

DATA CHARACTERISTICS AND KNOWN LIMITATIONS

CRIMES

A crime is an act specifically prohibited by law, or failure to perform an act specifically required by law, for which punishment is prescribed (California Penal Code section 15).

The eight crime offenses presented in this report were chosen because of their seriousness, frequency of occurrence, and likelihood of being reported to law enforcement. These offenses include homicide, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, motor vehicle theft, larceny-theft over \$400, and arson.

If multiple crimes occur during the same event, only the most serious (based on hierarchy) is counted. Arson is the exception to this rule because arson frequently occurs in conjunction with other crimes. Therefore, it is felt that valuable information could be lost using the hierarchy rule. Arson is counted along with the other most serious offense.

The number of reported homicide, forcible rape, and aggravated assault crimes represents known victims, while for robbery, burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson, the number represents known incidents.

Beginning in 2003, larceny-theft of property valued over \$400 was included in the property crime category to provide a more representative depiction of crime in California.

Some county sheriff department's motor vehicle thefts are reported by the California Highway Patrol.

ARRESTS

Monthly Arrest and Citation Register (MACR)

An arrest occurs when a person is taken into custody because an officer has reason to believe the person violated the law. Not all arrests result in persons being jailed. Arrestees may be released by the arresting agency, post bail, or be released on their own recognizance to appear in court at a later date. Some are issued citations, much like traffic tickets, which direct them to appear in court at a later date.

Arrests are divided into two major groups: felony arrests and misdemeanor arrests. A felony arrest can result in a sentence to state prison if the offender

is convicted as an adult. A misdemeanor arrest can result in a sentence of up to one year in county jail, a fine, probation, restitution, or any combination of these sentences.

Juveniles may also be arrested for truancy, incorrigibility, running away, and violating curfew. These are referred to as "status offenses" because agency intervention is based solely on the juvenile's status as a minor. Status offenses are acts that would not be "crimes" if committed by adults.

If a person is arrested for multiple offenses, the MACR selects only the most serious offense based on the severity of possible punishment.

The subjectivity of the classification and labeling process must be considered in the analysis of race/ethnic group data.

In 2004, the Legislature amended section 11093 of the Government Code to require any state agency or department that develops and maintains data and statistics on the municipal level to report a separate breakdown for the San Fernando Valley portion of the City of Los Angeles.

ADULT FELONY ARREST DISPOSITIONS

Offender-Based Transaction Statistics (OBTS)

The Offender-Based Transaction Statistics (OBTS) System statistically captures the number of adult-level final dispositions, reported to the Department of Justice (DOJ), that occur each year as a result of a felony arrest. The term "final disposition" refers to the last legal action taken following an arrest for a felony offense. Only the final disposition for an arrest event is selected for statistical purposes. Intermediate dispositions (i.e., diversion programs, suspended proceedings, reopenings, retrials, or subsequent actions) are not included in the OBTS data.

Final dispositions can occur at the law enforcement, prosecutorial or adult court level. These agencies are required to report final dispositions to the Department of Justice in order to update an individual's criminal history record. The OBTS data are extracted from this Automated Criminal History System (ACHS).

The OBTS file includes information about persons under 18 years of age at

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the time of arrest. These juveniles were processed as adults and received final dispositions in adult court under the Welfare and Institutions Code sections 602, 707(a), 707(b), 707(c), and 707.1(a).

If a person is arrested for multiple offenses, the OBTS system selects only the most serious offense based on the severity of possible punishment. If there are multiple court dispositions, the OBTS system selects the most serious court disposition and the associated offense.

The OBTS data are displayed by the year of final disposition regardless of the year in which an arrest occurred.

It is estimated that approximately 65 percent to 75 percent of adult felony arrest dispositions are reported annually. These data are considered representative at the statewide level; however, data may or may not be representative at the county level.

ADULT PROBATION

Adult probation data are limited to original grants of probation and do not include subsequent grants of probation to those already under supervised probation in the same county. Probationers are counted for each jurisdiction in which they are on probation. However, probationers with cases in multiple jurisdictions are counted more than one time in statewide totals.

Probation removal data from 2003 through 2007 will not match previously reported data because of programmatic adjustments made to one county, affecting statewide counts.

