

http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/usrv98.pdf - Microsoft Internet Explorer

File Edit Go To Favorites Help

Back

Forward

Home

Search

Favorites

Links

Sign

Y!oo

Address http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/usrv98.pdf

Save a Copy

Search

Select

47%

Sign

Y!oo

Pages

Comments

Abstracts

U.S. Department of Justice
Bureau of Justice Statistics
Special Report
National Crime Victimization Survey

Urban, Suburban, and Rural
Victimization, 1993-98

John E. Eckert, Ph.D.
L.S. Brinkley

Victims who reside in urban, suburban, and rural areas are exposed to different levels of victimization. This report examines the extent of victimization by residence type, and compares the rates of victimization for urban, suburban, and rural areas. The report also examines the extent of victimization by residence type, and compares the rates of victimization for urban, suburban, and rural areas.

Highlights

- Urban and suburban areas have higher rates of victimization than rural areas.
- Urban areas have the highest rates of victimization, followed by suburban areas, and then rural areas.
- Urban areas have the highest rates of victimization, followed by suburban areas, and then rural areas.

Done

Unknown Zone



Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report

National Crime Victimization Survey

October 2000, NCJ 182031

Urban, Suburban, and Rural Victimization, 1993-98

Detis T. Duhart, Ph.D.
BJS Statistician

Violent and property crime victimization disproportionately affected urban residents during 1998. Urbanites accounted for 29% of the U.S. population and sustained 38% (12 million) of all violent and property crime victimizations.

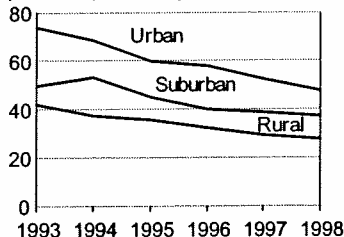
In comparison, the percentages of suburban and rural residents who were victims of crime were lower than their percentages of the population. Fifty-one percent of the U.S. population were suburban residents who experienced 47% (15 million) of all violent and property victimizations. Rural residents accounted for 20% of the U.S. population but sustained 15% (5 million) of all violent and property crime victimizations, according to National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) data.

During 1998 urban residents experienced overall violent crime, rape and sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, and simple assault, and personal theft at higher rates than suburban or rural residents. Urban households also sustained overall property crime, burglary, motor vehicle theft, and theft at higher rates than suburban or rural households.

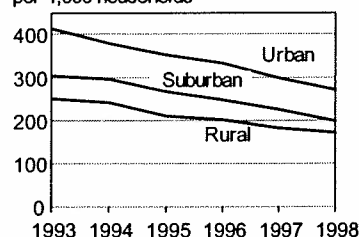
Highlights

Violent and property crimes in urban, suburban, and rural areas declined between 1993 and 1998

Rate of violent victimizations
per 1,000 persons age 12 or older



Rate of property victimizations
per 1,000 households



- From 1993 to 1998 the trends in violent and property crime for urban and suburban areas were similar. For both urban and suburban areas, violent and property crime trends during this period decreased at a greater rate than in rural areas.
- The average annual 1993-98 violent crime rate in urban areas was about 74% higher than the rural rate and 37% higher than the suburban rate.
- Urban males experienced violent victimizations at rates 64% higher than the average combined suburban and rural male rate and 47% higher than urban females.
- Although most violent crimes in urban (60%), suburban (68%), and rural (70%) areas were committed without a weapon, firearm usage in the commission of a violent crime

was higher in urban areas when compared to suburban or rural areas (12% urban versus 9% suburban and 8% rural).

- Between 1993 and 1998, 19 in 20 suburban and rural households owned motor vehicles; however, in suburban households the theft of motor vehicles (13 per 1,000 households) was twice the rural rate (6 per 1,000 households) during this period.
- Property crimes were generally completed at higher rates against urban households than against suburban or rural households.
- Urban violent crime victims were more likely than suburban or rural crime victims to be victimized by a stranger (respectively, 53%, 47%, and 34% of violent crime victims).

Data and measurement

This report presents findings based on NCVS data collected by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS). The NCVS gathers data about crimes from an ongoing, nationally representative sample of households in the United States. NCVS data include information about crime victims (age, gender, race, ethnicity, marital status, income, and educational level), criminal offenders (gender, race, approximate age, and victim-offender relationship), and the nature of the crime (time and place of occurrence, use of weapons, nature of injury, and victims' reaction to attack). Homicide data are collected by the FBI, under the Supplementary Homicide Reports (SHR) of the Uniform Crime Reporting Program (UCR).

Geographic areas in this report are based on Metropolitan Areas (MA's). The U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) classifies areas into three segments based on their relationship to an MA: central city, outside central city, and nonmetropolitan area. These classification categories are labeled in this report as urban, suburban, and rural, respectively.¹

Urban, suburban, and rural victimization, 1998

Victimization theorists and practitioners argue that victimization rates are related to locality of residence. The results of these analyses are consistent with previous studies that examined victimizations by locality of occurrence (table 1). Urban areas generally experienced criminal victimizations at rates higher than suburban or rural areas in 1998.

Violent crimes

Urban residents experienced overall violent crime at a higher rate than suburban or rural residents during 1998. Violent victimization rates for urbanites, suburbanites, and rural residents were 48, 37, and 28 per 1,000 persons, respectively. Similar

Table 1. Urban, suburban, and rural victimization rates, by crime category, 1998

	Number of victimizations per 1,000 persons or households		
	Urban	Suburban	Rural
Violent crimes	47.6	37.2	27.8
Rape and sexual assault	1.8	1.4	1.3
Robbery	6.2	3.2	2.3
Aggravated assault	10.2	7.2	4.9
Simple assault	29.3	25.4	19.3
Personal theft	2.0	1.0	0.3*
Property crimes	271.4	199.3	173.1
Household burglary	47.4	31.0	36.6
Motor vehicle theft	16.4	9.7	3.6
Theft	207.6	158.6	132.9

Note: The 1998 urban 12 or older population was 65,513,700, suburban 112,589,800, and rural 44,528,200. The 1998 total number of urban households was 32,546,700, suburban 52,545,400, and rural 20,757,300. Violent crime and personal theft rates are per 1,000 persons; property crime rates are per 1,000 households.

*Based on 10 or fewer sample cases.

results were found for all categories of violent crime (rape and sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, and simple assault) with two exceptions. Urban residents' simple assault rate was slightly higher than suburban residents' rate, and rape and sexual assault rates were similar across all areas during 1998. Urban, suburban, and rural residents' simple assault rates were almost triple the rates of any other violent crime (figure 1).

Personal thefts

Urbanites were victims of personal theft at a significantly higher rate than suburbanites. The urban personal theft rate was twice the rate experienced by suburban residents (2 versus 1 per 1,000 residents).

Property crimes

During 1998 urban households were characterized by a higher overall property crime rate than were suburban or rural households. For example, urban households' property crime rate was 36% higher than suburban households and 57% higher than rural households (271 urban, 199 suburban, and 173 rural property crimes per 1,000 households, respectively). In addition, urban households experienced burglary, motor vehicle theft, and theft at higher rates than households in other areas. Theft rates were higher than burglary or motor vehicle theft rates in all areas (figure 2).

Violent victimization in urban, suburban, and rural areas, 1998

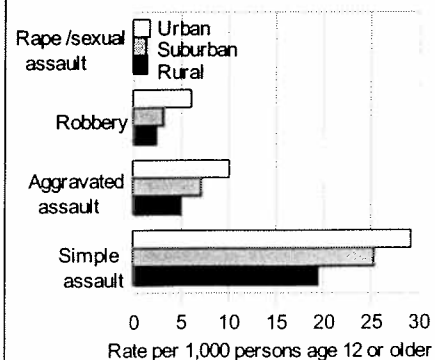


Figure 1

Property victimization in urban, suburban, and rural areas, 1998

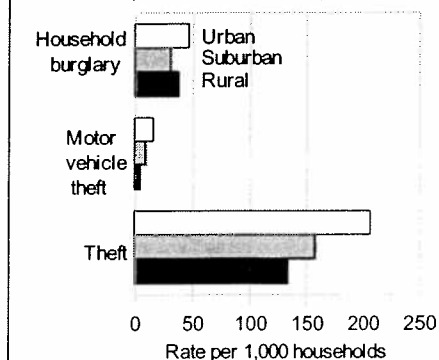


Figure 2

¹For more information about MA's, visit <http://www.census.gov/population/www/estimates/metroarea.html>.

