



Violent Crime

Definition

In the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program, violent crime is composed of four offenses: murder and nonnegligent manslaughter, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault. Violent crimes are defined in the UCR Program as those offenses that involve force or threat of force.

Data collection

The data presented in *Crime in the United States* reflect the Hierarchy Rule, which requires that only the most serious offense in a multiple-offense criminal incident be counted. The descending order of UCR violent crimes are murder and nonnegligent manslaughter, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault, followed by the property crimes of burglary, larceny-theft, and motor vehicle theft. Although arson is also a property crime, the Hierarchy Rule does not apply to the offense of arson. In cases in which an arson occurs in conjunction with another violent or property crime, both the arson and the additional crime are reported.

In 2016, the FBI Director approved the recommendation to discontinue reporting of rape data using the UCR legacy definition beginning in 2017. However, to maintain the 20-year trend in Table 1, the rape total for the legacy definition is used to calculate the violent crime total.

Overview

- In 2020, an estimated 1,277,696 violent crimes occurred nationwide, an increase of 5.6 percent from the 2019 estimate. (See Tables 1 and 1A.)
- When considering 5- and 10-year trends, the 2020 estimated violent crime total was 2.2 percent above the 2016 level and 5.9 percent above the 2011 level. (See Tables 1 and 1A.)
- There were an estimated 387.8 violent crimes per 100,000 inhabitants in 2020, a rate that rose 5.2 percent when compared with the 2019 estimated violent crime rate and rose 0.2 percent from the 2011 estimate. (See Tables 1 and 1A.)

- Aggravated assaults accounted for 72.1 percent of violent crimes reported to law enforcement in 2020. Robbery offenses accounted for 19.1 percent of violent crime offenses; rape (legacy definition) accounted for 7.1 percent; and murder accounted for 1.7 percent. (Based on Table 1.)
- Information collected regarding types of weapons used in violent crimes showed that firearms were used in 76.7 percent of the nation's murders, 37.3 percent of robberies, and 34.9 percent of aggravated assaults. (Weapons data are not collected for rape.) (See Expanded Homicide Data Table 7, Robbery Table 3, and the Aggravated Assault Table.)