

2009 VERMONT CRIME REPORT RELEASED: PROPERTY CRIME DROPS DESPITE ECONOMY

The 2009 Vermont Crime Report was released today by the Vermont Criminal Information Center at the Department of Public Safety. The Report contains an analysis of crime reported to law enforcement agencies throughout the State of Vermont during calendar year 2009. Crimes reported to state police, municipal police, sheriff departments, and other state law enforcement agencies are analyzed in the Report. Crime statistics are arranged statewide, by county, and by town.

Total Crime

The Crime Report indicates that the total number of reported Group "A" and Group "B" crimes in 2009 decreased by 1.5% from 2008.

In 2009, Group "A" crimes decreased by .7% when compared to 2008 while Group "B" crimes decreased by 4.2%. Group "A" crimes are the more serious crimes and are counted whenever a complaint is received by law enforcement. Group "B" crimes are a group of eleven less serious crimes which are only reported when an arrest is made. An overall decrease in the number of crimes against property (-1,076) was mitigated by increases in both crime against persons (+218) and crime against society (+641).

Violent Crime

Overall violent crime increased by 2.3% from 2008 and was driven primarily by an increase in robberies and forcible sex crimes. Robberies increased 25.8% from 89 to 112 while forcible sex crimes increased by nearly 19% from 197 to 234. Simple assaults also increased by 2.6% from 2,313 to 2,374.

Though the overall number of violent crimes increased during 2009, some violent crimes did decrease. Murders statewide were down from 17 victims in 2008 to 7 victims in 2009. Aggravated assaults decreased by 6.7% from 539 in 2008 to 503 in 2009.

Slightly more than 4,200 individuals were victims of crimes against persons in Vermont in 2009; 62 of the victims were law enforcement officers. Fifty-three percent of victims of violent crimes were women. Men and women in the age group 21- 29 were more frequently the victims of violent crime than any other age group. Men and women over the age of 50 years old were the least likely to be victims of violent crime. In 93% of violent crimes where defendant/victim relationship information was known the defendant was an acquaintance, intimate partner, or family member of the victim. In approximately 97% of the violent crime incidents the victim received either no injuries or minor injuries. Dangerous weapons including firearms were used in nearly 10% of violent crimes. Approximately 60% of violent crimes in Vermont occurred in residences which makes the home the most frequent location for violent criminal incidents. Highways and roads are the second most frequent location for violent crime (15%).

Domestic Violence incidents involving intimate partners decreased by approximately 2% from 1,025 in 2008 to 1,009 in 2009. The vast majority of domestic violence crimes involve simple assaults (67%) and aggravated assaults (18%).

Property Crime

Property crime in Vermont decreased by 4.6% in 2009. The decrease was fueled primarily by decreases in larceny/theft, down 6.2% from 2008. Other forms of property crime such as vandalism and burglary decreased slightly

Residences were the targets in 69% of burglaries. In nearly 52% of the cases no forced-entry was required by burglars to enter the target buildings. Nearly 50% of residential burglaries occurred between 8:00 A.M. and 4:00 P.M. For crime prevention information including tips on securing a location against break-in and theft visit the Department of Public Safety website at <http://www.vtsp.org/prevention/>.

Much of the decrease in thefts was fueled by decreases in theft from buildings (-13.6%), theft from a motor vehicle (-7.2%), theft of motor vehicle parts (-39%) and motor vehicle theft (-23.8%). There were also categories which saw increases over 2008 including shoplifting (+28.6%) and stolen property (+26.4%). Discount and departments stores were the most frequent target for shoplifting incidents at 42.3%, followed by grocery stores at 25.9%, convenience stores at 10.9% and specialty stores at 10.8%. Slightly less than 35% of shoplifting incidents involved thefts of less than \$25 while 36% of shoplifting incidents involved thefts of from \$25 - \$99. The most commonly stolen item during 2009 was money at 15.3%. Other commonly stolen items included purses/wallets (7.1%), bicycles (6.9%) and vehicle parts and accessories (6.6%).

In Vermont the total property loss in 2009 due to criminal activity reported to law enforcement agencies statewide was over \$19 million, down more than \$3.2 million from 2008. Theft was the primary area of change from 2008 with over \$2.4 million less being reported during 2009. Theft still accounts for the largest single monetary loss at \$8 million followed by burglary at \$4 million and destruction of property/vandalism at \$3 million.

Drug Crime

Drug crime increased by 22.5% from 2,823 incidents in 2008 to 3,459 incidents in 2009. In 2009, approximately 2,246 drug crime incidents involved marijuana (70%). Cocaine and crack cocaine cases amounted to slightly more than 9% of the drug crimes. Amphetamine and methamphetamine cases constituted less than 1% of drug cases.

Most drug related categories remained relatively unchanged from 2008 to 2009 with two notable exceptions. Marijuana related arrests increased by 24.6% from 2008 by a count of 1802 to 2246. Drugs in the other narcotics, other stimulants, other hallucinogens and other drugs (general) showed an increase of 45% from a count of 355 in 2008 to 515 in 2009. Some examples of drugs that may be classified in the „other“ categories include (but are not limited to) Ecstasy and various prescription drugs such as Oxycodone and Valium.

National and Regional Comparisons

In order to gauge the level and types of violent crimes occurring across the nation, the FBI has developed the Violent Crime Index. The Index is based on a sample of the violent crimes in a state. The Index only includes the number of murders, robberies, aggravated assaults, and rapes. Preliminary figures reported by the FBI indicate that the National Violent Crime Index showed a decrease of 5.3% from 2008. The Violent Crime Index for the Northeast decreased by 3.3%. The Violent Crime Index in Vermont similarly indicated a decrease of 4.3% based upon

this definition. However, as stated earlier when the definition of Violent Crime is expanded beyond the limited categories reviewed by the FBI the overall rate increased by 2.3% from 2008.

The FBI has also developed a Property Crime Index which is comprised of the number of burglaries, thefts, and motor vehicle thefts reported in a jurisdiction. Preliminary figures from the FBI indicate that the National Property Crime Index was down by 4.6% from 2008. The Northeast reported a decrease of 5.2% from 2008. The Property Crime Index in Vermont similarly decreased by 6.1% for the same time period. In all cases the significant drop in larceny/theft incidents during 2009 is the primary cause for such a significant change.

Vermont Crime On-Line

Interested readers can access the complete 2009 Vermont Crime Report by accessing the Vermont Criminal Information Center website at vcic.vermont.gov and selecting the *Vermont Crime On-Line* Link. Thirteen years of crime data are now available on the web site.

Vermont Crime On-Line makes it easy for the public to view standard crime reports and maps or to create their own custom reports and maps instantly on-line. *Vermont Crime On-Line* reports information on the time and day when crimes occur, crime location type, the amount of property crime loss, victim injuries, bias motivation, statistical information on the age, gender, and race of both victims and defendants and other crime circumstance data of interest to the public, law enforcement, public administrators, legislators, and researchers.

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