

**CRIME &
DELINQUENCY
IN CALIFORNIA**

1997



CRIMES

PART 1



WHAT IS A CRIME?

A crime is an act specifically prohibited by law, or failure to perform an act specifically required by law, for which punishment is prescribed (15 P.C.).

HOW ARE CRIMES COUNTED?

The **Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program** was inaugurated in 1930 and is administered on the national level by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). It provides criminal statistics for use in law enforcement administration, operation, and management. In California, this program is administered by the Department of Justice (DOJ).

As part of the UCR Program, law enforcement agencies throughout the state report summary information to the DOJ on "selected" crimes. Reported crimes are classified by UCR definitions designed to eliminate differences among the various states' penal code definitions of crimes.

The crimes, selected because of seriousness, frequency of occurrence, and the likelihood of being reported to the police, are: homicide, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson. These eight offenses are known as Part I crimes. Except for larceny-theft, UCR does not count misdemeanors and infractions.

The California Crime Index (CCI) comprises homicide, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, and motor vehicle theft. When a 1983 California law raised the lower limit of felony theft from \$200 to over \$400, the DOJ dropped theft (\$200 and over) from its measure of crime. Law enforcement agencies began submitting arson crime data in 1979; 1980 was the first year of complete reporting. Therefore, to maintain long-term felony trend data in the CCI, the DOJ excludes larceny-theft and arson.

The UCR Program accounts for Part I crimes only; however, some Part I crimes go undetected and therefore unreported. This, along with the hierarchy rule, accounts for a certain amount of underreporting in the system. Most crimes occur singly as opposed to more than one crime being committed within the same incident. The hierarchy rule assigns a value to each crime and requires that only the single most serious offense be reported. For example, if a person were to enter a bar, rob eight patrons, and kill the bartender, only the homicide would be reported. Arson is the exception. Since arson frequently occurs in conjunction with other crimes, it is felt that valuable information could be lost using the hierarchy rule. Therefore, arson is counted along with the other most serious offense.

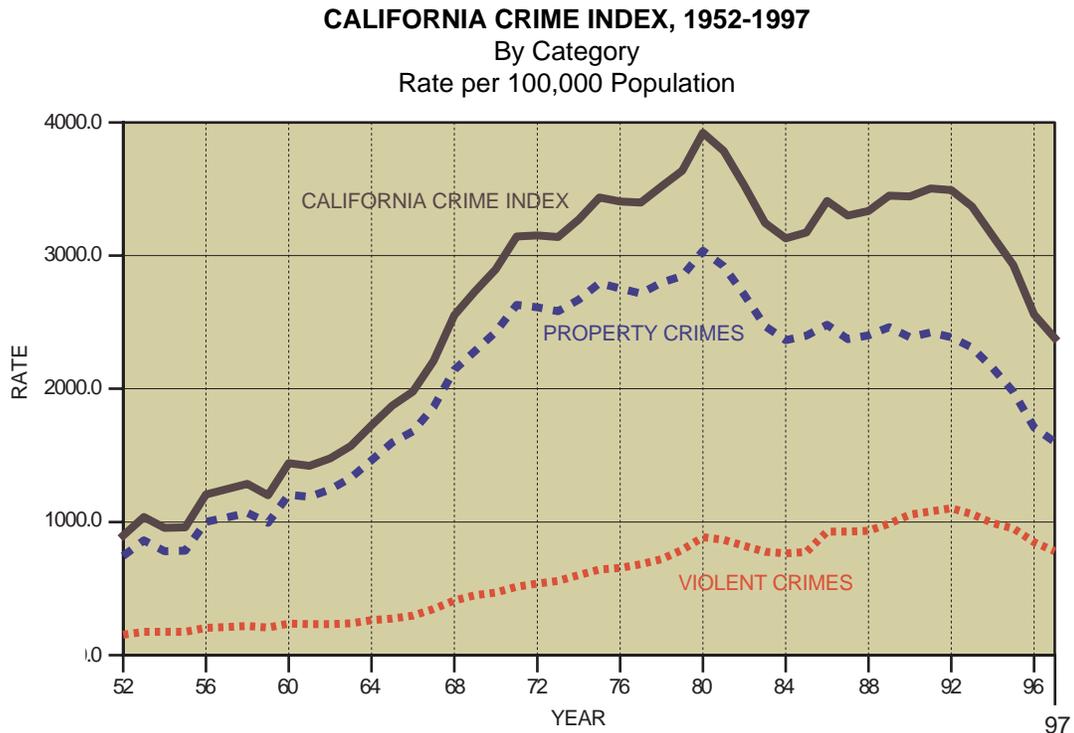
WHAT IS A RATE?

