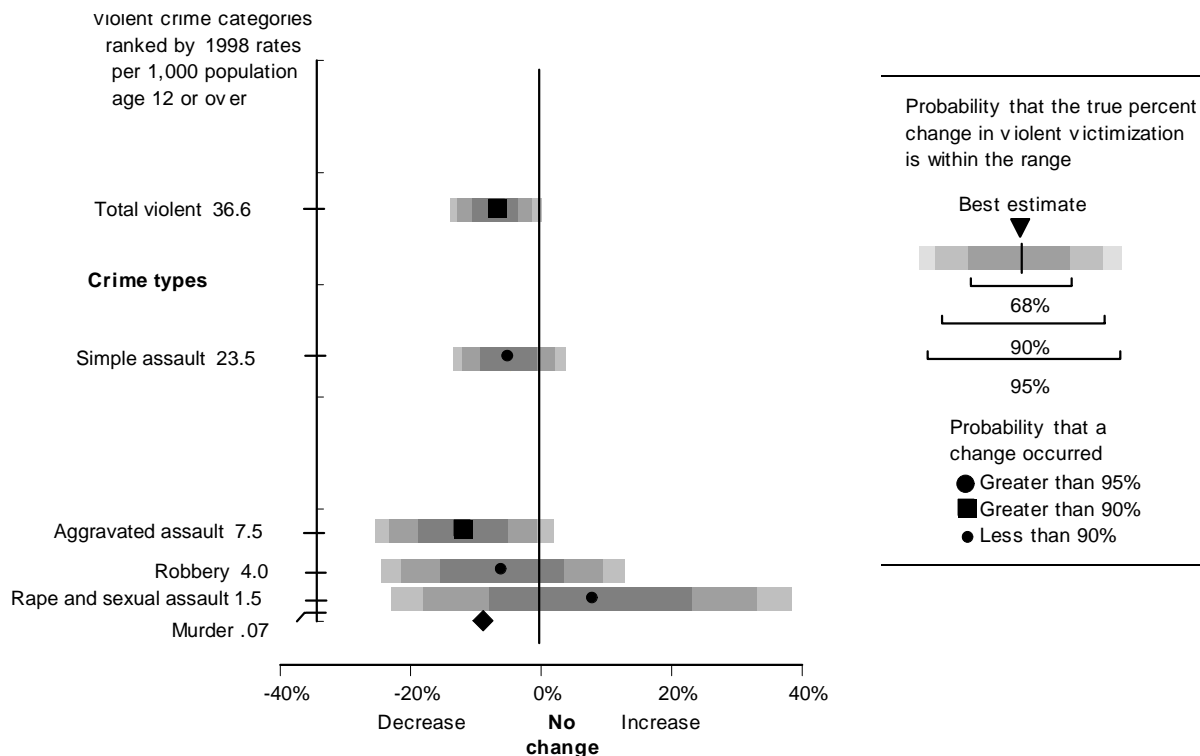
The NCVS collects data on nonfatal violent crimes against persons age 12 or older, both reported and not reported to the police. The Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program of the FBI

collects data on murder and nonnegligent manslaughter.

#### Violent crime measured by the NCVS

Overall violent victimization includes rape, sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, and simple assault (table 1). The 7% decrease in violent

### Change in violent victimization, by category, 1997-98



Note: The change in murder rates is presented as a point because the source of the data, the Uniform Crime Reports, is not a sample survey. 1998 homicide data are preliminary.

For further explanation of the graph, see the BJS Technical Report *Displaying Violent Crime Trends Using*

*Estimates from the National Crime Victimization Survey, NCJ 167881. \*The murder rates were for all ages.*

Sources: BJS, National Crime Victimization Survey, and FBI, Uniform Crime Reports.

The figure shows the estimated annual percentage change in victimization rates from 1997 to 1998 for the categories that comprise violent crime: homicide, rape and sexual assault, aggravated assault, simple assault, and robbery. The crime categories are displayed vertically according to their 1998 rates per 1,000 population age 12 or older. Total violent (the sum of all types) is first with the highest rate, and

murder is last with the lowest rate.

Because the National Crime Victimization Survey relies on a sample of households, the rates and numbers from it are estimates and are not exact. Each bar shows the range within which the true percent change in rates from year to year is likely to fall.

If a bar is clear of the "No change" line, we are reasonably certain a change occurred. If a bar crosses the "No change" line, there is a possibility that there was no change. The degree of certainty depends on where the bar crosses the line. The bars representing the crime categories in which a statistically significant year-to-year change occurred are outlined.

The length of the range bars varies considerably from crime to crime, dependent on sample size and rarity of the event. The preliminary value for the change in homicide rates is given as a point and not a range of estimates because homicide rates are derived from nonsample data. The murder rates have no variance, but some discrepancies exist between UCR rates and *Vital Statistics* of the National Center for Health Statistics.

Figure 1

crime between 1997 and 1998 from 39 to 37 victimizations per 1,000 persons was marginally significant. While 1998 completed violence rates did not change from 1997 values, attempted or threatened violent crime fell somewhat (27 to 25 victimizations per 1,000 persons).

Overall rates of assault, aggravated assault, and aggravated assaults involving threats with a weapon decreased somewhat from 1997 to 1998. Overall robbery rates remained unchanged, although completed robberies with injury declined slightly.

Rape or sexual assault, simple assault, and personal theft rates remained unchanged from 1997 levels.

Several demographic groups were less vulnerable to violent victimization in 1998 than the year before. For blacks the violent victimization rate fell from 49 to 42 victimizations per 1,000 blacks, while rates for Hispanics fell from 43 to 33 victimizations per 1,000 Hispanics.

	Number of violent crimes per 1,000 persons age 12 or older	
	1997	1998
Male	45.8	43.1
Female	33.0	30.4
White	38.3	36.3
Black	49.0	41.7*
Hispanic	43.1	32.8*
Non-Hispanic	38.3	36.8

\*1997-98 difference is significant at the 95% confidence level.

Violent victimization rates declined between 1997 and 1998 for individuals from age 25 to 34 and those 65 or older.

	Number of violent crimes per 1,000 persons age 12 or older	
	1997	1998
12-15 years	87.9	82.4
16-19 years	96.2	91.1
20-24 years	67.8	67.3
25-34 years	46.9	41.5*
35-49 years	32.2	29.9
50-64 years	14.6	15.4
65+ years	4.4	2.8*

\*1997-98 difference is significant at the 95% confidence level.