Trends in urban, suburban, and rural victimization, 1993-98

Victimization rates are declining. Violent crime, personal theft, and property crime rates fell between 1993 and 1998. The trends in violent and property crime for urban and suburban areas were similar, decreasing at a greater rate than in rural areas (see appendix table 1 for populations).

Violent crimes

Violent victimization rates fell for residents in urban, suburban, and rural areas between 1993 and 1998 (figure 3). There were 74 urban violent victimizations (per 1,000 urbanites) in 1993 compared to 48 in 1998 — a 36% decrease. Suburbanites experienced violent crime victimization at a rate about 25% lower in 1998 than in 1993 (37 compared to 50 per 1,000 suburbanites). During the same period, rural victimization rates fell significantly (34%) from 42 to 28 per 1,000 rural residents. The percent

decrease in violent crime victimization between 1993 and 1998 for urban residents was higher than that experienced in suburban and rural areas.

In all types of localities, aggravated and simple assault rates were lower in 1998 than they were in 1993 (table 2). Urban and rural residents experienced rape and sexual assault at significantly lower rates; suburban residents at somewhat lower rates. Urban and suburban robbery rates fell between 1993 and 1998, while rural robbery rates remained similar.

Homicide

From 1976 to 1998 changes in homicide trends were driven by changes in the number of homicides in large American cities (defined as cities with populations of 100,000 or more). Over half of the homicides during this period occurred in large cities; almost a quarter of the homicides occurred in cities with a population of more than 1 million (figure 4). Small cities are

Property victimizations in urban, suburban, and rural areas, 1993-98

Rate per 1,000 households

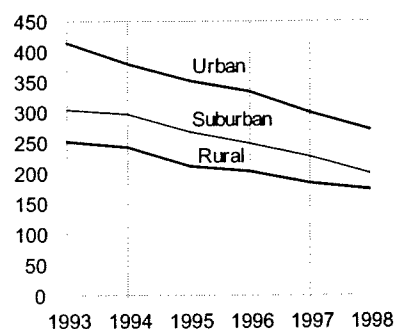


Figure 6

defined as those with a population of less than 100,000.

Personal thefts

Urban and suburban personal theft (pocket picking or purse snatching) rates declined from 1993 to 1998 (figure 5). In 1993 urbanites

Table 2. Trend in urban, suburban, and rural victimization rate, by violent crime, 1993-98

Year	Rate per 1,000 persons age 12 or older											
	Rape and sexual assault			Robbery			Aggravated assault			Simple assault		
	Urban	Suburban	Rural	Urban	Suburban	Rural	Urban	Suburban	Rural	Urban	Suburban	Rural
1993	3.6	2.0	2.4	11.0	5.2	3.1	16.0	11.7	10.6	43.1	30.9	26.1
1994	2.8	1.9	1.8	10.8	5.2	2.4	16.2	11.6	8.0	38.6	34.6	25.2
1995	2.1	1.7	1.1	10.0	4.0	2.5	12.1	8.6	6.6	35.6	30.8	25.5
1996	2.0	1.4	1.1	9.8	3.7	2.6	13.0	8.3	7.0	33.2	26.7	21.7
1997	2.1	1.4	1.1	7.5	3.4	2.1	12.8	7.1	7.1	30.2	26.9	19.2
1998	1.8	1.4	1.3	6.2	3.2	2.3	10.2	7.2	4.9	29.3	25.4	19.3

Note: See Appendix table 1.

Violent victimizations in urban, suburban, and rural areas, 1993-98

Rate per 1,000 persons age 12 or older

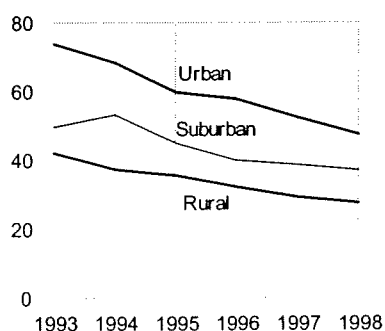


Figure 3

Homicides in urban, suburban, and rural areas, 1976-98

Number of homicides

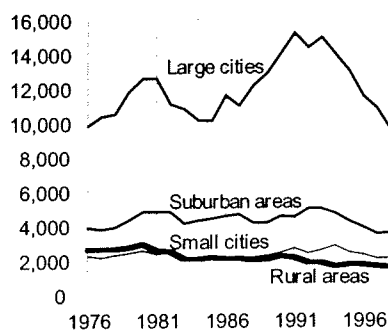


Figure 4

Personal theft victimizations in urban, suburban, and rural areas, 1993-98

Rate per 1,000 persons age 12 or older

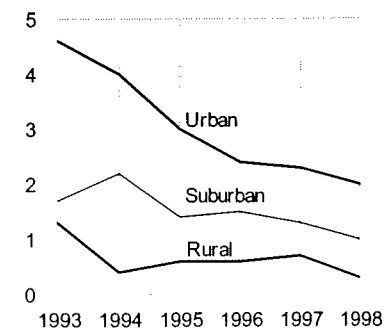


Figure 5

Table 3. Trend in urban, suburban, and rural victimization rate, by property crime, 1993-98

Year	Rate per 1,000 households					
	Burglary		Motor vehicle theft			Theft
	Urban	Suburban	Rural	Urban	Suburban	Rural
1993	84.8	47.3	55.3	33.7	16.7	6.4
1994	71.1	47.0	49.6	28.8	14.9	7.2
1995	60.8	39.1	48.6	25.3	14.5	6.8
1996	63.8	40.5	42.8	19.6	12.8	4.6
1997	55.3	37.7	43.0	19.7	12.0	6.6
1998	47.4	31.0	36.6	16.4	9.7	3.6
	295.5	240.4	190.5	280.1	235.4	185.8
	266.3	214.6	156.1	250.5	195.9	155.4
	224.9	177.0	133.9	207.6	158.6	132.9

Note: See Appendix table 1.

experienced more than twice the rate of personal theft than they experienced in 1998 (5 versus 2 personal thefts per 1,000 urbanites). For suburbanites, personal theft rates fell 41% between 1993 and 1998 (2 versus 1 personal theft per 1,000 suburbanites).

Property crimes

On average, urban, suburban, and rural property crime rates were 33% lower in 1998 than they were in 1993

(figure 6). Specifically, urban rates fell 34%, suburban rates 35%, and rural rates 31%.

For each category of property crime, burglary, motor vehicle theft, and theft, rates were lower in 1998 than in 1993, regardless of type of locality considered (table 3). Urban household rates of burglary and motor vehicle theft declined more than suburban or rural household rates.

Average annual urban, suburban, and rural victimization, 1993-98

Violent crime

Individuals living in urban areas were victims of overall violent crime, rape and sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, and simple assault at rates significantly higher than for those living in suburban or rural areas (table 4). The average annual overall violent crime rate in urban areas was about 74% higher than the average rural rate and 37% higher than the average suburban rate.

In all localities rates for robbery, aggravated assault, and simple assault in which no injuries occurred were higher than rates for these same offenses resulting in injuries.

Personal theft

On average, urban residents experienced personal theft at higher rates than suburban or rural residents (3 versus 2 and 1 per 1,000, respectively). Purse snatchings and pocket pickings were completed at a rate of 3 per 1,000 urban residents, twice the suburban rate, and 4 times the rural rate.

Property crime

Urban households experienced overall property crime at rates significantly higher than those for other households. Burglaries were sustained among urban households at rates higher than rural households (46 per 1,000), which in turn experienced burglaries at rates higher than suburban households (40 per 1,000). Urban households also experienced thefts at higher rates than suburban households.

A higher percentage of suburban and rural households owned motor vehicles than did urban households (96%, 95%, and 87%, respectively). The percentage of completed motor vehicle thefts was highest among rural households (79% in rural areas, 66% in urban areas, and 69% in suburban areas).