A rate describes the number of events that occur within a given population. Crime rates and clearance rates are used in this section. Formulas for calculating both can be found in the Appendix.

WHAT IS THE VALUE OF THE UCR PROGRAM?

Since its inception in 1930, UCR has become a nationwide program. All California law enforcement agencies participate. Quality control surveys conducted by the DOJ staff have shown a high level of compliance with UCR reporting standards. The number of participants and the amount and quality of data collected under the stringent rules of the system make UCR a valuable program. In California, because of the high quality of its law enforcement agencies and their close cooperation with the DOJ, UCR data are, and have been for many years, an extremely good *indicator* of the extent of, and fluctuation in, crimes reported to law enforcement.

CRIME TRENDS, 1952-1997



Source: Table 1.

Data depicting crime in California have been published continuously for 45 years. The first *Crime in California* publication was issued in 1953 and reported data for the 1952 calendar year.

Comparing 1952 to 1997:

- The California Crime Index (CCI) rate increased 165.2 percent (from 898.1 to 2,381.4).
- The violent crime rate increased 410.1 percent (from 153.1 to 781.0).
- The property crime rate increased 114.8 percent (from 745.0 to 1,600.3).

The CCI rate increased almost continuously from 1952 through its peak year of 1980. Since then, with the exception of slight increases from 1984 to 1991, the rate has been in a general decline. In 1997, the CCI rate dropped to a 29-year low of 2,381.4 per 100,000 population.

The violent crime rate reached its highest level in 1992 (1,103.9). In 1952, reported violent crime accounted for 17.0 percent of the CCI. In 1997, reported violent crime accounted for 32.8 percent.

The property crime rate, like the CCI, peaked in 1980. In 1952, reported property crime accounted for 83.0 percent of the CCI. In 1997, reported property crime accounted for 67.2 percent.

Since 1952, there have been changes in laws and data collection procedures. For instance, in 1986 legislation was enacted which required reporting domestic violence as criminal conduct. As a result, the aggravated assault category increased over 35 percent in rate in one year. These types of changes should be considered when comparing data.



California Crime Index

California Crime Index (CCI) - homicide, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, and motor vehicle theft.

Comparing 1992 to 1997:

- Reported California Crime Index offenses decreased 31.8 percent in rate.

From 1996 to 1997:

- The California Crime Index rate decreased 6.9 percent.

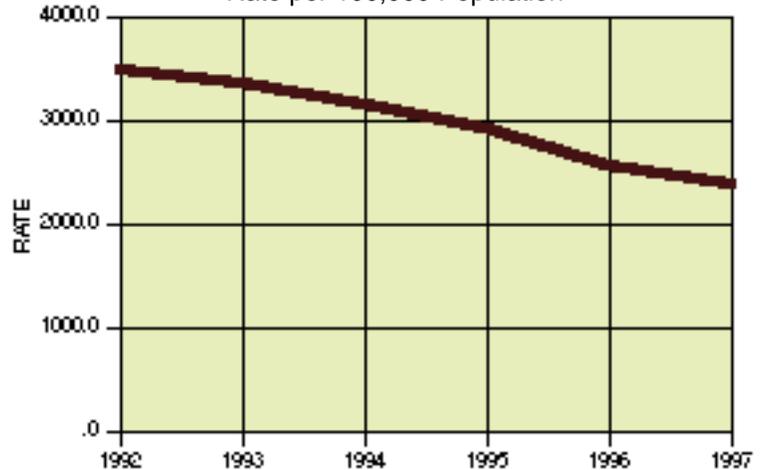
In 1997,

Of 784,831 California Crime Index offenses reported:

- Violent crimes accounted for 32.8 percent (257,409).
- Property crimes accounted for 67.2 percent (527,422).