**Table 1. Criminal victimization, 1997-98**

Type of crime	Number of victimizations (1,000's)		Victimization rates (per 1,000 persons age 12 or older or per 1,000 households)		
	1997	1998	1997	1998	Percent change, 1997-98
<b>All crimes</b>	34,788	31,307	...	...	
<b>Personal crimes<sup>a</sup></b>	8,971	8,412	40.8	37.9	-7.1%*
Crimes of violence	8,614	8,116	39.2	36.6	-6.6 <sup>‡</sup>
Completed violence	2,679	2,564	12.2	11.6	-4.9
Attempted/threatened violence	5,935	5,553	27.0	25.0	-7.4 <sup>‡</sup>
Rape/Sexual assault	311	333	1.4	1.5	7.1
Rape/attempted rape	194	200	0.9	0.9	0.0
Rape	115	110	0.5	0.5	0.0
Attempted rape	79	89	0.4	0.4	0.0
Sexual assault	117	133	0.5	0.6	20.0
Robbery	944	886	4.3	4.0	-7.0
Completed/property taken	607	610	2.8	2.7	-3.6
With injury	243	170	1.1	0.8	-27.3 <sup>‡</sup>
Without injury	363	439	1.7	2.0	17.6
Attempted to take property	337	277	1.5	1.2	-20.0
With injury	73	70	0.3	0.3	0.0
Without injury	265	207	1.2	0.9	-25.0
Assault	7,359	6,897	33.5	31.1	-7.2 <sup>‡</sup>
Aggravated	1,883	1,674	8.6	7.5	-12.8 <sup>‡</sup>
With injury	595	547	2.7	2.5	-7.4
Threatened with weapon	1,288	1,126	5.9	5.1	-13.6 <sup>‡</sup>
Simple	5,476	5,224	24.9	23.5	-5.6
With minor injury	1,258	1,175	5.7	5.3	-7.0
Without injury	4,218	4,048	19.2	18.2	-5.2
Personal theft <sup>b</sup>	357	296	1.6	1.3	-18.8
<b>Property crimes</b>	25,817	22,895	248.3	217.4	-12.4%*
Household burglary	4,635	4,054	44.6	38.5	-13.7*
Completed	3,893	3,380	37.4	32.1	-14.2*
Forcible entry	1,497	1,310	14.4	12.4	-13.9*
Unlawful entry without force	2,396	2,070	23.0	19.7	-14.3*
Attempted forcible entry	742	674	7.1	6.4	-9.9
Motor vehicle theft	1,433	1,138	13.8	10.8	-21.7*
Completed	1,007	822	9.7	7.8	-19.6*
Attempted	426	316	4.1	3.0	-26.8*
Theft	19,749	17,703	189.9	168.1	-11.5*
Completed <sup>c</sup>	18,960	17,074	182.3	162.1	-11.1*
Less than \$50	7,218	6,169	69.4	58.6	-15.6*
\$50-\$249	6,680	6,083	64.2	57.8	-10.0*
\$250 or more	3,955	3,693	38.0	35.1	-7.6 <sup>‡</sup>
Attempted	789	629	7.6	6.0	-21.1*

Note: Completed violent crimes include rape, sexual assault, robbery with or without injury, aggravated assault with injury, and simple assault with minor injury. The total population age 12 or older was 221,880,960 in 1998 and 219,839,810 in 1997. The total number of households was 105,322,920 in 1998 and 103,988,670 in 1997.

...Not applicable.

\*The difference from 1997 to 1998 is significant at the 95% confidence level.

<sup>‡</sup>The difference from 1997 to 1998 is significant at the 90% confidence level.

<sup>a</sup>The NCVS is based on interviews with victims and therefore cannot measure murder.

<sup>b</sup>Includes pocket picking, purse snatching, and attempted purse snatching not shown separately.

<sup>c</sup>Includes thefts with unknown losses.

When considered by income level, persons in households with incomes between \$34,999 and \$50,000 annually had a lower risk of violent victimization in 1998 than in 1997. For no other income levels did violent victimization rates change appreciably from 1997 to 1998.

	Number of violent crimes per 1,000 persons age 12 or older	
	1997	1998
Less than \$7,500	71.0	63.8
\$7,500-\$14,999	51.2	49.3
\$15,000-\$24,999	40.1	39.4
\$25,000-\$34,999	40.2	42.0
\$35,000-\$49,999	38.7	31.7*
\$50,000-\$74,999	33.9	32.0
\$75,000 plus	30.7	33.1

\*1997-98 difference is significant at the 95% confidence level.

By region, only residents in the South were measurably less vulnerable to violent crime in 1998 than in 1997.

	Number of violent crimes per 1,000 persons age 12 or older	
	1997	1998
Northeast	34.6	31.1
Midwest	36.4	40.2
South	38.1	31.0*
West	48.4	46.7

\*1997-98 difference is significant at the 95% confidence level.

Urban violent victimization decreased marginally between 1997 and 1998.

	Number of violent crimes per 1,000 persons age 12 or older	
	1997	1998
Urban	51.8	46.3 <sup>†</sup>
Suburban	36.4	35.5
Rural	30.0	27.6

<sup>†</sup>1997-98 difference is significant at the 90% confidence level.

Declines in violent victimization of blacks resulted from decreases in simple assault (28 to 22 simple assaults per 1,000 blacks). Hispanic rate declines

came from decreases in aggravated assault (10 versus 6 aggravated assaults per 1,000 Hispanics). Because of small sample sizes, determining specific sources of declines for other demographic groups was not possible.

### *Murder and nonnegligent manslaughter measured by the FBI*

Preliminary estimates from the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) program of the FBI suggest that the murder rate declined about 9% between 1997 and 1998. The number of murders in the United States decreased 8%. Similar declines occurred across all population categories of cities and all regions in the Nation, according to the preliminary data. (See box on this page.)

### *Property crime*

The NCVS defines property crime as a composite of burglary, motor vehicle theft, and theft. Overall property crime rates fell 12% from 248 to 217 incidents per 1,000 households between 1997 and 1998.

Burglary rates fell 14%, from 45 to 39 victimizations per 1,000 households, between 1997 and 1998. Rates for all categories of burglary except attempted forced entry decreased from 1997.

Motor vehicle theft rates fell 22% from 1997 to 1998 because of a 20% decline in completed motor vehicle

**Table 2. Rates of violent crime and personal theft, by gender, age, race, and Hispanic origin, 1998**

Characteristic of victim	Population	Victimizations per 1,000 persons age 12 or older						Personal theft
		All crimes of violence*	Rape/Sexual assault	Robbery	Violent crimes		Assault Aggravated	
					Total	Simple		
<b>Gender</b>								
Male	107,595,530	43.1	0.2	4.6	38.3	10.5	27.8	1.2
Female	114,285,430	30.4	2.7	3.5	24.3	4.7	19.5	1.5
<b>Age</b>								
12-15	15,781,590	82.4	3.5	7.7	71.2	12.2	58.9	2.0
16-19	15,620,290	91.1	5.0	11.4	74.7	19.0	55.7	2.3
20-24	17,663,220	67.3	4.6	7.9	54.8	16.0	38.8	1.8
25-34	39,263,480	41.5	1.7	4.2	35.6	8.4	27.3	1.0
35-49	63,428,180	29.9	0.7	3.2	26.1	6.8	19.3	1.2
50-64	37,939,800	15.4	0.2	1.7	13.5	3.3	10.2	1.6
65 or older	32,184,400	2.8	0.0	0.5	2.3	0.5	1.8	0.8
<b>Race</b>								
White	185,831,440	36.3	1.5	3.7	31.1	7.0	24.2	1.2
Black	27,020,600	41.7	2.0	5.9	33.7	11.9	21.8	2.1
Other	9,028,930	27.6	0.7	4.4	22.5	6.6	15.9	1.4
<b>Hispanic origin</b>								
Hispanic	21,699,490	32.8	0.8	6.3	25.6	6.1	19.5	1.7
Non-Hispanic	197,506,660	36.8	1.6	3.7	31.5	7.6	23.9	1.3

\*The National Crime Victimization Survey includes as violent crime rape/sexual assault, robbery, and assault, but not murder and manslaughter.