Demographics characteristics of violent crime victims

Certain population groups — especially males, blacks, persons in low income

Table 4. Average annual victimization rate, by type of crime and locality of residence, 1993-98

	Average annual rate of victimization per 1,000 persons or households		
	Urban	Suburban	Rural
Personal victimization	62.9	45.3	35.0
Violent crimes	59.8	43.8	34.3
Rape and sexual assault	2.4	1.6	1.5
Rape	0.8	0.5	0.7
Attempted rape	0.7	0.4	0.4
Sexual assault	0.8	0.6	0.4
Robbery	9.2	4.1	2.5
With injury	2.8	1.1	0.8
Without injury	6.4	2.9	1.7
Aggravated assault	13.4	9.0	7.4
With injury	4.0	2.4	2.3
Without injury	9.3	6.6	5.1
Simple assault	34.9	29.1	22.9
With injury	7.4	6.1	5.4
Without injury	27.5	23.0	17.6
Personal theft	3.0	1.5	0.7
Purse snatch and pocket picking	2.9	1.4	0.6
Attempted purse snatch	0.2	0.1	0.0*
Property crimes	341.2	255.8	211.9
Household burglary	63.7	40.2	46.2
Completed forced entry	22.1	12.0	12.8
No forced entry	29.9	21.5	27.0
Attempted forced entry	11.7	6.7	6.4
Motor vehicle theft	23.8	13.3	5.9
Completed	15.7	9.1	4.7
Attempted	8.1	4.2	1.2
Theft	253.7	202.3	159.8
Completed <\$50	87.5	77.9	69.3
\$50 to \$249	88.4	66.0	51.4
\$250 or above	50.6	39.1	25.7
Amount not available	14.8	11.5	8.5
Attempted theft	12.5	7.8	5.0

Note: See Appendix table 1.

*Based on 10 or fewer sample cases.

categories, the young, persons who never married, and divorced or separated persons — experience higher rates of victimization than others. The same groups were also most susceptible to victimization in urban, suburban, and rural areas (table 5).

Gender

Urban males and females were violently victimized at rates higher than males and females in other areas. Across all areas of interest, urban male violent victimization rates were the highest. Stated differently, urban males experienced violent victimizations at a rate 87% higher than rural males and 47% higher than urban females.

Race

Violent crimes were committed against blacks at rates higher than whites in urban localities. Black urbanites experienced 68 violent victimizations (per 1,000) while urban whites were victimized at a rate of 59 (per 1,000). Suburban blacks experienced violent crime at a rate marginally higher than white suburbanites. Rural residents of other races were twice as likely to be victims of violent crime as were black or white rural residents (68 victimizations compared to 31 and 34 per 1,000 persons, respectively).²

Ethnicity

In all areas, violent crime victimization rates among Hispanics were statistically similar. Non-Hispanics in urban areas experienced violent crime at a higher rate than Hispanics (61 versus 52 per 1,000, respectively), while suburban and rural Hispanics sustained violence at a higher rate than respective non-Hispanic residents.

Annual household income

In general regardless of the type of area considered, as annual household income increased, violent victimization

rates decreased. Persons with household incomes of less than \$7,500 in all areas experienced a violent victimization at more than twice the rate of persons with household incomes of \$75,000 or more. Urban residents in the highest income category were victims of violent crime more than similar suburban or rural residents. Urban residents in the lowest income category were violently victimized at a rate slightly higher than low-income suburbanites and 41% higher than low-income rural residents.

Age

Residents younger than 20 years old in all areas experienced violent crime more than all other age groups, while residents age 65 or over experienced violent crime the least of all age groups. In each age group, urbanites were victims of violent crime at rates higher than suburban or rural residents.

Marital status

In urban and suburban areas, persons who had never married were violently victimized more than those in any other category of marital status. Urban residents, whether never married, married, or widowed, were victimized at higher rates than similar residents in suburban or rural areas. Divorced or separated urbanites were violent crime victims at a rate somewhat higher than similar suburbanites and at a rate higher than rural residents.

Demographic characteristics of victims of rape and sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, and simple assault

In general, regardless of the characteristics, urban residents were victims of all types of violent crimes at higher rates than suburban or rural residents (table 6).

Table 5. Average annual violent and property crime victimization rate, by locality of residence and victim demographics, 1993-98

	Violent crime rate per 1,000 persons age 12 and older			Property crime rate per 1,000 households		
	Urban	Suburban	Rural	Urban	Suburban	Rural
Gender						
Male	71.9	51.3	38.4	354.7	256.0	213.0
Female	48.9	36.7	30.4	325.1	255.3	210.0
Race						
Black	68.0	48.5	31.1	348.6	295.5	200.0
White	59.1	43.8	34.0	341.7	252.4	210.6
Others	35.7	34.8	68.3	295.4	253.9	342.8
Ethnicity						
Hispanic	51.7	49.7	46.5	383.4	337.8	271.6
Non-Hispanic	60.9	43.1	33.7	335.2	249.9	209.6
Household income						
Less than \$7,500	89.9	80.4	63.9	313.9	279.8	239.3
\$7,500-\$14,999	77.2	54.1	35.2	337.7	239.5	210.7
\$15,000-\$24,999	62.6	48.3	33.0	365.8	250.5	201.3
\$25,000-\$34,999	59.6	47.5	35.1	375.4	257.2	224.7
\$35,000-\$49,999	56.6	43.3	30.0	378.3	272.6	204.9
\$50,000-\$74,999	49.9	41.7	30.6	381.0	284.5	245.4
\$75,000 or more	42.8	35.2	22.8	375.3	291.9	259.1
Age						
12-19	129.2	108.9	80.4	693.2	648.8	583.3
20-34	77.4	59.9	53.5	417.9	312.8	277.6
35-49	51.1	33.9	27.3	402.8	323.8	281.6
50-64	21.7	15.6	12.1	285.7	218.6	170.9
65 or over	8.0	4.0	2.8	149.7	95.4	94.3
Marital status						
Never married	96.6	84.6	68.2	371.6	287.4	260.1
Married	29.0	22.3	16.3	350.7	261.8	207.5
Widowed	13.5	7.2	6.3	174.2	116.8	111.4
Divorced or separated	78.7	70.8	67.5	380.8	300.2	284.8

Note: See Appendix table 1.

²For information about urban, suburban, and rural victimizations among American Indians, see *American Indians and Crime*, NCJ 173386, February 1999.

Gender

Urban females were raped or sexually assaulted at rates 53% higher than suburban or rural females. Males were robbed and assaulted more than females in all localities of interest. The rate of aggravated assault against urban males was about twice that of urban females.

Race

Blacks were robbed and experienced aggravated assault more than whites and persons of other races in urban and suburban areas. In rural areas robbery rates were similar for all races; however, slightly more aggravated assaults occurred among rural blacks than among rural whites. White rural residents were simple assault victims more often than blacks in similar areas. Rural residents of other races were simple assault victims more than white or black rural residents.

Annual household income

Generally, in all localities, residents with low household incomes experienced all categories of violent crime more than residents with high household incomes. For all levels of income, urban residents were robbed more than other residents. Urban and suburban residents in the lowest and highest income categories were aggravated assault victims at similar rates. Except for households with incomes between \$7,500-\$24,999 and \$35,000-\$49,999, the simple assault rate among urban residents was similar to suburbanites and higher than rural residents.

Age

In general, in all areas, younger residents were victims of all categories of violent crime at higher rates than older residents. Rape and sexual assault rates among 20-49 year old

urbanites were marginally higher than suburbanites' rates in the same age category. Except for residents age 65 or older, urban residents were robbed and experienced aggravated assaults more than suburban or rural residents. Urban residents younger than age 20 experienced simple assault at rates similar to suburban residents of the same ages, and at higher rates than all other residents, regardless of age.