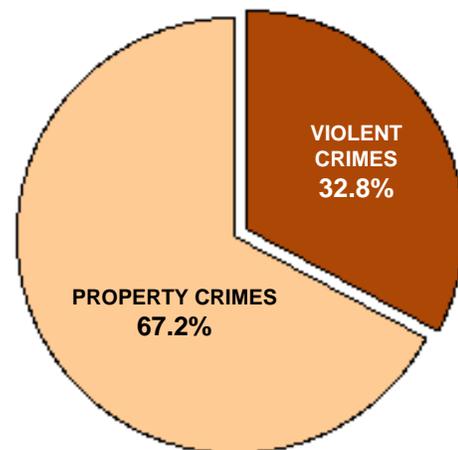
The CCI rate decreased for the sixth consecutive year (see Table 1).

CALIFORNIA CRIME INDEX, 1992-1997
Rate per 100,000 Population



Source: Table 2.

CALIFORNIA CRIME INDEX, 1997
By Category

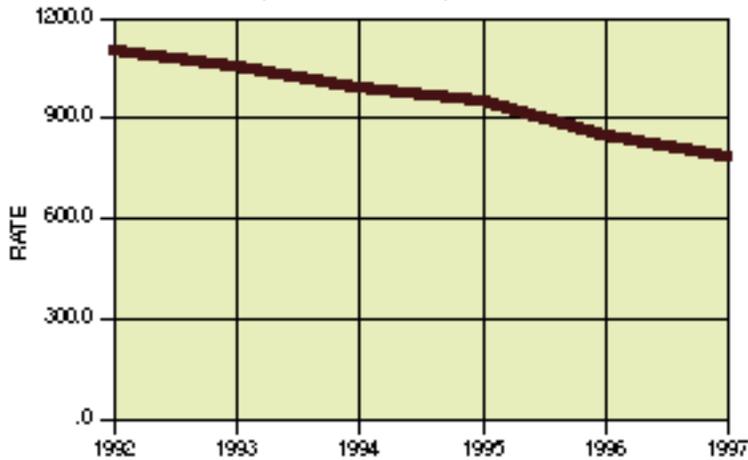


Source: Table 3.

Violent Crimes

Violent Crimes - homicide, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault.

VIOLENT CRIMES, 1992-1997
Rate per 100,000 Population



Source: Table 2.

Comparing 1992 to 1997:

- The rate of reported violent crime decreased 29.3 percent.

From 1996 to 1997:

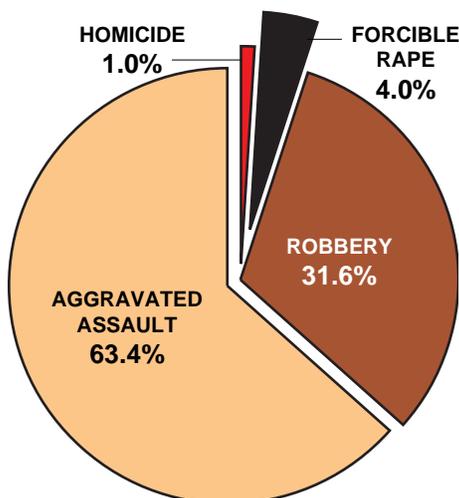
- The violent crime rate decreased 7.9 percent.

In 1997,

Of 257,409 violent crimes reported:

- Homicide accounted for 1.0 percent (2,579).
- Forcible rape accounted for 4.0 percent (10,182).
- Robbery accounted for 31.6 percent (81,413).
- Aggravated assault accounted for 63.4 percent (163,235).

VIOLENT CRIMES, 1997
By Crime



Source: Table 3.

The violent crime rate decreased for the fifth consecutive year.

Homicide

Homicide - *The willful (nonnegligent) killing of one human being by another. Murder and nonnegligent manslaughter comprise this category.*

Comparing 1992 to 1997:

- The rate of reported homicides decreased 37.6 percent.

From 1996 to 1997:

- The homicide rate decreased 13.3 percent.