### **Murder in the United States, 1998**

Statistics on murder are compiled from over 16,000 city, county, and State law enforcement agencies as part of the FBI's Uniform Crime Reports. In 1997 the UCR program stated that 18,210 murders occurred in the United States. Preliminary 1998 UCR data suggest about an 8% drop in the number of murders and a 9% drop in the murder rate from 1997.

The FBI defines murder in its annual *Crime in the United States* as the willful (nonnegligent) killing of one

human being by another. The incidence of murder varies across victim characteristics. While the number of homicides has decreased since 1993, the pattern of characteristics of homicide victims has remained relatively unchanged year after year.

- In general, three-fourths of murder victims are male.
- Whites and blacks each make up about half of murder victims.

- Approximately 1 in 8 murder victims are under age 18
- Firearms are used in about 70% of murders.
- The homicide rate tends to be highest in the South and lowest in the Northeast.
- The homicide rate tends to be higher in metropolitan cities than in smaller cities and rural areas.

For more information about U.S. murder trends: <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/homicide/homtrnd.htm>

theft (from 10 down to 8 completed motor vehicle thefts per 1,000 households), and a decrease of 27% in attempted motor vehicle theft (from 4 to 3 attempted motor vehicle thefts per 1,000 households).

Household theft rates decreased 12% from 1997 to 1998 (from 190 to 168 thefts per 1,000 households) because of decreases in completed thefts (down 11%), theft of items valued at less than \$50 (down 16%), theft of items valued between \$50 and \$249 (down 10%), and a slight decline in the thefts of items valued at \$250 or more (down 8%). Attempted household theft rates declined 21% from 1997 to 1998.

Except for the categories described below, households of all races, ethnicities, incomes, regions, and statuses of home ownership experienced declines in overall property crime rates from 1997 to 1998. Overall property crime rates fell slightly for rural households. Households headed by an Asian or American Indian ("other races"), households with an annual income between \$7,499 and \$15,000, and households in the Midwest had no change in the property crime rate from 1997 to 1998.

The overall property crime rate for white households fell because of decreases in every type of property crime measured: burglary, motor vehicle theft, and household theft. The overall property crime rate for black households declined because of a decrease in household theft only.

Non-Hispanic households had a rate decline in all categories of property crime. Declining property crime rates for Hispanic households resulted from decreasing burglary and household theft rates and a slight decrease in the rate of motor vehicle theft.

### Characteristics of violent crime victims, 1998

Victimization research consistently has found that victimization rates are related to individual demographic characteristics (table 2). Analyses demonstrate that demographic groups which were historically susceptible to

**Table 3. Rates of violent crime and personal theft, by household income, marital status, region, and location of residence of victims, 1998**

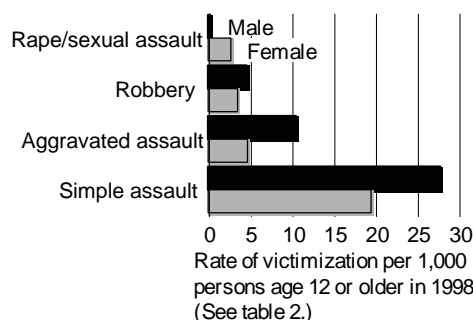
Characteristic of victim	Population	Victimizations per 1,000 persons age 12 or older						Personal theft
		Violent crimes						
		All*	Rape/Sexual assault	Robbery	Total	Assault Aggravated	Simple	
<b>Household income</b>								
Less than \$7,500	11,724,160	63.8	3.2	6.5	54.2	19.6	34.5	1.7
\$7,500 - \$14,999	21,132,940	49.3	2.4	5.8	41.0	11.8	29.3	1.8
\$15,000 - \$24,999	29,783,090	39.4	2.3	3.6	33.5	7.9	25.7	1.3
\$25,000 - \$34,999	28,314,520	42.0	2.4	6.9	32.8	6.3	26.5	1.1
\$35,000 - \$49,999	34,039,640	31.7	0.5	3.1	28.1	6.2	21.9	1.6
\$50,000 - \$74,999	33,179,460	32.0	0.7	2.8	28.5	6.2	22.3	1.1
\$75,000 or more	29,414,500	33.1	1.2	2.9	29.0	6.2	22.8	1.0
<b>Marital status</b>								
Never married	68,860,090	66.6	3.1	8.0	55.5	12.9	42.5	2.0
Married	114,134,930	17.7	0.5	1.3	15.9	3.9	11.9	0.9
Divorced/separated	23,948,180	57.4	2.6	6.8	48.0	12.8	35.2	2.0
Widowed	13,632,600	6.7	0.3	1.2	5.2	1.5	3.7	0.8
<b>Region</b>								
Northeast	42,008,340	31.3	1.7	3.2	26.2	5.9	20.3	2.0
Midwest	53,236,240	40.2	1.8	3.8	34.5	8.5	26.0	1.0
South	79,513,720	31.0	1.1	3.8	26.2	7.2	19.0	1.2
West	47,122,670	46.7	1.6	5.2	39.9	8.4	31.5	1.3
<b>Residence</b>								
Urban	62,685,860	46.3	1.7	6.5	38.1	10.9	27.2	2.4
Suburban	102,775,530	35.5	1.4	3.2	30.9	6.9	24.0	1.1
Rural	56,419,570	27.6	1.5	2.6	23.6	4.9	18.7	0.5

\*The National Crime Victimization Survey includes as violent crime rape/sexual assault, robbery, and assault, but not murder and manslaughter.

victimization continue to be the most susceptible to victimization in 1998.

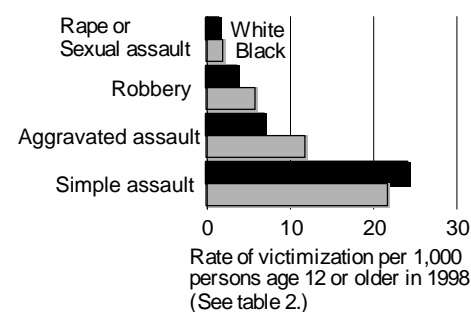
### Gender of victim

For overall violent crime and simple assault, the rates for males were 30% greater than those for females in 1998. Males were twice as likely as females to be victims of aggravated assault (11 versus 5 victimizations per 1,000 persons), while females sustained rape or sexual assault at a rate 14 times that of males (2.7 versus 0.2 victimizations per 1,000 persons). Males had slightly greater robbery victimization rates than females in 1998 (5 incidents versus 4 incidents per 1,000 persons).



