

2002 VERMONT CRIME REPORT RELEASED: TOTAL CRIME DOWN, SERIOUS CRIME INCREASES

The *2002 Vermont Crime Report* was released today by the Vermont Crime 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 2002. Crimes reported to state police, game wardens, 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.

The Report indicates that the total number of reported crimes declined by nearly 3.5% from 2001. This is the second year in a row that the overall number of crimes in the state has declined.

Though the overall number of crimes decreased, certain serious crimes increased. For example, while murders and robberies showed a decrease in 2002, rapes increased from 129 to 153 (19% increase) and aggravated assaults increased from 447 to 490 (10% increase). This is the third year in a row that reported aggravated assaults increased in Vermont. Aggravated assaults involve very serious or life threatening injuries usually inflicted with some type of weapon.

The typical victim of a violent crime in Vermont tends to be a white, female, in her early twenties. The victim and the assailant were known to each other in 87% of violent crime incidents. Assaults most frequently occurred on Sundays in the early evening at a private residence. Firearms were used as a weapon in 11% of aggravated assaults and other dangerous weapons such as knives and clubs were used in 24% of serious assaults.

In terms of property crime, while larceny, and motor vehicle thefts were down from last year, burglary offenses increased by 14% and cases of reported arson were up by 15%. Drug crime increased by more than 9%.

The total property loss due to criminal activity was estimated to be in excess of \$21 million. Over \$4 million of that loss involved theft of currency. The typical burglary incident involved a residential target and was committed during the morning hours on weekdays. Burglaries tend to be committed by white males under the age of seventeen.

For comparison purposes the FBI has established a Crime Index which consists of both violent and property crimes and is designed to summarize the crime conditions in a jurisdiction. The Vermont Crime Index was nearly unchanged from 2001. The National Crime Index reported by the FBI showed a decrease of 1.4% from 2001. The FBI's figures are based on preliminary findings for 2002.

Though the total Vermont Crime Index was unchanged from 2001, the Violent Crimes Index in Vermont was up by 8% from 2001. In contrast to the Vermont figures, the National Violent Crime Index declined by nearly 1.5% from last year.

The Vermont Property Crimes Index decreased by nearly 1% from 2001 as compared to National Property Crime Index which was unchanged from last year.