For 2002, the Marin County Probation Department implemented a new computer system. Because of complications associated with the new system, the department was unable to extract data for November and December.

Beginning in March 2002, the Placer County Probation Department's caseload increased because of the merging of the Tahoe City and Auburn offices. Previously, the Tahoe City office did not submit reports.

San Bernardino County Probation Department data are incomplete for 2001 because of a loss of personnel.

The San Francisco County Probation Department was unable to report for 2001 through 2005 because of computer program issues and budget cuts.

In 2002, the San Joaquin County Probation Department reported a negative caseload count for felony offenses. This was due to more probationers being removed from probation at the beginning of the year than were added throughout the year.

In 2009, the Santa Barbara County Probation Department discovered that counts for offenders added to probation through reinstatement were being underreported. Adjustments were made to their December report to correct the 2009 total. Although the problem was identified as occurring in 2007 and 2008, no adjustments were made for the prior years.

The Ventura County Probation Department made adjustments to its 2003 through 2005 data. Therefore, data for Ventura County and statewide will not match previously reported data.

The Yolo County Probation Department was unable to report data for April through December 2001.

Counts for adults on active probation for felony offenses may also include adults for probation for misdemeanor offenses for the following counties and years: Contra Costa (2000–2010), Kern (2010), Lake (2001–2010), Merced (2003–2010), Sacramento (2003–2010), Siskiyou (2000–2010), Tulare (2000–2009), and Yolo (2000–2009).

JAIL PROFILE SURVEY

The DOJ has ceased publication of "Jail Profile" data. Please contact the Corrections Standards Authority for data (http://www.cdcr.ca.gov/CSA/FSO/Surveys/Jail_Profile/Jail_Profile_Survey.html).

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Domestic Violence-Related Calls for Assistance

Domestic violence is defined as "...abuse committed against an adult or a fully emancipated minor who is a spouse, former spouse, cohabitant, former cohabitant, or person with whom the suspect has had a child or is having or

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has had a dating or engagement relationship." [13700(b) PC]

Abuse is defined as "...intentionally or recklessly causing or attempting to cause bodily injury, or placing another person in reasonable apprehension of imminent serious bodily injury to himself or herself, or another." [13700(a) PC]

The definition of "domestic violence" is subject to varying interpretations by law enforcement agencies. As a result, different types of domestic violence relationships may be included in the database.

Included in the data are any cases that resulted in a report being written by the responding law enforcement agency. Therefore, data include both cases where an arrest was made and those where circumstances did not warrant an arrest.

Domestic violence-related calls for assistance that involved the use, or threat to use, a firearm, knife or cutting instrument or other dangerous weapon are reported according to the type of weapon used, regardless of the outcome or injury.

In 2002, law enforcement agencies were given clarification about reporting personal weapons. This clarification corresponds to a notable decrease in the number of personal weapons reported. The use of a personal weapon, such as hands, fists, or feet, was reported as a weapon only if the assault was considered an aggravated assault under Uniform Crime Reporting guidelines. An aggravated assault is an unlawful attack by one person upon another for the purpose of inflicting severe or aggravated bodily injury, such as broken bones, internal injuries, or cuts requiring stitches.

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AGENCY NOTES FOR CRIMES, ARRESTS, AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FOR 2010

The Solano County Sheriff's Department did not report May through December 2010. (Homicides were reported in May (1) and June (1).

The Calipatria Police Department did not report arrest data for January through December 2010 because of staffing shortages.

San Francisco Police Department arrest counts are low for December 2010 because of a data extraction error found in their new records management system. The agency was unable to make corrections because of staffing shortages.

The Trinidad Police Department began contracting services with the Humboldt County Sheriff's Department in July 2010. The Trinidad Police Department's data for July through December 2010 are included in the Humboldt County Sheriff Department's reports.

The San Carlos Police Department began contracting services with the San Mateo County Sheriff's Department in November 2010. The San Carlos Police Department's data for November and December 2010 are included in the San Mateo County Sheriff Department's reports.

The McFarland Police Department began reporting data in January 2010.

The Shasta County Marshal's Office began reporting data in January 2010.