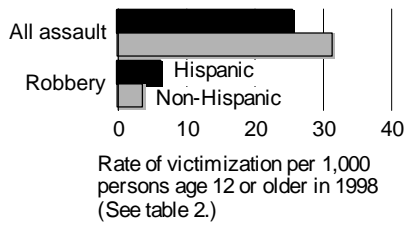
### Race of victim

Blacks had marginally higher overall violent crime rates than whites and significantly higher rates than persons of other races in 1998. Whites and persons of other races differed in the rates of violent victimization overall, robbery, and simple assault in 1998. Blacks and whites did not differ significantly in the rates of victimization by robbery, simple assault, and rape or sexual assault.



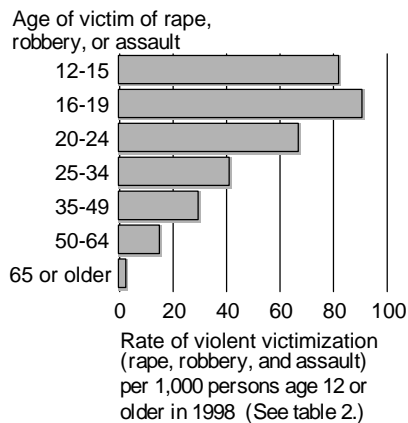
### Ethnicity of victim

Non-Hispanics and Hispanics experienced similar rates of overall violent crime in 1998. Non-Hispanics had higher rape or sexual assault rates and somewhat higher simple assault rates than Hispanics. Robbery rates were higher for Hispanics than for non-Hispanics (6 versus 4 incidents per 1,000 persons). No difference in aggravated assault or personal theft rates was found between the groups.



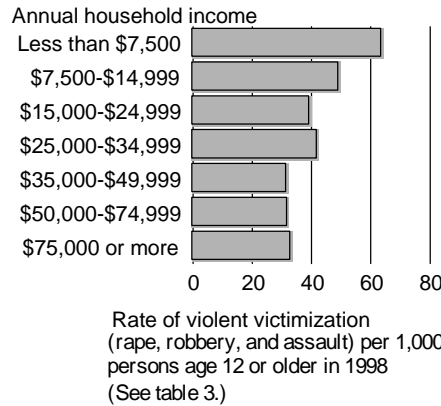
### Age of victim

In general, the younger the person, the greater the overall violent victimization rate in 1998. Persons age 16-19 sustained violent victimizations at higher rates than persons in other age categories. Persons age 12-15 were raped or sexually assaulted at 4 times the rate of persons 50 or older; those age 16-24, at a rate 5 times that of persons age 50 or older.



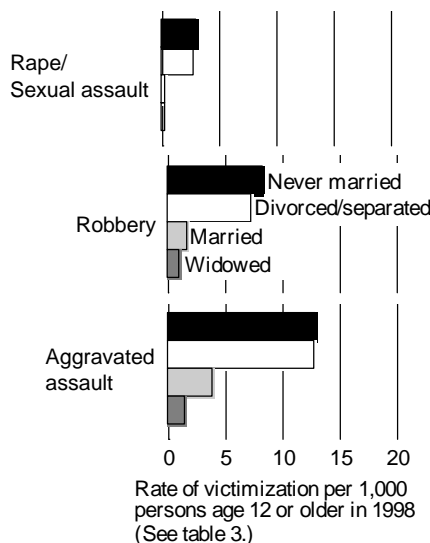
### Household income

Violent crime rates increased as household income decreased in 1998 (table 3). Persons in households with annual incomes greater than \$35,000 had lower violent crime rates than persons in households at any other income level, while persons in households with incomes of less than \$7,500 experienced a higher violent crime rate than other households.



### Marital status

In 1998 those who had never married were the most likely to be violent crime victims. Those who were divorced or separated were more likely to be victimized than married individuals. In turn, married individuals had higher victimization rates than widowed persons. Those who had never married became violent crime victims at 10 times the rate of widowed persons and at over 3 times the rate of married persons.



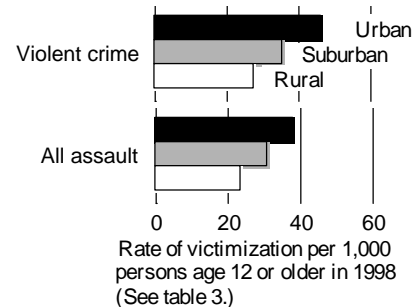
### Region

Western residents had higher violent victimization rates than people in other regions in 1998 (47 victimizations per 1,000 persons). Violent victimization rates were marginally higher for Midwesterners (40 per 1,000) than for Southern and Northeastern residents (31 per 1,000 for each region).



### Urbanization

Urban residents were victimized by violent crime overall at a higher rate than suburban residents, and suburban residents experienced violent victimization at a higher rate than rural residents in 1998. This pattern also emerged for the rates of aggravated assault and personal theft. Rates of robbery among suburban and rural residents did not differ significantly but were lower than those for urban residents. The urban rate of simple assault was slightly higher than the suburban rate, which was significantly higher than the rural rate. No significant difference between urban, suburban, and rural rates for rape or sexual assault occurred in 1998.



Note: The crime survey includes as violent crime rape, robbery, and assault.

**Table 4. Victim and offender relationship, 1998**

Relationship with victim	Violent crime		Rape or sexual assault		Robbery		Aggravated assault		Simple assault	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	8,116,200	100%	332,500	100%	886,500	100%	1,673,600	100%	5,223,600	100%
<b>Nonstranger</b>	4,407,900	54%	244,400	74%	362,200	41%	838,300	50%	2,963,000	57%
Intimate	956,200	12	58,900	18	103,900	12	173,600	10	619,800	12
Other relative	487,400	6	25,100	8	73,300	8	110,500	7	278,500	5
Friend/acquaintance	2,964,200	37	160,400	48	184,900	21	554,200	33	2,064,700	40
<b>Stranger</b>	3,604,300	44%	82,900	25%	505,600	57%	808,300	48%	2,207,500	42%
<b>Relationship unknown</b>	104,000	1%	5,200	2%	18,700	2%	27,000	2%	53,100	1%

Note: Percentages may not total to 100% because of rounding. Multiple-offender victimizations are classified by the most intimate relationship between the victim and one of the offenders. Intimates include current and former spouses and girl/boyfriends.

**Table 5. Use of weapons in violent crimes, 1998**

Offender's use of weapon	Violent crime		Rape or sexual assault		Robbery		Assault	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	8,116,200	100%	332,500	100%	886,500	100%	6,897,200	100%
<b>No weapon</b>	5,503,300	68%	290,400	87%	432,700	49%	4,780,200	69%
<b>Weapon</b>	1,918,700	24%	29,000	9%	342,700	39%	1,547,000	22%
Gun	670,500	8	12,800	4 <sup>a</sup>	182,200	21	475,400	7
Knife	461,000	6	9,400	3 <sup>a</sup>	89,900	10	361,700	5
Other	647,300	8	0	0 <sup>a</sup>	57,700	7	589,600	8
Type not ascertained	140,000	2	6,800	2 <sup>a</sup>	12,900	1 <sup>a</sup>	120,300	2
<b>Don't know</b>	694,200	9%	13,200	4% <sup>a</sup>	111,100	13%	570,000	8%

Note: Percentages may not total to 100% because of rounding. If the offender had more than one weapon, the crime is classified by the most serious weapon present.