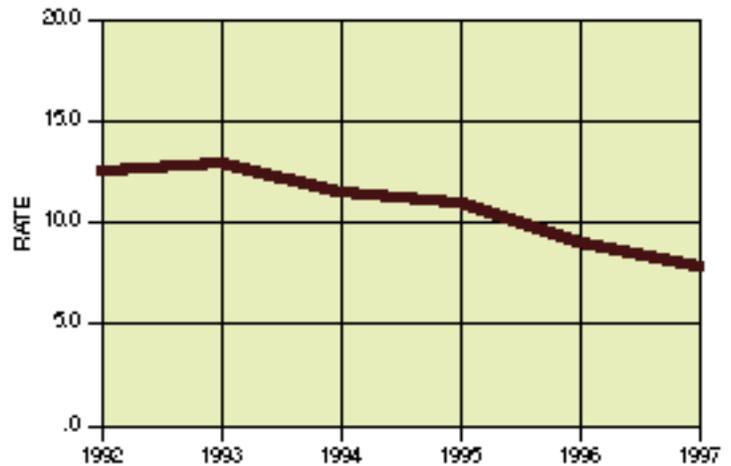
In 1997,

Of 2,579 homicides reported, the type of weapon was known in 2,539 cases (98.4 percent). Of these:

- Firearms accounted for 72.3 percent (1,835).
- Knives or cutting instruments accounted for 12.1 percent (307).
- Blunt objects (clubs, etc.) accounted for 4.3 percent (108).
- Personal weapons (hands, feet, etc.) accounted for 5.8 percent (148).
- Other weapons accounted for 5.6 percent (141).

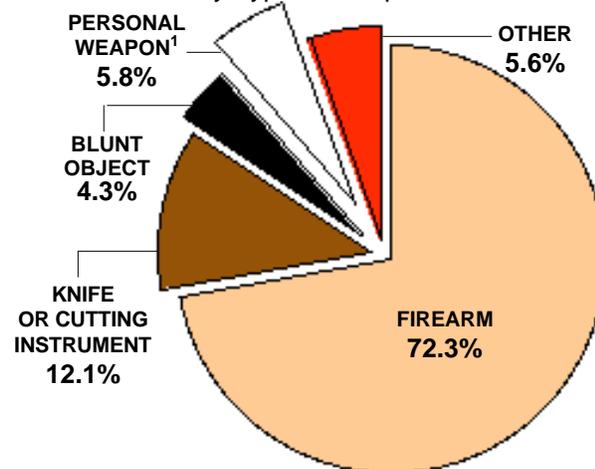
The 1997 homicide rate of 7.8 is the lowest since 1970 (see Table 1).

HOMICIDE CRIMES, 1992-1997
Rate per 100,000 Population



Source: Table 2.

HOMICIDE CRIMES, 1997
By Type of Weapon Used



Source: Table 4.

Note: Percents may not add to 100.0 because of independent rounding.

¹Hands, feet, etc.

Forcible Rape

Forcible Rape - *The carnal knowledge of a female forcibly and against her will. Assaults or attempts to commit rape by force or threat of force are included.*

The UCR definition of forcible rape states that only females can be victims; therefore, a forcible rape crime rate based exclusively on the female population is included. Although both rates are shown on the trend chart, **the following discussion is based on the rate of occurrence in the female population only.**

Comparing 1992 to 1997:

- The rate of reported forcible rapes decreased 27.3 percent.

From 1996 to 1997:

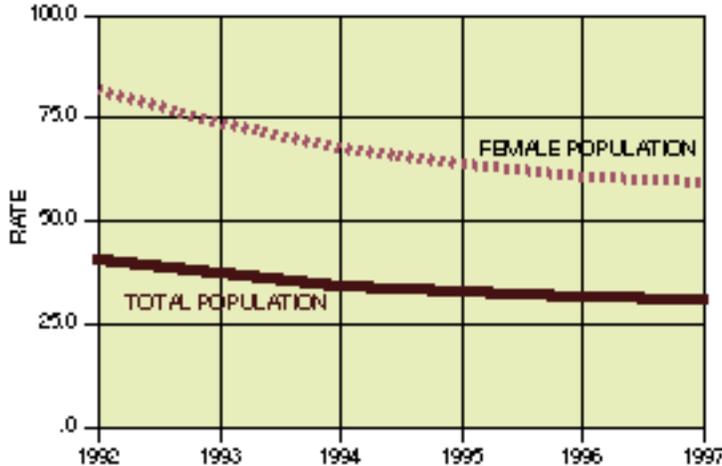
- The forcible rape rate decreased 2.1 percent.

