

2008 VERMONT CRIME REPORT RELEASED: PROPERTY CRIME ON THE RISE

The 2008 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 2008. 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 2008 remained relatively unchanged from 2007.

In 2008, Group "A" crimes increased by 1.6% when compared to 2007 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. The increase in Group "A" crime was due to a 4% increase in property crime. Group "A" crimes against persons and crimes against society both dropped by approximately 6%.

Violent Crime

The drop in violent crime was due to declines in sex crimes and simple assaults. Forcible sex crimes decreased by 22% from 256 statewide to 197. Non-forcible sex crimes dropped by nearly 29% from 49 to 25. Simple assaults declined by approximately 10% from 2,566 to 2,313.

Though the overall number of violent crimes declined in 2008, some violent crimes did increase. Murders statewide were up from 12 victims in 2007 to 17 victims in 2008. Robberies increased by 11% from 80 in 2007 to 89 in 2008. Aggravated assaults increased by 10% from 488 statewide to 539.

Slightly more than 4,000 individuals were victims of violent crimes in Vermont in 2008; 72 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 either an acquaintance, intimate partner, or family member of the victim. In approximately 96% 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 65% 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 (16%).

Domestic Violence incidents involving intimate partners increased by approximately 2% from 1003 in 2007 to 1025 in 2008. The vast majority of domestic violence crimes involve simple assaults (70%) and aggravated assaults (21%).

Property Crime

Property crime in Vermont increased by 4% in 2008. The increase was fueled primarily by increases in burglaries and thefts. Burglaries were up by 11% in 2008 and theft was up by 10%. Conversely motor vehicle theft decreased by 4% and vandalism and fraud cases were both down by approximately 7%.

Residences were the targets in 67% of burglaries. In nearly 50% 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.

Much of the increase in thefts was fueled by increases in shoplifting and thefts from motor vehicles. Shoplifting incidents increased by 13%. Discount and departments stores were the most frequent target for shoplifting incidents (34%), followed by grocery stores (28%), and convenience stores (14%). Slightly more than 35% of shoplifting incidents involved thefts of less than \$25. Nearly 40% of shoplifting incidents involved thefts of from \$25 - \$100. Thefts from vehicles increased by 30%. Thefts from vehicles tended to occur in parking lots or driveways. Nearly 50% of the property stolen involved money, wallets/purses, and vehicle parts and accessories.

In Vermont the total property loss in 2008 due to criminal activity reported to law enforcement agencies statewide was over \$23 million, up more than \$870,000 from 2007. Theft is the most costly property crime accounting for losses of over \$10.5 million in 2008. Burglary was second accounting for slightly more than \$4 million in losses.

Drug Crime

Drug crime decreased by 6% from 3,008 incidents in 2007 to 2,823 incidents in 2008.

In 2008, approximately 1,802 drug crime incidents involved marijuana (67%). Cocaine and crack cocaine cases amounted to slightly more than 10% of the drug crimes. Amphetamine and methamphetamine cases constituted less than 1% of drug cases.

Though there was a substantial decrease in cocaine cases and drug cases where the type of drug was reported as "unknown", other drug cases including crack cocaine, heroin, and "other narcotic" drug cases showed significant increases. Crack cocaine cases increased 33% from 88 cases in 2007 to 117 cases in 2008. Heroin cases increased 105% from 39 cases in 2007 to 80 cases in 2008. "Other narcotic" drug cases increased by 27% from 156 to 198 cases.

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 3.5% from 2007. The Violent Crime Index for the Northeast decreased by 2.9%. The Violent Crime Index in Vermont, however, indicated an increase of 8%.

The Violent Crime Index typically mirrors the total amount of violent crime in a state. In 2008, however, the FBI's Violent Crime Index suggested an 8% increase in the State's violent crime, while in reality the state's violent crimes declined by 6%. The discrepancy was due to the fact that the Violent Crime Index is based on only a sample of crimes and does not include several types of violent crimes which saw significant declines in Vermont during 2008. In summary, when all violent crimes are counted there was a decline of 6% in violent crime. When only a sample of violent crimes are counted as in the Violent Crime Index, there appears to be an increase in violent crime. The total count approach is the more accurate indicator for determining the changes in Vermont crimes from year to year.

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 2.5% from 2007. The Northeast reported an increase of 1.7% from 2007. The Property Crime Index in Vermont increased 10%. Though the Property Crime Index did capture the increases in Vermont burglaries and thefts in 2008, it failed to take into consideration the decreases in motor vehicle theft, vandalism and fraud cases. The total property crime count in Vermont indicates an increase of 4% while the sample of property crimes in the Property Crime Index incorrectly indicates a 10% increase in property crime.

Vermont Crime On-Line

Interested readers can access the complete 2008 Vermont Crime Report by using [Vermont Crime On-Line](#) from the [Department of Public Safety's](#) web page. Twelve 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.