<sup>a</sup>Based on 10 or fewer sample cases.

**Victim-offender relationship**

Over half of violent crime victims knew the offender(s) in 1998 (table 4). Rape or sexual assault victims were most likely to know the offender(s) (74%), and robbery victims least likely to know the offender(s) (41%). Victims identified intimates (current or former spouses, boyfriends, and girlfriends) as offenders in 12% of overall violent crimes, robbery, and simple assault. Ten percent of aggravated assault victims and 18% of rape or sexual assault victims were victimized by an intimate.

**Weapon use**

Offenders were armed with a weapon or an object used as a weapon in about a quarter of 1998 violent victimizations (table 5). Thirty-nine percent of robber-

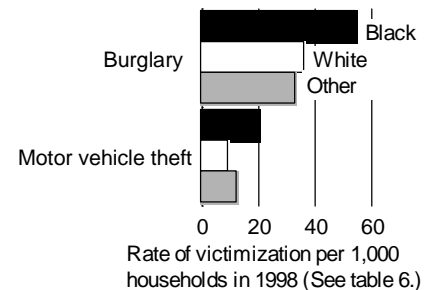
ies and 9% of rape or sexual assaults were committed by an offender with a weapon.

When an offender had a weapon, it was most likely a firearm or an object used as a weapon such as a rock, club, or a blackjack. Over a third of all armed assaults were committed by an offender using an object as a weapon, and slightly less than a third by an offender with a firearm. Offenders with a firearm committed 21% of all serious victimizations (rape, sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated assault). About half of armed robberies (53%) and armed rape or sexual assaults (44%) were committed by an offender using a firearm.

**Property crime victim characteristics, 1998**

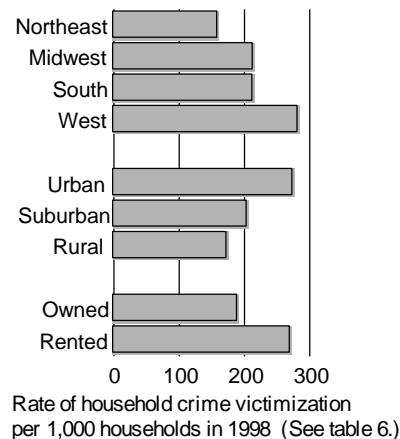
*Race of household head*

Black households were property crime victims at a higher rate than white households (248 versus 213 crimes per 1,000 households, see table 6). Households with an Asian or American Indian head (collectively called "other race") experienced 225 property crimes per 1,000 households, not significantly different from black or white households.



**Table 6. Household property crime victimization, by race, Hispanic origin, household income, region, and home ownership of households victimized, 1998**

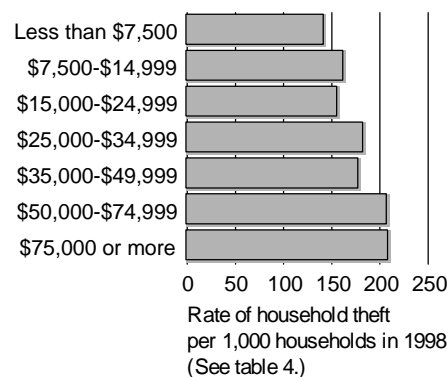
Characteristic of household or head of household	Number of households, 1998	Victimizations per 1,000 households			
		Total	Burglary	Motor vehicle theft	Theft
<b>Race</b>					
White	88,616,850	212.6	36.3	9.4	166.9
Black	12,992,210	248.0	54.8	20.1	173.1
Other	3,713,860	224.5	33.2	12.5	178.9
<b>Hispanic origin</b>					
Hispanic	8,497,710	267.6	44.9	22.0	200.7
Non-Hispanic	96,037,610	212.5	37.7	9.7	165.0
<b>Household income</b>					
Less than \$7,500	7,427,400	209.0	55.4	11.1	142.5
\$7,500 - \$14,999	11,641,910	229.8	57.8	9.0	162.9
\$15,000 - \$24,999	14,878,040	211.0	42.6	12.0	156.5
\$25,000 - \$34,999	13,249,500	233.8	38.2	12.3	183.2
\$35,000 - \$49,999	14,903,750	221.7	32.7	10.8	178.3
\$50,000 - \$74,999	13,490,230	248.6	30.1	10.6	208.0
\$75,000 or more	11,843,870	248.6	28.0	11.2	209.4
<b>Region</b>					
Northeast	20,186,010	159.3	26.0	8.4	124.8
Midwest	25,481,910	214.0	39.3	9.9	164.7
South	37,990,330	213.5	41.1	9.9	162.5
West	21,664,680	282.3	44.6	15.6	222.1
<b>Residence</b>					
Urban	31,153,220	274.2	49.3	17.8	207.0
Suburban	47,853,910	204.5	32.5	10.2	161.8
Rural	26,315,800	173.5	36.6	3.5	133.4
<b>Home ownership</b>					
Owned	69,145,000	189.6	31.7	8.5	149.3
Rented	36,177,920	270.6	51.5	15.1	204.0



Urban households were the most vulnerable to overall property crime and burglary in 1998. Rural households were the least likely to experience motor vehicle theft. Households in rented housing were more vulnerable to overall property crime, burglary, motor vehicle theft, and household theft than those that owned their home.

*Household income*

In general, the higher the annual household income, the higher the theft rate in 1998. Households with annual incomes greater than \$50,000 experienced about 30% more household thefts than those with incomes less than \$15,000. Household income was unrelated to motor vehicle theft rates in 1998.

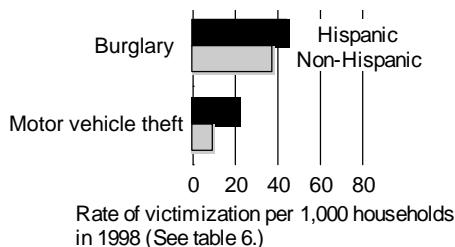


Burglary rates increased as annual household income decreased. Households with incomes of less than \$15,000 annually had twice the burglary rate of households with annual incomes of greater than \$35,000.

Households headed by blacks sustained burglaries and motor vehicle thefts at higher rates than households headed by whites and persons of other races. Theft rates were comparable among households headed by whites, blacks, and persons of other races in 1998.

*Ethnicity of household head*

Hispanic households were characterized by significantly greater overall rates of property crime, motor vehicle theft, and theft, and marginally greater rates of burglary than non-Hispanic households in 1998.



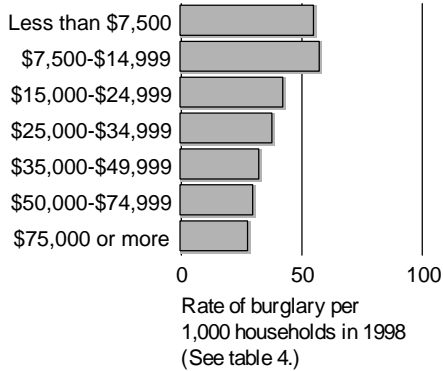
Note: The race or ethnicity is that of the household head.

Hispanic headed households were more than twice as likely to be victims of motor vehicle theft than non-Hispanic headed households (22 versus 10 motor vehicle thefts per 1,000 households).