In 1997,

Of 10,182 forcible rapes reported:

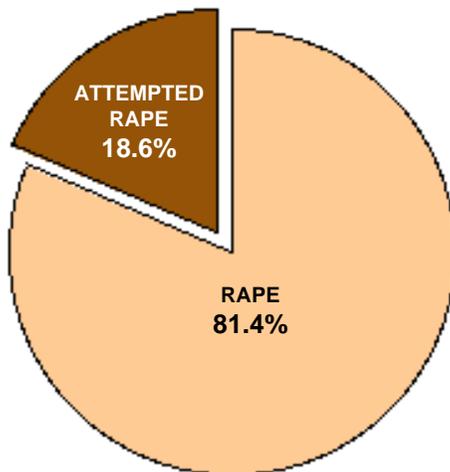
- Rape accounted for 81.4 percent (8,292).
- Attempted rape accounted for 18.6 percent (1,890).

FORCIBLE RAPE CRIMES, 1992-1997
Rate per 100,000 Total and Female Populations



Sources: [Tables 2 and 5.](#)

FORCIBLE RAPE CRIMES, 1997
By Type of Rape



Source: [Table 5.](#)



Robbery

Robbery - The taking or attempting to take anything of value from the care, custody, or control of a person or persons by force or threat of force or violence and/or by putting the victim in fear.

Comparing 1992 to 1997:

- The rate of reported robberies decreased 40.9 percent.

From 1996 to 1997:

- The robbery rate decreased 15.0 percent.

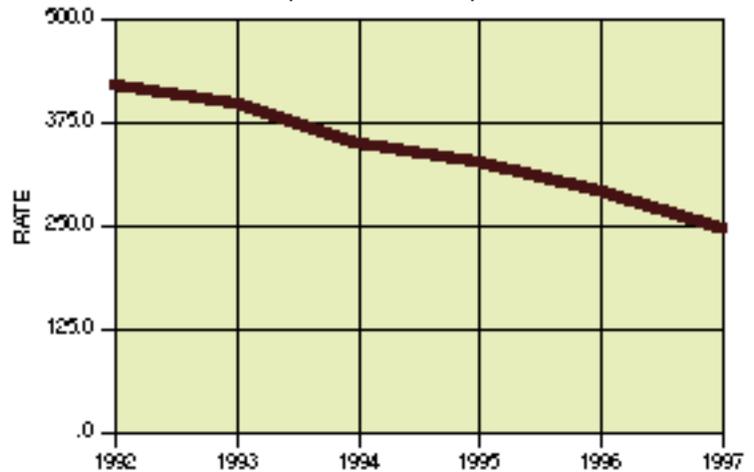
In 1997,

Of 81,413 robberies reported:

- Highway robbery (streets, parks, parking lots, etc.) accounted for 48.0 percent (39,089).
- Commercial robbery accounted for 23.1 percent (18,802).
- Residential robbery accounted for 8.9 percent (7,262).
- Bank robbery accounted for 2.2 percent (1,812).
- Robberies that occurred in other locations (churches, schools, trains, etc.) accounted for 17.7 percent (14,448).

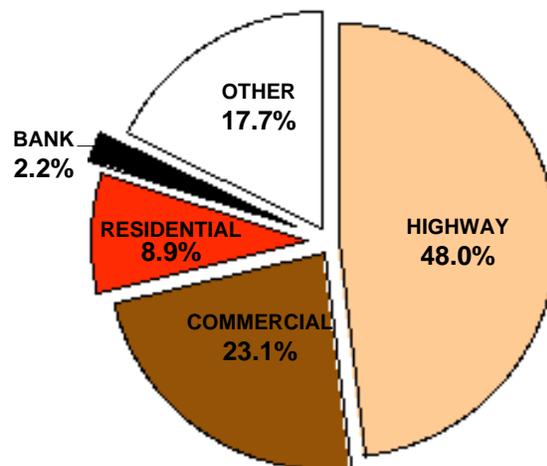
Since peaking in 1992, the rate of reported robbery crimes has decreased for five consecutive years.

ROBBERY CRIMES, 1992-1997
Rate per 100,000 Population



Source: Table 2.