Marital status

In all types of localities, residents who never married or were divorced or separated were raped and sexually assaulted, robbed, and assaulted more than people who were married or widowed. Urban robbery rates were higher than suburban or rural rates for all marital categories except among widowed residents. Aggravated assault rates were higher in urban areas for never married and married residents. Widowed and divorced or

Table 6. Average annual rape and sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, and simple assault victimization rate, by locality of residence and victim demographics, 1993-98

Characteristic of victim	Rate per 1,000 females age 12 or older			Rate per 1,000 persons age 12 or older								
	Rape and sexual assault			Robbery			Aggravated assault			Simple assault		
	Urban	Suburban	Rural	Urban	Suburban	Rural	Urban	Suburban	Rural	Urban	Suburban	Rural
Gender												
Male	--	--	--	13.0	5.2	3.2	18.0	12.0	9.7	40.7	33.7	25.3
Female	4.3	2.8	2.7	5.7	3.0	1.9	9.2	6.1	5.3	29.7	24.7	20.6
Race												
Black	4.6	2.3	3.6	14.5	7.6	2.7	17.0	12.1	9.7	33.8	27.3	16.7
White	4.3	2.8	2.6	7.5	3.7	2.5	12.6	8.8	7.0	36.5	29.6	23.0
Others	2.4*	2.7	2.9*	9.5	4.3	4.2	8.0	8.2	15.7	16.7	20.3	46.8
Household income												
Less than \$7,500	9.0	6.4	6.9	16.0	8.1	4.8	20.8	21.3	15.7	47.3	46.5	39.0
\$7,500-\$14,999	5.4	4.0	2.8	13.5	6.9	2.2	17.1	11.9	8.4	43.2	32.8	23.0
\$15,000-\$24,999	5.0	3.3	2.4	9.4	4.6	2.9	14.7	11.8	6.9	35.8	29.9	21.8
\$25,000-\$34,999	4.2	2.9	3.1	7.9	4.3	3.3	13.4	8.7	6.3	36.0	32.8	23.9
\$35,000-\$49,999	3.0	2.4	1.6*	6.5	3.8	1.6	12.8	8.3	6.8	35.7	29.9	20.8
\$50,000-\$74,999	1.8	2.0	1.1*	6.4	3.0	1.5	11.3	8.0	5.6	31.4	29.6	22.9
\$75,000 or more	3.0	1.8	1.0*	6.3	2.6	2.2*	7.1	6.2	3.7	27.8	25.3	16.1
Age												
12-19	11.6	7.3	6.6	17.8	9.2	6.0	30.6	21.1	14.3	74.5	74.8	56.9
20-34	6.0	4.5	5.2	11.6	5.6	3.8	17.6	13.1	13.1	45.0	38.5	33.7
35-49	3.2	2.0	2.2	8.6	3.2	1.7	10.4	7.0	5.9	30.4	22.6	18.5
50-64	0.4*	0.4*	0.0	3.7	1.7	1.4	4.8	3.0	3.0	13.0	10.7	7.7
65 or over	0.4*	0.0*	0.0	2.3	0.8	0.2*	1.2	0.9	0.8	4.3	2.3	1.7
Marital status												
Never married	7.9	6.3	6.5	15.2	7.9	5.6	21.7	17.1	13.5	55.6	56.3	45.9
Married	1.0	0.7	0.8	3.7	1.9	0.8	6.5	4.8	4.0	18.3	15.2	11.1
Widowed	0.7*	0.5*	0.0	2.8	1.4	0.9*	2.3	1.6	1.5*	7.8	3.8	3.9*
Divorced or separated	7.1	6.5	6.9	13.3	6.9	5.6	17.5	14.6	15.1	43.5	45.1	43.0

Note: See Appendix table 1.

--Male rate not reported due to small number of cases.

*Based on 10 or fewer sample cases.

separated residents aggravated assault rates did not vary significantly by location.

Demographic characteristics of property crime victims

Gender

Urban households headed by males experienced property crime at a rate about 9% higher than that found among urban households headed by females (table 5). Urban households with male and female heads were victimized at rates significantly higher than equivalent suburban and rural households.

Race

Black and white households experienced property victimization at similar rates whether living in urban or rural areas. Both black and white urban households were victims of property crime at significantly higher rates than black and white suburban and rural

households. In suburban areas, blacks experienced property crimes at rates higher than whites. Rural households headed by persons of other races were victims of property crime at higher rates than black or white rural households (343, 200, and 211 per 1,000 households, respectively).

Ethnicity

Urban households headed by Hispanic or non-Hispanic persons experienced property crime at rates higher than similar suburban or rural households. Regardless of locality, Hispanics were victims of property crime more than non-Hispanics.

Annual household income

Urban households at all income levels experienced property crime at higher rates, followed by suburban and rural households. For example, the property crime rate for urban households with annual incomes of \$25,000-\$34,999 was 375 crimes per 1,000 households. Suburban and rural households at this

income level had property crime rates of 257 and 225 crimes per 1,000 households, respectively.

Age of household head

Generally, younger households in all areas of residence were more likely to experience property crimes than households headed by older residents. Urban households headed by persons under age 20 experienced property crimes at more than twice the rate sustained by households headed by persons ages 50-64. Urban households headed by persons age 20 or over were victims of property crime at significantly higher rates than similar suburban or rural households.

Marital status of household head

Households headed by divorced or separated persons and households headed by persons who never married were victims of property crime at higher rates than households of married or widowed persons regardless of the

Table 7. Average annual burglary, motor vehicle theft, and theft victimization rate, by locality of residence and victim demographics, 1993-98

Characteristics of head of household	Rate per 1,000 households								
	Burglary			Motor vehicle theft			Theft		
	Urban	Suburban	Rural	Urban	Suburban	Rural	Urban	Suburban	Rural
Gender									
Male	60.5	36.9	41.7	26.3	13.0	6.2	267.9	206.2	165.1
Female	67.5	46.0	53.9	20.9	13.9	5.4	236.8	195.4	150.7
Race									
Black	76.9	57.4	50.2	30.5	25.1	6.8	241.2	213.0	143.0
White	60.8	38.8	45.3	21.4	12.2	5.7	259.5	201.4	159.6
Others	45.1	37.6	74.3	30.6	16.9	14.9	219.7	199.4	253.5
Household income									
Less than \$7,500	88.8	71.7	73.9	16.9	11.9	5.5	208.2	196.2	159.9
\$7,500-\$14,999	75.4	51.3	56.1	21.9	12.2	4.4	240.5	176.0	150.2
\$15,000-\$24,999	66.0	45.6	41.9	26.4	12.9	6.2	273.4	192.0	153.2
\$25,000-\$34,999	63.0	37.9	39.9	26.6	15.4	7.9	285.7	203.9	176.8
\$35,000-\$49,999	57.3	39.2	35.1	27.4	13.4	6.3	293.6	220.0	163.5
\$50,000-\$74,999	51.8	33.3	32.9	24.6	14.3	3.8	304.7	236.9	208.6
\$75,000 or more	53.3	33.2	46.7	25.0	13.9	10.2	296.9	244.9	202.2
Age									
12-19	149.3	164.7	145.0	27.6	29.1	12.4*	516.3	455.0	425.9
20-34	74.6	48.6	65.8	31.0	18.3	9.1	312.2	245.8	202.6
35-49	71.2	47.2	50.2	26.7	15.5	8.2	304.8	261.1	223.2
50-64	54.7	33.9	38.3	20.1	12.6	4.3	210.9	172.0	128.3
65 or over	36.7	20.8	27.9	11.2	3.8	1.7	101.8	70.8	64.7
Marital status									
Never married	72.3	52.2	64.8	23.8	16.7	6.6	275.5	218.5	188.7
Married	52.3	34.0	37.5	26.4	13.2	6.0	271.9	214.6	164.0
Widowed	48.5	27.2	36.2	11.6	4.6	1.6	114.1	85.0	73.5
Divorced or separated	86.3	62.3	74.9	25.7	16.7	8.7	268.7	221.1	201.2

Note: See Appendix table 1.

*Based on 10 or fewer sample cases.

locality of residence. Urban households were the victims of property crime at higher rates when compared to suburban or rural households for all categories of marital status.

Demographic characteristics of burglary, motor vehicle theft, and theft victims

In general, households in urban areas experienced overall property crime, burglary, motor vehicle theft, and theft, at rates significantly higher than suburban or rural households.

Gender

Female-headed households were burglarized more than male-headed households in all areas of residence (table 7). The burglary rates for rural male- and female-headed households were higher than suburban male- and female-headed household rates (42 rural males and 54 rural females per 1,000 households compared to 37 suburban males and 46 suburban females per 1,000 households). Motor vehicle theft rates were similar for male- and female-headed households in all localities except urban areas; where households headed by males were victims of motor vehicle theft more than households headed by females. Male-headed households experienced theft more than households headed by females in all areas.