*Region, urbanization, and home ownership*

Western households had the highest rate of overall property crime, motor vehicle theft, and theft rates of all regions in 1998. Western, Southern and Midwestern households experienced similar burglary rates, and Northeastern households had the lowest burglary rate in the Nation.





### Reporting to the police

Victims reported about half of all violent crimes (46%) and about a third (35%) of property crimes to the police in 1998. Among violent crimes, victims reported robberies most often (62%) and rape or sexual assaults least often (32%). Victims notified authorities in approximately a third of personal theft victimizations. Among property crimes,

motor vehicle thefts continued to be the property crime most often reported (80%).

Female victims reported a higher percentage of violent crime to the police than did male victims in 1998 (51% versus 42%). Black victims reported violent victimizations in higher percentages than white victims (52% versus 44%). Violent victimization

**Table 7. Rates of criminal victimization and percent change, 1993-98**

Type of crime	Victimization rates (per 1,000 persons age 12 or older or per 1,000 households)						Percent change				
	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1993-98	1994-98	1995-98	1996-98	1997-98
<b>Personal crimes<sup>a</sup></b>	52.2	54.1	48.5	43.5	40.8	37.9	-27.4%*	-29.9%*	-21.9%*	-12.9%*	-7.1%*
Crimes of violence	49.9	51.8	46.6	42.0	39.2	36.6	-26.7*	-29.3*	-21.5*	-12.9*	-6.6 <sup>†</sup>
Completed violence	15.0	15.4	13.8	12.4	12.2	11.6	-22.7*	-24.7*	-15.9*	-6.5	-4.9
Attempted/threatened violence	34.9	36.4	32.8	29.6	27.0	25.0	-28.4*	-31.3*	-23.8*	-15.5*	-7.4 <sup>†</sup>
Rape/Sexual assault	2.5	2.1	1.7	1.4	1.4	1.5	-40.0*	-28.6*	-11.8	7.1	7.1
Rape/attempted rape	1.6	1.4	1.2	0.9	0.9	0.9	-43.8*	-35.7*	-25.0 <sup>‡</sup>	0	0
Rape	1.0	0.7	0.7	0.4	0.5	0.5	-50.0*	-28.6	-28.6	25.0	0
Attempted rape	0.7	0.7	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.4	-42.9*	-42.9*	-20.0	-20.0	0
Sexual assault	0.8	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.6	-25.0	0	20.0	20.0	20.0
Robbery	6.0	6.3	5.4	5.2	4.3	4.0	-33.3*	-36.5*	-25.9*	-23.1*	-7.0
Completed/property taken	3.8	4.0	3.5	3.5	2.8	2.7	-28.9*	-32.5*	-22.9*	-22.9*	-3.6
With injury	1.3	1.4	1.0	1.1	1.1	0.8	-38.5*	-42.9*	-20.0*	-27.3 <sup>‡</sup>	-27.3 <sup>‡</sup>
Without injury	2.5	2.6	2.5	2.3	1.7	2.0	-20.0	-23.1*	-20.0*	-13.0	17.6
Attempted to take property	2.2	2.3	1.9	1.7	1.5	1.2	-45.5*	-47.8*	-36.8*	-29.4*	-20.0
With injury	0.4	0.6	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.3	-25.0	-50.0*	-25.0*	-25.0	0
Without injury	1.8	1.7	1.6	1.4	1.2	0.9	-50.0*	-47.1*	-43.8*	-35.7*	-25.0
Assault	41.4	43.3	39.5	35.4	33.5	31.1	-24.9*	-28.2*	-21.3*	-12.1*	-7.2 <sup>†</sup>
Aggravated	12.0	11.9	9.5	8.8	8.6	7.5	-37.5*	-37.0*	-21.1*	-14.8*	-12.8 <sup>†</sup>
With injury	3.4	3.3	2.5	2.4	2.7	2.5	-26.5*	-24.2*	0	4.2	-7.4
Threatened with weapon	8.6	8.6	7.1	6.4	5.9	5.1	-40.7*	-40.7*	-28.2*	-20.3*	-13.6 <sup>†</sup>
Simple	29.4	31.5	29.9	26.6	24.9	23.5	-20.1*	-25.4*	-21.4*	-11.7*	-5.6
With minor injury	6.1	6.8	6.6	5.7	5.7	5.3	-13.1 <sup>‡</sup>	-22.1*	-19.7*	-7.0	-7.0
Without injury	23.3	24.7	23.3	20.9	19.2	18.2	-21.9*	-26.3*	-21.9*	-12.9*	-5.2
Personal theft <sup>b</sup>	2.3	2.4	1.9	1.5	1.6	1.3	-43.5*	-45.8*	-31.6*	-13.3	-18.8
<b>Property crimes</b>	318.9	310.2	290.5	266.3	248.3	217.4	-31.8*	-29.9*	-25.2*	-18.4*	-12.4%*
Household burglary	58.2	56.3	49.3	47.2	44.6	38.5	-33.8*	-31.6*	-21.9*	-18.4*	-13.7*
Completed	47.2	46.1	41.7	39.5	37.4	32.1	-32.0*	-30.4*	-23.0*	-18.7*	-14.2*
Forcible entry	18.1	16.9	15.5	14.7	14.4	12.4	-31.5*	-26.6*	-20.0*	-15.6*	-13.9*
Unlawful entry without force	29.1	29.2	26.2	24.8	23.0	19.7	-32.3*	-32.5*	-24.8*	-20.6*	-14.3*
Attempted forcible entry	10.9	10.2	7.6	7.7	7.1	6.4	-41.3*	-37.3*	-15.8 <sup>‡</sup>	-16.9*	-9.9
Motor vehicle theft	19.0	18.8	16.9	13.5	13.8	10.8	-43.2*	-42.6*	-36.1*	-20.0*	-21.7*
Completed	12.4	12.5	11.5	9.1	9.7	7.8	-37.1*	-37.6*	-32.2*	-14.3 <sup>‡</sup>	-19.6*
Attempted	6.6	6.3	5.5	4.4	4.1	3.0	-54.5*	-52.4*	-45.5*	-31.8*	-26.8*
Theft	241.7	235.1	224.3	205.7	189.9	168.1	-30.5*	-28.5*	-25.1*	-18.3*	-11.5*
Completed <sup>c</sup>	230.1	224.3	215.3	197.7	182.3	162.1	-29.6*	-27.7*	-24.7*	-18.0*	-11.1*
Less than \$50	98.7	93.5	85.2	73.8	69.4	58.6	-40.6*	-37.3*	-31.2*	-20.6*	-15.6*
\$50-\$249	76.1	77.0	76.0	71.8	64.2	57.8	-24.0*	-24.9*	-23.9*	-19.5*	-10.0*
\$250 or more	41.6	41.8	42.1	41.1	38.0	35.1	-15.6*	-16.0*	-16.6*	-14.6*	-7.6 <sup>‡</sup>
Attempted	11.6	10.8	9.0	8.0	7.6	6.0	-48.3*	-44.4*	-33.3*	-25.0*	-21.1*

Note: Victimization rates may differ from those reported previously because the estimates are now based on data collected in each calendar year rather than data about events within a calendar year. (See *Survey methodology* on page 12.) Completed violent crimes include rape, sexual assault, robbery with or without injury, aggravated assault with injury, and simple assault with minor injury. In 1993 the total population age 12 or older was 211,524,770; in 1994, 213,135,890; in 1995, 215,080,690; in 1996, 217,234,280; in 1997, 219,839,110; in 1998, 221,880,960. The total number of households in 1993 was 99,927,410; in 1994, 100,568,060; in 1995, 101,504,820; in 1996, 102,697,490; in 1997, 103,988,670; and in 1998, 105,322,920.