ROBBERY CRIMES, 1997
By Location

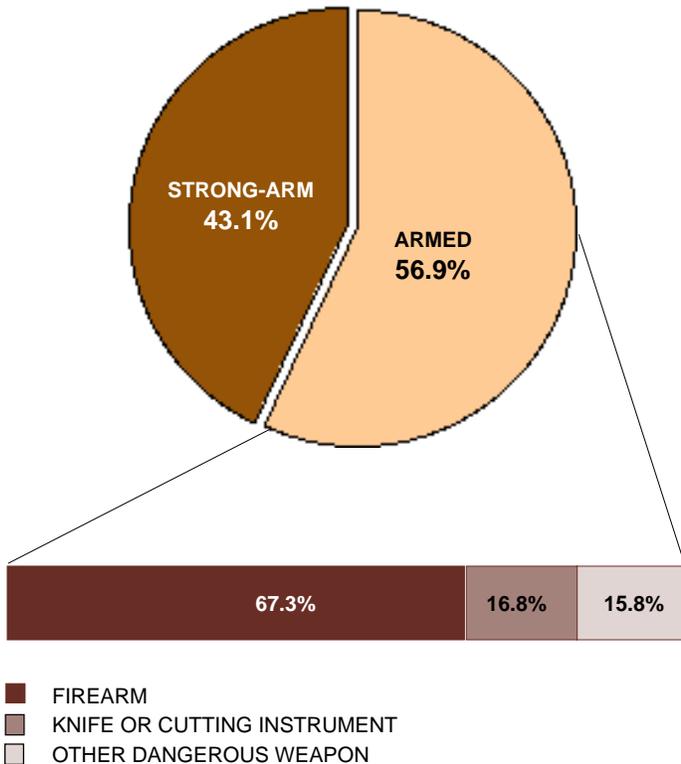


Source: Table 6.

Note: Percents may not add to 100.0 because of independent rounding.

Robbery (continued)

ROBBERY CRIMES, 1997
By Type of Robbery and Type of Weapon if Armed



Source: Table 6.

In 1997,

Of all robberies reported:

- Armed robbery accounted for 56.9 percent (46,328).
- Strong-arm robbery accounted for 43.1 percent (35,085).

Of the 46,328 armed robberies reported:

- Firearms were involved in 67.3 percent (31,193).
- Knives or cutting instruments were involved in 16.8 percent (7,795).
- Other dangerous weapons were involved in 15.8 percent (7,340).

In 1997, over half of all robberies involved the use of a weapon. Six out of ten times that weapon was a firearm.

Aggravated Assault

Aggravated Assault - The unlawful attack or attempted attack by one person upon another for the purpose of inflicting severe or aggravated bodily injury. This type of assault is usually accompanied by the use of a weapon or by means likely to produce death or great bodily harm.

Comparing 1992 to 1997:

- The rate of reported aggravated assaults decreased 21.7 percent.

From 1996 to 1997:

- The aggravated assault rate decreased 4.2 percent.

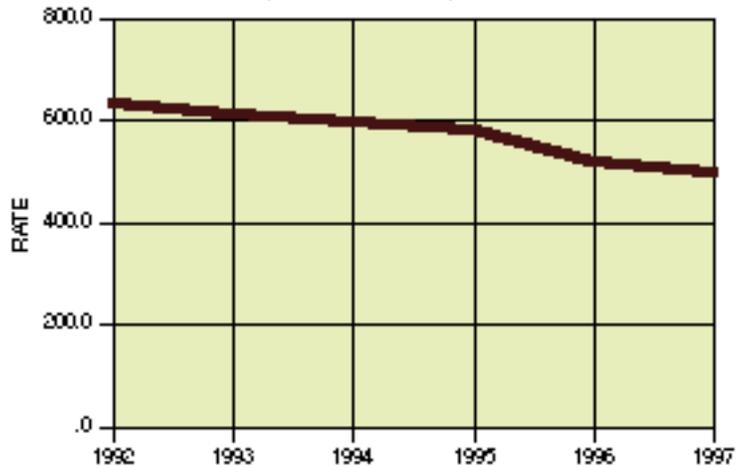
In 1997,

Of 163,235 aggravated assaults reported:

- Firearms were involved in 15.8 percent (25,812).
- Knives or cutting instruments were involved in 12.7 percent (20,771).
- Other dangerous weapons were involved in 31.2 percent (50,934).
- Personal weapons were involved in 40.3 percent (65,718).