Race

Black households were burglarized and sustained motor vehicle thefts at rates higher than white households in urban and suburban areas, while rural blacks and whites experienced these crimes at similar rates. Theft rates for white households were higher than black household rates in urban areas and somewhat higher in rural areas. Rural households of other races were victims of thefts at rates higher than black or white households. Rural households of other races were burglarized more than white households and slightly more than black households.

Annual household income

Households with low incomes were generally burglarized at higher rates

than households with higher annual incomes across all areas of residence. Generally, within each type of area, motor vehicle theft rates were similar for all levels of income. However, in all areas of residence, households in high-income categories were generally more likely to be the victims of thefts than households in low-income categories.

Age of household head

In all areas, households headed by younger persons were generally victims of burglary, motor vehicle theft, and theft at rates higher than older households. Except among households headed by persons between the ages of 12-19 years, urban households were the victims of burglary, motor vehicle theft, and theft more than suburban or rural households.

Marital status of household head

In all areas households with heads who never married or those who divorced or separated were burglarized at rates higher than households headed by

married or widowed persons. Never married, widowed, and divorced or separated rural households were burglarized more than similar suburban households. Motor vehicle theft and theft rates were lowest for widowed households regardless of residence location. Motor vehicle theft and theft rates for suburban households were higher than rural for all categories of marital status except for theft among widowed households.

Characteristics of victimization

Many characteristics of crime were similar across all types of locality. Location of residence had very little effect on the time of victimization, victims' reaction to the attack, type of injury sustained from the victimization, and whether offender used a weapon in the commission of the act.

Location of victimization

Most violent crimes in urban and suburban areas occurred in open areas, on the street, or on public

Table 8. Location and time of violent crime victimization in urban, suburban, and rural areas, 1993-98

	Urban		Suburban		Rural	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	22,988,720	100%	28,048,000	100%	9,517,960	100%
Location of victimization						
Victim's home	3,430,030	15%	3,877,430	14%	1,689,120	18%
Near victim's home	3,095,910	13	2,951,560	11	1,099,940	12
Friend/neighbor's home	2,012,820	9	2,485,090	9	1,142,030	12
Commercial place	2,616,740	11	3,997,600	14	1,171,460	12
Parking lot/garage	1,663,820	7	2,295,880	8	658,240	7
School	2,291,780	10	4,388,640	16	1,445,700	15
Open area, public transportation	6,057,370	26	5,311,760	19	1,356,400	14
Others	1,820,250	8	2,740,040	10	955,070	10
Time of victimization						
Daylight (6 a.m. to 6 p.m.)	11,191,410	49%	14,529,410	52%	4,889,100	51%
6 p.m. to midnight	7,652,360	33	9,025,490	32	3,079,680	32
Midnight to 6 a.m.	2,905,050	13	2,871,580	10	1,058,360	11
Unknown	1,239,900	5	1,621,510	6	490,820	5

Note: Detail may not add to total shown because of rounding.

Table 9. Victim response to violent offenders in urban, suburban, and rural areas, 1993-98

	Rate per 1,000 persons age 12 or older					
	Urban		Suburban		Rural	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	22,988,720	100%	28,048,000	100%	9,517,960	100%
Victims reaction to attack						
No threat or attack	19,943,370	87%	23,923,990	85%	8,201,580	86%
Threaten or attacked	580,210	3	660,110	2	251,200	3
Other	2,465,140	11	3,463,900	12	1,065,190	11

Note: Detail may not add to total shown because of rounding.

transportation. Between 1993 and 1998, more than a quarter (26%) of violent crime victimizations among urban residents, and about a fifth (19%) among suburban residents occurred in these areas (table 8). Rural residents were more likely to be victimized in their homes when compared to other areas where victimizations occurred. About 18% of rural victims of violent crime were victimized at their homes compared to urban (15%) or suburban (14%) victimizations.

Time of victimization

Crimes happened at similar times of the day among residents living in urban, suburban, and rural areas.

About half of the violent crime experienced by urban (49%), suburban (52%), and rural (51%) residents were committed between 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. Around 3 out of 10 violent crimes occurred between 6 p.m. and midnight.

Victims' reaction to attack

Most violent crime victims did not defend themselves or their property (no resistance, unarmed confrontation, and non-confrontational tactics) in urban (87%), suburban (85%), and rural (86%) areas (table 9). About 3% of violent crime victims in urban and rural areas compared to 2% of suburban victims defended themselves by threatening or attacking their assailant with a firearm or other weapon.

Type of injury

About 20% of violent crimes in all areas resulted in minor injury; about 5% resulted in serious injury (table 10).

Weapons used

Most violent offenders were unarmed in every type of locality (60% urban, 68% suburban, and 70% rural). Urban violent offenders were more likely than offenders elsewhere (12% urban versus 9% suburban and 8% rural) to use a firearm.

Characteristics of offender

Gender of offender

Males were perceived to be the offenders of violent crimes more often than females regardless of the area examined (table 11). Males were perceived to have committed 80% of the urban violent victimizations and 79% of suburban and rural violent crimes. Although the percentage of females perceived to have committed violent crimes in suburban and rural areas was similar (16%), the percentage of females committing violent crimes in suburban areas was significantly higher than the percentage of females committing violent crimes in urban areas (14%). The percentage of violent crime committed by females in rural areas was slightly higher than the percentage committed by females in urban areas.

Race of offender

Whites were perceived to be the assailants in violent crime more often than blacks or persons of other races in all types of localities. However, the percentage of whites in the urban, suburban, and rural populations was higher than the percentage of offenses perceived to have been committed by whites in each area. In contrast, the percentage of blacks in all localities was lower than their percentage of violent crime victimizations. For example, between 1993-98, 90% of the rural population was white and whites were perceived to have committed 72% of rural violent victimizations. Although blacks comprised 8% of the

Table 10. Injury sustained and weapon used in violent crime victimizations, by geographic locations, 1993-98

	Urban		Suburban		Rural	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	22,988,720	100%	28,048,000	100%	9,517,960	100%
Type of injury						
No injury	17,033,510	74%	21,349,820	76%	6,952,710	73%
Serious injury	1,161,350	5	1,072,470	4	452,370	5
Minor injury	4,764,550	21	5,597,920	20	2,100,820	22
Other	29,310	0	27,790	0	12,060	0
Weapon used						
No weapon	13,869,950	60%	19,196,840	68%	6,631,540	70%
Firearm	2,854,200	12	2,384,300	9	778,370	8
Knife	1,581,750	7	1,714,880	6	516,810	5
Other	4,682,820	20	4,751,990	17	1,591,250	17

Note: Detail may not add to total shown because of rounding.

Table 11. Gender, race, and age of violent crime offenders in urban, suburban, and rural areas, 1993-98

Characteristic of offender	Urban		Suburban		Rural	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	22,988,720	100%	28,048,000	100%	9,517,960	100%
Gender						
Male	18,308,240	80%	22,099,160	79%	7,535,780	79%
Female	3,167,970	14	4,366,390	16	1,538,970	16
Both	811,300	4	872,390	3	270,620	3
Unknown	701,200	3	710,060	3	172,590	2
Race						
White	10,295,540	45%	17,700,780	63%	6,899,520	72%
Black	8,415,210	37	5,723,110	20	1,481,310	16
Other	2,443,710	11	2,564,080	9	675,450	7
Mixed races	725,590	3	822,940	3	211,080	2
Unknown	1,108,680	5	1,237,080	4	250,600	3
Age						
Under 18	4,325,200	19%	6,445,690	23%	2,163,830	24%
18 or older	14,549,380	63	17,410,480	62	6,079,000	64
Mixed group	2,586,170	11	2,745,470	10	859,370	9
Unknown	1,527,970	7	1,446,360	5	415,770	4

Note: Detail may not add to total shown because of rounding.

rural population, they were perceived to have committed 16% of rural violent crimes (see appendix table 1 for total populations).

Age of offender

In all localities, almost two-thirds of the violent crime victims perceived the offender to have been age 18 or older (urban 63%, suburban 62%, and rural 64%). Only about a quarter of violent offenders in all localities was perceived to be younger than age 18. The percentage of suburban and rural crime victims who perceived their offender to be less than 18 was higher than urban victims' percentage (23% and 24% versus 19%, respectively).

Offender substance abuse

The percentage of urban and suburban violent crime offenders perceived to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs was similar (29%); the percentage of rural offenders perceived to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs while committing a violent crime (35%) was higher than that in urban or suburban areas (table 12).