\*The difference between the indicated years is significant at the 95% confidence level.

<sup>†</sup>The difference between the indicated years is significant at the 90% confidence level.

<sup>a</sup>The NCVS is based on interviews with victims and therefore cannot measure murder.

<sup>b</sup>Includes pocket picking, purse snatching, and attempted purse snatching not shown separately.

<sup>c</sup>Includes thefts with unknown losses.

reporting to police was equal for Hispanic and non-Hispanic victims, as well as for urban, suburban, and rural victims. Southern victims reported

	Percent of crime reported to the police
All victimizations	38.0%
<b>Violent crime</b>	45.9%
Rape/Sexual assault	31.6
Robbery	62.0
Aggravated assault	57.6
Simple assault	40.3
<b>Personal theft</b>	34.0%
<b>Household crime</b>	35.3%
Burglary	49.4
Motor vehicle theft	79.7
Theft	29.2

violent victimizations to the police in somewhat higher percentages than Northeastern victims and in higher percentages than victims in the West.

Victim characteristic	Percent of victimizations reported to the police	
	Violent	Property
All	45.9%	35.3%
Male	42.3%	33.0%
Female	50.7	37.3
White	44.4%	35.2%
Black	52.3	37.1
Hispanic	45.7%	31.5%
Non-Hispanic	45.7	35.8

Households headed by females reported property crime to police in higher percentages than households headed by males in 1998 (37% versus 33%). Non-Hispanic households reported property crimes to police at a higher rate than did Hispanics (36% versus 32%). Black and white households, and urban, suburban, and rural households reported property crimes to police in similar percentages (not all shown in a table). Southern households reported property victimization to the police in somewhat higher percentages than Northeastern households and in higher percentages than Western households.

### Trends in violent victimization, 1973-98

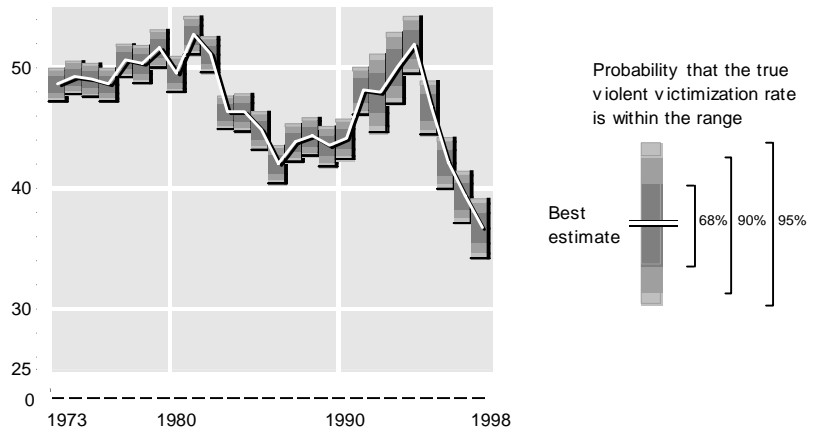
Because the National Crime Victimization Survey relies on a sample of households, the rates and numbers from it are estimates and are not exact.

The figure shows trends in the violent victimization rate: Each bar shows the range within which the true victimization rate is likely to fall for the indicated year, and the line represents the best estimate, the most likely value for the rate in each year, which is the published number. There is a greater likelihood that the true rate will fall near the best estimate, and the bars reflect that likelihood: The darker the bar segment, the greater the likelihood.

Because the estimates are based on samples, their precision depends on the sample size: The larger the sample, the better the estimate and the smaller the range bars. Some year-to-year changes are so large that contiguous bars do not touch (1980-81, 1982-83, 1990-91, 1994-95, and 1995-96),

#### The best estimate and range of estimates

Violent victimizations per 1,000 population age 12 or over



Note: Because of changes made to the victimization survey, data prior to 1992 are adjusted to make them comparable to data collected under the redesigned methodology.  
Source: National Crime Victimization Survey, 1973-98.

suggesting statistically significant increases and decreases. Where there is a lot of overlap (1973-76 and 1986-90), the year-to-year changes may be too small to be statistically significant.

Even though the victimization rates have a range of possible values, general trends are readily apparent. Violent crime rates increased from the early 1970's to the early 1980's, then

fell until around 1986. For several years in the late 1980's, violent crime rates were stable, but increased in the early 1990's and fell after 1994 through 1998.

For more explanation of this graph, see the BJS Technical Report *Displaying Violent Crime Trends Using Estimates from the National Crime Victimization Survey*, NCJ 167881.

Figure 2

**Victimization trends, 1993-98**

Every major type of crime measured — rape or sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, simple assault, burglary, theft, and motor vehicle theft — decreased from 1993 to 1998 (table 7).

*Murder and nonnegligent manslaughter*

According to preliminary UCR data, the rate and overall number of murders in the United States in 1998 appear to be continuing the steady decline that began in 1993. See the box on page 4.

*Violent crime*

Between 1993 and 1998 the overall violent crime rate fell 27% from 50 to 37 incidents per 1,000 persons. Over the same period the rate of robbery declined 33%; aggravated assault 38%; simple assault 20%; and rape or sexual assault rates 40%.

*Personal theft*

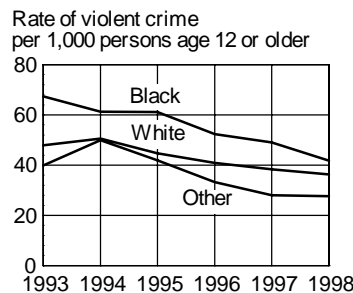
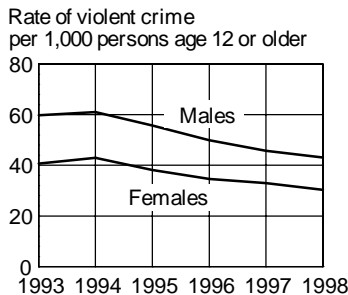
Personal theft rates decreased 44% between 1993 and 1998. The 1998 rate of 1.3 personal thefts per 1,000 persons was about half of the 2.3 personal thefts per 1,000 persons recorded in 1993.