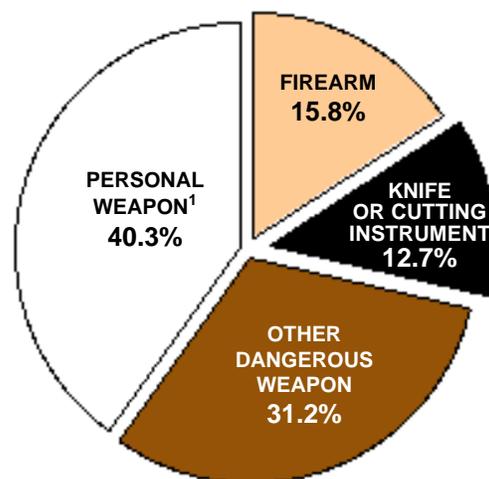
Since peaking in 1992, the rate of reported aggravated assault crimes has decreased for five consecutive years.

AGGRAVATED ASSAULT CRIMES, 1992-1997
Rate per 100,000 Population



Source: Table 2.

AGGRAVATED ASSAULT CRIMES, 1997
By Type of Weapon Used



Source: Table 7.

¹Hands, feet, etc.

Property Crimes

Property Crimes - burglary and motor vehicle theft.

Comparing 1992 to 1997:

- The rate of reported property crime decreased 33.0 percent.

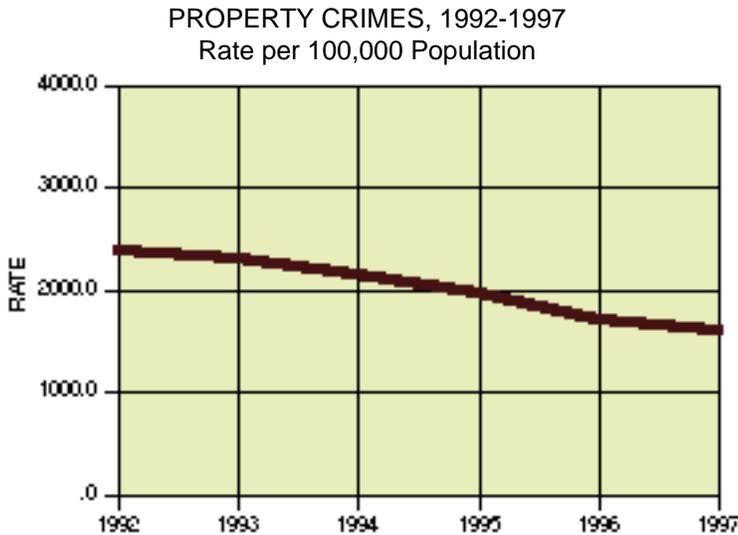
From 1996 to 1997:

- The property crime rate decreased 6.5 percent.

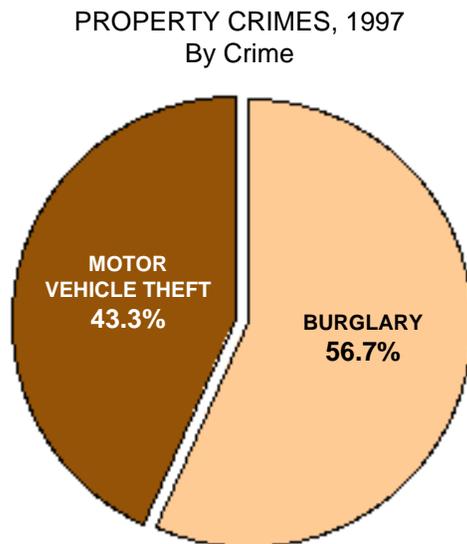
In 1997,

Of 527,422 property crimes reported:

- Burglary accounted for 56.7 percent (298,882).
- Motor vehicle theft accounted for 43.3 percent (228,540).



Source: Table 2.



Source: Table 3.

The property crime rate decreased for the sixth consecutive year (see Table 1).

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