Victim offender relationship

In suburban and rural areas, victims were more likely to be victimized by someone they knew than by a stranger (table 13). About 50% of suburban victims and 63% of rural victims knew their offender compared to 47% and 34% of stranger victimization in each respective area. Urban violent crime victims were more likely to be victimized by a stranger, accounting for 53% of all urban violent victimizations.

Who reports to the police

Gender

Females were more likely to report victimizations to the police than males in urban and rural areas (table 14). Suburban males and females reported to the police at similar percentages.

Race

Urban and suburban blacks reported their victimizations to the police at higher percentages than whites in similar localities. Blacks and whites living in all reported victimizations to the police at similar percentages. Residents of other races were least

likely to report being victimized to the police in suburban areas.

Ethnicity

Hispanics and non-Hispanics reported crimes at similar rates in all localities. Non-Hispanics reported more crime than Hispanics in urban and suburban areas; in rural areas both groups reported at similar percentages.

What crimes are reported to the police

In all localities robberies and aggravated assaults were the violent crimes most likely to be reported to the police (table 15). Rape and sexual assaults were the least likely to be reported in urban and suburban areas. In rural areas rape and sexual assaults and simple assaults were reported the least. Residents of all localities reported about 3 in 10 personal thefts to the police.

Victims of motor vehicle thefts reported their victimization to the police more than any other property crime. Rural residents reported household burglaries less than suburban residents and slightly less than urban residents.

Table 12. Substance abuse of violent offenders in urban, suburban, and rural areas, 1993-98

	Urban		Suburban		Rural	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	22,988,720	100%	28,048,000	100%	9,517,960	100%
Substance abuse						
Used alcohol or drugs	6,649,060	29%	8,147,600	29%	3,309,210	35%
Did not use alcohol or drugs	5,856,070	25	8,422,510	30	2,902,250	30
Unknown	10,184,520	44	11,112,470	40	3,213,390	34
Other	299,070	1	365,420	1	93,110	1

Note: Detail may not add to total shown because of rounding.

Table 13. Victim-offender relationship in urban, suburban, and rural areas, 1993-98

	Urban		Suburban		Rural	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	22,988,720	100%	28,048,000	100%	9,517,960	100%
Victim-offender relationship						
Known	9,845,430	43%	13,963,870	50%	5,977,880	63%
Stranger	12,164,850	53	13,174,530	47	3,266,430	34
Relationship unknown	483,230	2	434,140	2	142,990	2
Number of offenders unknown	495,210	2	475,460	2	130,660	1

Note: Detail may not add to total shown because of rounding.

Methodology

The National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) measures personal and household offenses, including crimes not reported to the police. The crimes measured are rape and sexual assault, robbery, aggravated and

Table 14. Urban, suburban, and rural police reporting, by victim characteristic, 1993-98

Victim characteristic	Percent of victimizations reported to the police		
	Urban	Suburban	Rural
Gender			
Male	35%	35%	35%
Female	38	37	38
Race			
Black	39%	39%	40%
White	36	36	36
Other	34	32	38
Ethnicity			
Hispanic	33%	33%	36%
Non-Hispanic	37	36	36
Other	39	33	33

Note: See Appendix table 1.

Table 15. Urban, suburban, and rural police reporting, by type of crime, 1993-98

Type of crime	Percent of crime reported to the police		
	Urban	Suburban	Rural
Violent crime			
Rape and sexual assault	29%	30%	36%
Robbery	58	54	58
Aggravated assault	54	54	57
Simple assault	37	36	39
Personal theft	35%	29%	32%
Property crime			
Household burglary	50%	52%	47%
Motor vehicle theft	78	78	78
Theft	26	28	28

Note: See Appendix table 1. Victimization rates for violent crime and personal theft are per 1,000 persons age 12 or older; property crime rates are per 1,000 households.

simple assault, personal theft (purse snatching and pocket picking), household burglary, motor vehicle theft, and theft. Information is obtained from a continuous, nationally representative sample of households in the United States.

The sample includes persons living in group quarters, such as dormitories, rooming houses, and religious group dwellings. Crew members of merchant vessels, Armed Forces personnel living in military barracks or temporary housing, and institutionalized persons, such as correctional facility inmates, and hospital or nursing home patients, were not included.

Between 1993 and 1998 approximately 293,400 households and 574,000 individuals age 12 or older were interviewed about the crimes they experienced in the previous 6 months. Yearly response rates for the NCVS data presented varied between 93% and 96% of eligible households and between 89% and 92% of eligible individuals.

Estimates for 1998 in this report are obtained about victimizations experienced in the same calendar year, called a data year. The data in the BJS Bulletin *Criminal Victimization 1998: Changes 1997-98 with Trends 1993-98* were collected during the calendar year being estimated, termed a collection year. Estimates for 1998 in this report and estimates in the Bulletin may differ somewhat because of differences in the two collection methods.

Standard error computations for NCVS estimates

Comparisons of percentages and rates in this report were tested to determine if differences were statistically significant. Differences described in the text as higher, lower, or different and changes over time characterized as having increased or decreased passed a hypothesis test at the .05 level of statistical significance (95% confidence level). That is, the tested difference in the estimates was greater than twice the standard error of that difference. For comparisons that were statistically

significant at the .10 level of statistical significance (90% confidence level), the terms somewhat different, marginally different, or slight difference are used to note the nature of the difference.

Caution is required when comparing estimates not explicitly discussed in the text. What may appear to be large differences may not test as statistically significant at the 95% or the 90% confidence level. Significance testing calculations were conducted at the Bureau of Justice Statistics using statistical programs developed specifically for the NCVS by the U.S. Bureau of the Census. These programs take into consideration many aspects of the complex NCVS sample design when calculating generalized variance estimates.

Trends in violent and property victimization

A linear trend test was used to test the change in violent and property crime estimates over time. This test allows one to examine whether, for example, the rate of violent crime victimization decreased (or increased) over time. Based on a regression with, for example, time as the independent variable and violent victimization rate as the dependent variable, the test involves computing the regression coefficient (*b*) and its corresponding standard error (*o*). The ratio of these two (*b/o*) is the test statistic *t*. If *t* is greater than 1.96, the null hypothesis is rejected. In addition, independent sample *t* tests were conducted on the adjusted yearly rates of victimizations in urban, suburban, and rural areas to

Appendix table 1. Urban, suburban, and rural populations, persons 12 or older and households, 1993-98

	Persons in the population					
	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Total	211,524,800	213,747,300	215,709,500	217,967,400	220,433,500	222,631,700
Urban	61,687,200	63,338,100	63,907,100	64,508,500	65,226,800	65,513,700
Suburban	101,431,600	101,764,100	104,864,100	109,158,700	110,750,000	112,589,800
Rural	48,406,000	48,645,100	46,938,300	44,300,200	44,456,700	44,528,200
	Households in the population					
	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Total	99,927,400	100,807,700	101,888,400	103,095,500	104,343,000	105,849,500
Urban	30,992,200	31,805,600	32,015,900	32,052,700	32,293,900	32,546,700
Suburban	46,499,500	46,670,500	48,218,000	50,476,400	51,370,100	52,545,400
Rural	22,435,700	22,331,600	21,654,400	20,566,400	20,679,000	20,757,300

determine if the decline in each area differed significantly from each other.

Calculation of rates and annual levels

Except as noted, the rates in this report are average annual rates for 1993-98. The numerator of a given number is the sum of crimes that occurred for each year from 1993 through 1998; the denominator is the sum of the annual population of persons or households for these years (or the number falling within the particular demographic group being measured). These numbers are multiplied by 1,000 to obtain the average annual rates. Average annual levels of criminal victimization are obtained by summing the number of victimizations between 1993 and 1998 and dividing by six.

This report and others from BJS are available free of charge through the Internet —

<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/>

The data from the NCVS are available from the National Archive of Criminal

Population totals used in this report are calculated from estimates derived from the NCVS (appendix table 1). Included in the population are persons age 12 or older living in the households, including group quarters such as dormitories. Population estimates do not include children less than age 12, institutionalized persons, U.S. citizens living aboard, crew members of merchant vessels, and Armed Forces personnel living in military barracks. The percentages are calculated using the method similar to the one used for average annual rates.