*Property crime*

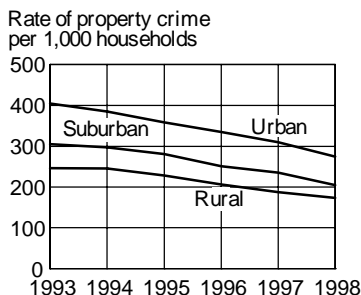
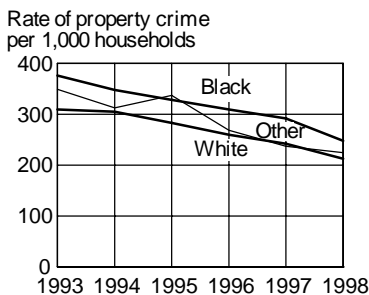
The rate of every type of property crime decreased between 1993 and 1998. Household burglary decreased 34%; motor vehicle theft decreased 43%; and theft decreased 31%.

*Characteristics of victims*

Of the demographic categories considered, virtually all experienced a decrease in violent victimization between 1993 and 1998. For example, male violent victimization rates fell 39%, and black violent victimization rates fell 38%.



Decreases in property crime rates occurred between 1993 and 1998 in every demographic group considered (tables 8 and 9). The overall property crime rate declined at least 31% for white, black, urban, and suburban households.



**Table 8. Property victimization rates of selected household categories, 1993 and 1998**

Property crime	Number of property crimes per 1,000 households	
	1993	1998
<b>Property crime</b>		
White	309.7	212.6*
Black	376.6	248.0*
Other	349.6	224.5*
Hispanic	429.7	267.6*
Non-Hispanic	311.0	212.5*
Urban	404.8	274.2*
Suburban	305.1	204.5*
Rural	246.4	173.5*
Northeast	235.6	159.3*
Midwest	311.2	214.0*
South	299.4	213.5*
West	434.5	282.3*
<b>Burglary</b>		
Hispanic	78.9	44.9*
Non-Hispanic	56.7	37.7*
Urban	83.5	49.3*
Suburban	45.5	32.5*
Rural	50.9	36.6*
Northeast	39.1	26.0*
Midwest	63.4	39.3*
South	58.0	41.1*
West	69.6	44.6*
<b>Theft</b>		
White	239.4	166.9*
Black	253.5	173.1*
Other	260.8	178.9*
Hispanic	317.5	200.7*
Non-Hispanic	236.2	165.0*
Urban	290.5	207.0*
Suburban	241.1	161.8*
Rural	188.7	133.4*
Northeast	178.5	124.8*
Midwest	233.1	164.7*
South	225.2	162.5*
West	335.4	222.1*

Note: The 1993 estimates, based on the collection year, differ from estimates for 1993 published in *Changes in Criminal Victimization, 1994-95* (NCJ 162032), table J, based on the data year. See page 12.  
\*1993-98 difference is significant at the 95% confidence level.

**Table 9. Violent and property victimization rates, by annual household income, 1993-98**

Annual household income	Number of victimizations per 1,000 persons age 12 or older or per 1,000 households					
	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
<b>Violent victimizations</b>						
Less than \$7,500	84.7	86.0	77.8	65.3	71.0	63.8*
\$7,500-\$14,999	56.4	60.7	49.8	52.1	51.2	49.3
\$15,000-\$24,999	49.0	50.7	48.9	44.1	40.1	39.4*
\$25,000-\$34,999	51.0	47.3	47.1	43.0	40.2	42.0*
\$35,000-\$49,999	45.6	47.0	45.8	43.0	38.7	31.7*
\$50,000-\$74,999	44.0	48.0	44.6	37.5	33.9	32.0*
\$75,000 or more	41.3	39.5	37.3	30.5	30.7	33.1 <sup>†</sup>
<b>Property victimizations</b>						
Less than \$7,500	305.9	299.6	304.3	282.7	258.8	209.0*
\$7,500-\$14,999	285.9	299.1	267.1	247.5	236.3	229.8*
\$15,000-\$24,999	307.0	308.1	289.8	273.1	242.4	211.0*
\$25,000-\$34,999	336.7	305.2	294.8	285.1	260.3	233.8*
\$35,000-\$49,999	342.7	326.9	301.5	287.6	271.7	221.7*
\$50,000-\$74,999	374.4	364.1	333.2	284.0	270.9	248.6*
\$75,000 or more	400.3	356.0	350.4	304.6	292.8	248.6*

\*1993-98 difference is significant at the 95% confidence level.

†1993-98 difference is significant at the 90% confidence level.

### Survey methodology

Except for homicide data obtained from the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting program, this Bulletin presents data from the NCVS. The NCVS collects data on nonfatal crimes against persons age 12 or older, reported and not reported to the police, from a nationally representative sample of households in the United States. The NCVS provides information about victims (age, gender, race, ethnicity, marital status, income, and educational level), offenders (gender, race, approximate age, and victim-offender relations), and criminal offenses (time and place of occurrence, use of weapons, nature of injury, and economic consequences).

In 1998 approximately 43,000 households and 80,000 people age 12 or older were interviewed. For the 1998 NCVS data presented here, the response rate is 94% of eligible households and 89% of eligible individuals.

The data in this Bulletin were collected during the calendar year being estimated. Because of the retrospective nature of the survey, the estimates include some incidents that actually occurred during the previous year. Analyses comparing the victimization

information collected in a calendar year (termed a collection year) to that obtained about victimizations experienced in the same calendar year (called a data year) show only a small difference between the two methods. For example, for 1995 the violent crime rate based on data year victimization was 44.5 per 1,000 persons age 12 or older, compared to 46.6 based on the collection year method. The differences will be greater during periods of changing crime rates and less during periods of stable rates.

### Standard error computations

Comparisons made in this Bulletin were tested to determine if observed differences were statistically significant. Differences described as higher, lower, or different in this Bulletin passed a hypothesis test at the .05 level of statistical significance (95% confidence level). That is, the tested difference was greater than twice the standard error of that difference. For comparisons which were statistically significant at the 0.10 level of statistical significance (90% confidence level), the terms *somewhat different*, *marginally different*, and *slight difference* are used to note the nature of the difference.

The Bureau of Justice Statistics is the statistical agency of the U.S. Department of Justice. Jan M. Chaiken, Ph.D., is director.

This report continues the BJS Bulletin series of *Criminal Victimization*. BJS Bulletins present the first release of findings from permanent data collection programs such as the National Crime Victimization Survey.

Callie M. Rennison, BJS Statistician, wrote this report. Marianne Zawitz, BJS Statistician, and Michael Maltz, BJS Fellow, produced figures 1 and 2. Cathy Maston and Matthew Durose provided statistical review. Tom Hester and Yvonne Boston produced and edited the report. Ms. Boston and Jayne Robinson administered final production.

July 1999, NCJ 176353

This report and additional data, analyses, and graphs about criminal victimization in the United States are available on the Internet at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/>

Data presented in this report can be obtained from the National Archive of Criminal Justice Data at the University of Michigan, 1-800-999-0960. The archive can also be accessed through the BJS Web site. When at the archive site, search for dataset ICPSR 6406.

Caution is required when comparing estimates not explicitly discussed in the Bulletin text. What may appear to be large differences may not test as statistically significant at the 95% or even the 90% confidence level. Significance testing calculations were conducted at the Bureau of Justice Statistics using statistical programs developed specifically for the NCVS by the U.S. Bureau of the Census. These programs consider the complex NCVS sample design when calculating generalized variance estimates.