



# Vermont Crime Information Center

Department of Public Safety - Division of Criminal Justice Services

## 1997 Vermont Crime Report

### Introduction

#### Contents

The 1997 edition of the Vermont Crime Report contains an analysis of crime reported to law enforcement agencies throughout the state of Vermont during calendar year 1997. Crimes reported to state police, game wardens, municipal police, sheriff departments, and other state law enforcement agencies are contained in this report. Crime statistics are arranged statewide, by county, and by town. Specific details on crime definitions and how this data were collected and organized may be found in the Methodology section following the introductory sections.

#### Report Format

In the past the Vermont Crime Report included under one cover both statewide and local crime data for all counties. Feedback from our readers indicated that most users were only interested in crime data from their town and their county and in statewide data for comparison purposes. As such, nearly 85% of the paper report was not consulted by the typical reader. As a way of addressing this issue, the 1997 edition of the Vermont Crime Report is being published in two formats - a printed format, and an Internet format. The printed format contains statewide, county, and local data for a specific county. The Internet format contains statewide, county, and local data for ALL counties. Most users will find that the printed format for their county will meet their needs. However, users who may be interested in crime data from other counties may view complete crime data on the Internet site. An Internet version of the Vermont Crime Report will provide access to statewide data while reducing waste since users will print only what they need.

#### Methodology

The crime data provided in this report is an enumeration of crimes known to law enforcement agencies – it is not an enumeration of all crimes that were committed in Vermont during 1997. Crimes that are included in this report 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.

The data in this report were provided by municipal, sheriff, state police, and other state law enforcement agencies who are solely responsible for the accuracy of their submissions. 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 barracks and the Department of Fish and Wildlife 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.

In some cases law enforcement agencies did not report a township or county location for a reported crime (< 1%). These crime reports are included in the statewide totals but are excluded from all county and township tables. Therefore, the totals from county and township tables will differ from those in the statewide criminal statistics table.

In 1997, crime data was received from all law enforcement agencies required to report. Therefore, no estimation techniques were used to compensate for missing data. Population figures are based on 1996 estimates provided by the Vermont Department of Health.

In 1997, agencies reported their annual crime statistics to the Vermont VCIC in one of three ways:

1. electronic submission through the VIBRS Network;
2. magnetic or paper submission of incident-based data from self-standing agency computers; or
3. paper submission on a form specified by VCIC.

All agencies were required to submit crime data on Part I and Part II crimes as defined by the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Uniform Crime Reporting System. The definitions for Part I and Part II crimes are included at the conclusion of this section.

#### Trend Data

The reader will note that, with the exception of homicide data, there are no yearly comparisons of crime data. This is because the State of Vermont's crime reporting program is undergoing fundamental changes. Vermont is in the process of implementing a newly established national standard for crime reporting. The new standard, called Incident-Based Reporting (IBR), involves a different methodology for reporting crime when compared to the old standard or summary-based reporting. The IBR methodology results in a higher number of crimes reported and more details on the type of crime and the circumstances surrounding each crime incident. When a law enforcement agency adopts the IBR standard, the crime rate for that jurisdiction may appear to increase when compared to a crime rate based on summary-based reports. The apparent increase in crime is more likely to be caused by the IBR reporting methodology than by an actual increase in crime. Until all Vermont law enforcement agencies are able to adopt the IBR standard, yearly comparisons of crime are likely to yield inaccurate conclusions regarding crime trends. As such, yearly comparisons of crime data will not be included in this report.