Homicide data

Homicide data presented in this report are collected by the FBI, under the Supplementary Homicide Reports

Justice Data, maintained by the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research at the University of Michigan, 1-800-999-0960. The archive may also be accessed through the BJS Internet site.

(SHR) of the Uniform Crime Reporting Program (UCR). The homicide data provide incident-level data on about 92% of the homicides in the United States, including the victim and offender relationship.

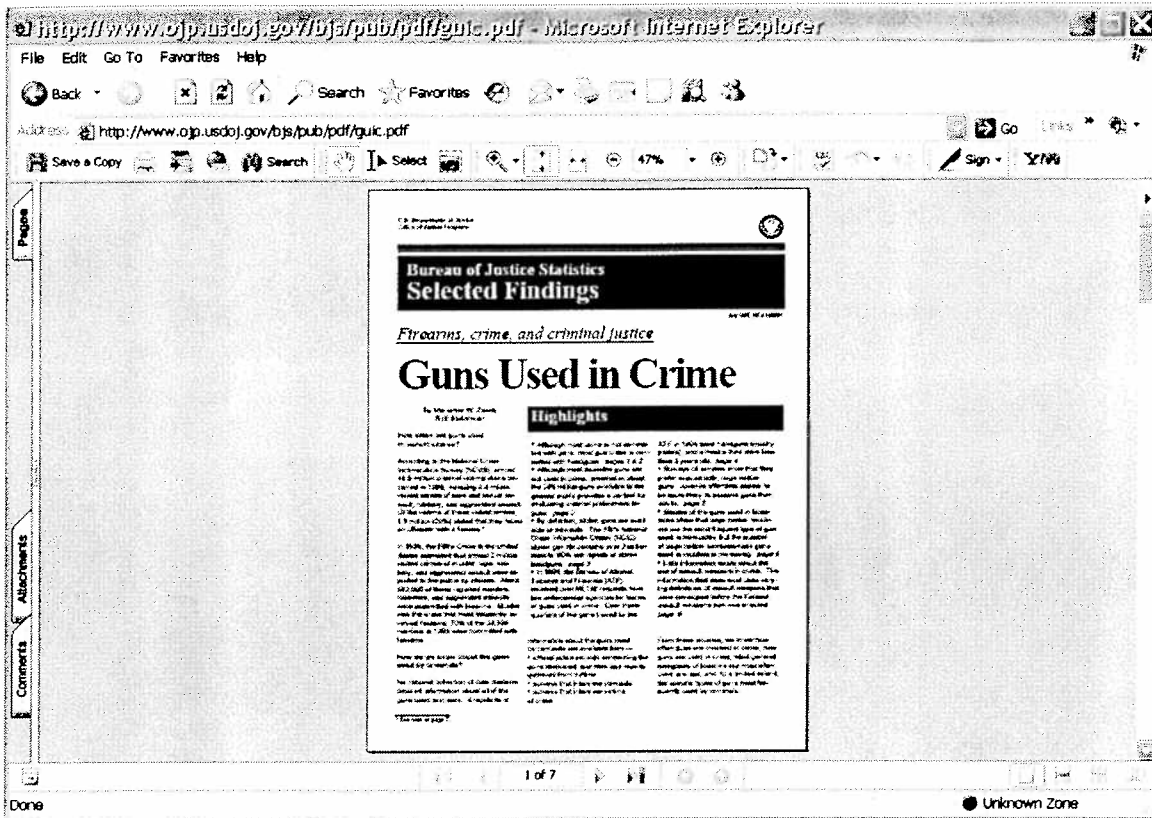
The Bureau of Justice Statistics is the statistical agency of the U.S. Department of Justice. Jan M. Chaiken, Ph.D., is director.

BJS Special Reports address a specific topic in depth from one or more datasets that cover many topics.

Detis T. Duhart, Ph.D., wrote this report under the supervision of Michael Rand. Tom Hester and Ellen Goldberg produced and edited the report, with assistance from Rhonda C. Keith.

Callie Rennison provided statistical assistance, and Cathy Maston provided verification.

October 2000, NCJ 182031



P.19



Bureau of Justice Statistics Selected Findings

July 1995, NCJ-148201

Firearms, crime, and criminal justice

Guns Used in Crime

By Marianne W. Zawitz
BJS Statistician

How often are guns used in violent crimes?

According to the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), almost 43.6 million criminal victimizations occurred in 1993, including 4.4 million violent crimes of rape and sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated assault. Of the victims of these violent crimes, 1.3 million (29%) stated that they faced an offender with a firearm.*

In 1993, the FBI's *Crime in the United States* estimated that almost 2 million violent crimes of murder, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault were reported to the police by citizens. About 582,000 of these reported murders, robberies, and aggravated assaults were committed with firearms. Murder was the crime that most frequently involved firearms; 70% of the 24,526 murders in 1993 were committed with firearms.

How do we know about the guns used by criminals?

No national collection of data contains detailed information about all of the guns used in crimes. Snapshots of

Highlights

- Although most crime is not committed with guns, most gun crime is committed with handguns. *pages 1 & 2*
- Although most available guns are not used in crime, information about the 223 million guns available to the general public provides a context for evaluating criminal preferences for guns. *page 2*
- By definition, stolen guns are available to criminals. The FBI's National Crime Information Center (NCIC) stolen gun file contains over 2 million reports; 60% are reports of stolen handguns. *page 3*
- In 1994, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) received over 85,132 requests from law enforcement agencies for traces of guns used in crime. Over three-quarters of the guns traced by the

ATF in 1994 were handguns (mostly pistols), and almost a third were less than 3 years old. *page 4*

- Surveys of inmates show that they prefer concealable, large caliber guns. Juvenile offenders appear to be more likely to possess guns than adults. *page 5*

- Studies of the guns used in homicides show that large caliber revolvers are the most frequent type of gun used in homicides, but the number of large caliber semiautomatic guns used in murders is increasing. *page 5*

- Little information exists about the use of assault weapons in crime. The information that does exist uses varying definitions of assault weapons that were developed before the Federal assault weapons ban was enacted. *page 6*

information about the guns used by criminals are available from —

- official police records concerning the guns recovered in crimes and reports gathered from victims
- surveys that interview criminals
- surveys that interview victims of crime.

From these sources, we know how often guns are involved in crime, how guns are used in crime, what general categories of firearms are most often used in crime, and, to a limited extent, the specific types of guns most frequently used by criminals.

* See note on page 7.

What are the different types of firearms?

Types

Handgun	A weapon designed to fire a small projectile from one or more barrels when held in one hand with a short stock designed to be gripped by one hand.
Revolver	A handgun that contains its ammunition in a revolving cylinder that typically holds five to nine cartridges, each within a separate chamber. Before a revolver fires, the cylinder rotates, and the next chamber is aligned with the barrel.
Pistol	Any handgun that does not contain its ammunition in a revolving cylinder. Pistols can be manually operated or semiautomatic. A semiautomatic pistol generally contains cartridges in a magazine located in the grip of the gun. When the semiautomatic pistol is fired, the spent cartridge that contained the bullet and propellant is ejected, the firing mechanism is cocked, and a new cartridge is chambered.
Derringer	A small single- or multiple-shot handgun other than a revolver or semiautomatic pistol.
Rifle	A weapon intended to be fired from the shoulder that uses the energy of the explosive in a fixed metallic cartridge to fire only a single projectile through a rifled bore for each single pull of the trigger.
Shotgun	A weapon intended to be fired from the shoulder that uses the energy of the explosive in a fixed shotgun shell to fire through a smooth bore either a number of ball shot or a single projectile for each single pull of the trigger.

Firing action

Fully automatic	Capability to fire a succession of cartridges so long as the trigger is depressed or until the ammunition supply is exhausted. Automatic weapons are considered machineguns subject to the provisions of the National Firearms Act.
Semiautomatic	An autoloading action that will fire only a single shot for each single function of a trigger.
Machinegun	Any weapon that shoots, is designed to shoot, or can be readily restored to shoot automatically more than one shot without manual reloading by a single function of the trigger.
Submachinegun	A simple fully automatic weapon that fires a pistol cartridge that is also referred to as a machine pistol.

