Vermont Crime Information Center
Department of Public Safety - Division of Criminal Justice Services

2010 Vermont Crime Report

Introduction

The 2010 edition of the Vermont Crime Report contains an analysis of crime reported to law enforcement agencies throughout the State of Vermont during calendar year 2010. Crimes reported to state police, game wardens, municipal police, sheriff departments, and other state law enforcement agencies are contained in this report. Crime statistics may be viewed by town, county, State Police Barracks and Troop, and statewide.

VERMONT CRIME ON-LINE (VCON) Methodology

What is Included in VCON

The crime data provided for Vermont Crime On-Line (VCON) is an enumeration of crimes known to law enforcement agencies. It is not an enumeration of all crimes that were committed in Vermont during calendar year 2010. Crimes that are included in VCON are based on reports received by law enforcement agencies from victims, officers who discover infractions, or other sources. Crimes that may have occurred but were not reported are not included in this report. All reports of crime have been validated by a law enforcement officer. That is, reports which are later shown to be unfounded (e.g., property reported as stolen but later discovered as misplaced) are not included in this report.

All agencies were required to submit crime data for Group A and Group B crimes as defined by the Federal Bureau of Investigation's National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) program. The definitions for Group A and Group B crimes are accessible from the Vermont Crime On-Line Site.

How Crimes Are Counted: Summary Data vs. VCON Data

There are two important differences between the way in which crimes are counted by VCON vs. the way crimes were counted by the old FBI SUMMARY system used in Vermont prior to 2005:

VCON collects data on 56 crimes vs. the 26 crimes counted in the old SUMMARY system. This change affects the way in which the data is displayed rather than the total amount of crime counted. VCON provides a greater level of detail than the old SUMMARY system.
VCON only collects data for Group B offenses (a group of 11 less serious crimes) when there is an arrest. The old SUMMARY system as implemented in Vermont collected data on all reported less serious offenses not just less serious offenses for which an arrest was made. This change does result in a reduction in the total number of crimes reported on VCON.

Data Quality

The data in this report were provided by municipal, sheriff, state police, and other Vermont state law enforcement agencies which are solely responsible for the accuracy of their submissions. Agencies are required to utilize automated editing software to error check their data prior to submitting the information to the Vermont Crime Information Center (VCIC). The FBI performs similar edit checks on Vermont's data before including the data in the national system. The data which appears in VCON has undergone edit checking at both the local and federal level before being published. VCIC also has a VCON data quality program which audits each reporting agency at least once every two years.

The data quality of the VCON system is higher than that of the old SUMMARY system due to automated vs. manual data collection methods and the data quality editing that is performed at both the local and federal level. As such there will be some discrepancies when comparing crime data from previous years collected using the SUMMARY format vs. data collected in more recent years using VCON. Due to more rigorous data collection standards the amount of crime reported in VCON will be less than the number of crimes reported in the old SUMMARY system.

Location Issues

Municipal police departments generally submit crime data which is limited to their town/city. Sheriff Departments report crime data for towns for which they have law enforcement responsibilities. State Police and other state law enforcement agencies report crime data based on the location of the crime. It is not uncommon for towns to have different law enforcement agencies policing the jurisdiction depending on the time of day or day of the week. In these cases, the Vermont Crime Information Center (VCIC) collates crime reports from all involved law enforcement agencies to ensure the accuracy of the town's crime rate.

Reporting Compliance

In 2010, crime data was received from all law enforcement agencies required to report with the exception of: Mount Tabor PD, Royalton PD, Rutland Town PD, Essex County Sheriff, and the Department of Liquor Control. As such, no data from these agencies are included on the Vermont Crime On-Line site.

Population Figures

Population figures provided on the VCON site are based on the most current data available from the Vermont Department of Health.

2010 Report Methodology

As discussed in the Methodology Section above there are discrepancies between crime counts reported in VCON vs. crime counts reported using the old SUMMARY system. These discrepancies have arisen for three reasons: 1) changes in the way crimes are counted; 2) more rigorous data quality standards; and 3) the failure of some law enforcement agencies to report.

In light of these findings VCIC discontinued the use of unaudited, SUMMARY style data as the basis for reporting Statewide Crime Statistics in 2005. Rather, only INCIDENT crime data reported to VCON and subject to data quality audits are used in this report. As a result, crime statistics collected in 2005 and thereafter will be lower than those reported in years prior to 2005 when data was collected using the SUMMARY system.

For purposes of continuity, however, the 2010 Crime Report does contain a Statewide Crime Statistics table which is based on the old SUMMARY Crime Index (known as Part I crimes). The Crime Index was developed by the FBI and is used as an indicator to measure changes in the total amount of crime in a jurisdiction. The data in the Statewide Crime Statistics table were obtained from VCON and collapsed into the SUMMARY system crime types. In the past the Statewide Crime Statistics table contained both the Crime Index and a list of less serious crimes known at Part II crimes. Because of different reporting practices between the SUMMARY and VCON system it is not possible to collapse VCON data into a valid SUMMARY, Part II crime table. A complete enumeration of crimes reported to law enforcement is, however, available from VCON. Crime statistics are arranged statewide, by county, and by town.

A Note Regarding Annual Comparisons

It is valid to compare the differences in the Statewide Crime Statistics tables between 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2010 since those years were collected using the VCON system. It is not valid, however, to compare the Statewide Crime Statistics table developed using the SUMMARY system prior to 2005 with those collected using the VCON system in 2005 and later years since the data collection methodologies were different.