Ammunition

Caliber	The size of the ammunition that a weapon is designed to shoot, as measured by the bullet's approximate diameter in inches in the United States and in millimeters in other countries. In some instances, ammunition is described with additional terms, such as the year of its introduction (.30/06) or the name of the designer (.30 Newton). In some countries, ammunition is also described in terms of the length of the cartridge case (7.62 x 63 mm).
Gauge	For shotguns, the number of spherical balls of pure lead, each exactly fitting the bore, that equals one pound.

Sources: ATF, *Firearms & Explosives Tracing Guidebook*, September 1993, pp. 35-40, and Paul C. Giannelli, "Ballistics Evidence: Firearms Identification," *Criminal Law Bulletin*, May-June 1991, pp. 195-215.

Handguns are most often the type of firearm used in crime

- According to the Victim Survey (NCVS), 25% of the victims of rape and sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated assault in 1993 faced an offender armed with a handgun. Of all firearm-related crime reported to the survey, 86% involved handguns.
- The FBI's Supplemental Homicide Reports show that 57% of all murders in 1993 were committed with handguns, 3% with rifles, 5% with shotguns, and 5% with firearms where the type was unknown.
- The 1991 Survey of State Prison Inmates found that violent inmates who used a weapon were more likely to use a handgun than any other weapon; 24% of all violent inmates reported that they used a handgun. Of all inmates, 13% reported carrying a handgun when they committed the offense for which they were serving time.

What types of guns do criminals prefer?

Research by Wright and Rossi in the 1980's found that most criminals prefer guns that are easily concealable, large caliber, and well made. Their studies also found that the handguns used by the felons interviewed were similar to the handguns available to the general public, except that the criminals preferred larger caliber guns.

What types of guns are available generally?

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) estimates that from 1899 to 1993 about 223 million guns became available in the United States, including over 79 million rifles, 77 million handguns, and 66 million shotguns. The number of guns seized, destroyed, lost, or not working is unknown.

The number of new handguns added to those available has exceeded the number of new shotguns and rifles in recent years. More than half of the guns added in 1993 were handguns.

Over 40 million handguns have been produced in the United States since 1973.

Since over 80% of the guns available in the United States are manufactured here, gun production is a reasonable indicator of the guns made available. From 1973 to 1993, U.S. manufacturers produced —

- 6.6 million .357 Magnum revolvers
- 6.5 million .38 Special revolvers
- 5.4 million .22 caliber pistols
- 5.3 million .22 caliber revolvers
- 4.5 million .25 caliber pistols
- 3.1 million 9 millimeter pistols
- 2.4 million .380 caliber pistols
- 2.2 million .44 Magnum revolvers
- 1.7 million .45 caliber pistols
- 1.2 million .32 caliber revolvers.

During the two decades from 1973 to 1993, the types of handguns most frequently produced have changed. Most new handguns are pistols rather than revolvers. Pistol production grew from 28% of the handguns produced in the United States in 1973 to 80% in 1993.

The number of large caliber pistols produced annually increased substantially after 1986. Until the mid-1980's, most pistols produced in the United States were .22 and .25 caliber models. Production of .380 caliber and 9 millimeter pistols began to increase substantially in 1987, so that by 1993 they became the most frequently produced pistols. From 1991 to 1993, the last 3 years for which data are available, the most frequently produced handguns were —

- .380 caliber pistols (20%)
- 9 millimeter pistols (19%)
- .22 caliber pistols (17%)
- .25 caliber pistols (13%)
- .50 caliber pistols (8%).

Stolen guns are a source of weapons for criminals

All stolen guns are available to criminals by definition. Recent studies of adult and juvenile offenders show that many have either stolen a firearm or kept, sold, or traded a stolen firearm:

- According to the 1991 Survey of State Prison Inmates, among those inmates who possessed a handgun, 9% had acquired it through theft, and 28% had acquired it through an illegal market such as a drug dealer or fence. Of all inmates, 10% had stolen at least one gun, and 11% had sold or traded stolen guns.
- Studies of adult and juvenile offenders that the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services conducted in 1992 and 1993 found that 15% of the adult offenders and 19% of the juvenile offenders had stolen guns; 16% of the adults and 24% of the juveniles had kept a stolen gun; and 20% of the adults and 30% of the juveniles had sold or traded a stolen gun.
- From a sample of juvenile inmates in four States, Sheley and Wright found that more than 50% had stolen a gun at least once in their lives and 24% had stolen their most recently obtained handgun. They concluded that theft and burglary were the original, not always the proximate, source of many guns acquired by the juveniles.

How many guns are stolen?

The Victim Survey (NCVS) estimates that there were 341,000 incidents of firearm theft from private citizens annually from 1987 to 1992. Because the survey does not ask how many guns were stolen, the number of guns stolen probably exceeds the number of incidents of gun theft.

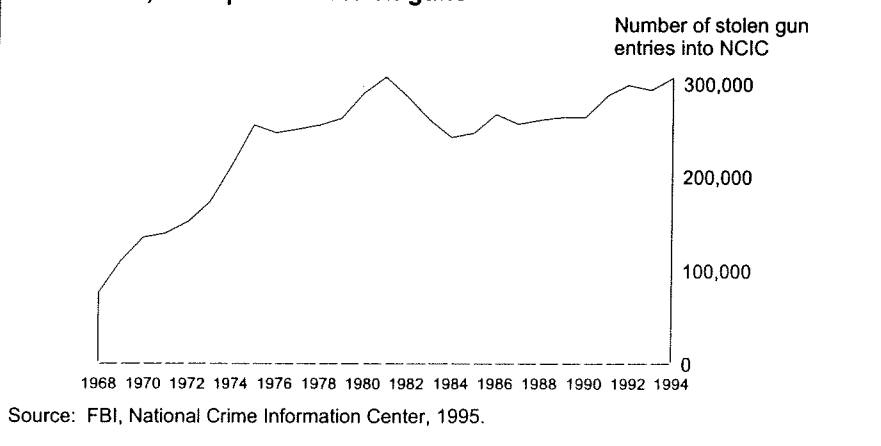
The FBI's National Crime Information Center (NCIC) stolen gun file contained over 2 million reports as of March 1995. In 1994, over 306,000 entries were added to this file including a variety of guns, ammunition, canons, and grenades. Reports of stolen guns are included in the NCIC files when citizens report a theft to law enforcement agencies that submit a report to the FBI. All entries must include make, caliber, and serial number. Initiated in 1967, the NCIC stolen gun file retains all entries indefinitely unless a recovery is reported.

Most stolen guns are handguns

Victims report to the Victim Survey that handguns were stolen in 53% of the thefts of guns. The FBI's stolen gun file's 2 million reports include information on —

- 1.26 million handguns (almost 60%)
- 470,000 rifles (22%)
- 356,000 shotguns (17%).

From 1985 to 1994, the FBI received an annual average of over 274,000 reports of stolen guns



How many automatic weapons are stolen?

Under the provisions of the National Firearms Act, all automatic weapons such as machine guns must be registered with the ATF. In 1995, over 240,000 automatic weapons were registered with the ATF. As of March 1995, the NCIC stolen gun file contained reports on about 7,700 machine guns and submachine guns.

What types of handguns are most frequently stolen?

Most frequently reported handguns in the NCIC stolen gun file

Percent of stolen handguns	Number	Caliber	Type
20.5%	259,184	.38	Revolver
11.7	147,681	.22	Revolver
11.6	146,474	.357	Revolver
8.8	111,558	9 mm	Semiautomatic
7.0	87,714	.25	Semiautomatic
6.7	84,474	.22	Semiautomatic
5.4	68,112	.380	Semiautomatic
3.7	46,503	.45	Semiautomatic
3.3	41,318	.32	Revolver
3.1	39,254	.44	Revolver
1.5	18,377	.32	Semiautomatic
1.3	16,214	.45	Revolver

Upon request, the ATF traces some guns used in crime to their origin

The National Tracing Center of ATF traces firearms to their original point of sale upon the request of police agencies. The requesting agency can use this information to assist in identifying suspects, providing evidence for subsequent prosecution, establishing stolen status, and proving ownership. The number of requests for firearms traces increased from 37,181 in 1990 to 85,132 in 1994.

Trace requests represent an unknown portion of all the guns used in crimes. ATF is not able to trace guns manufactured before 1968, most surplus military weapons, imported guns without the importer's name, stolen guns, and guns missing a legible serial number.

Police agencies do not request traces on all firearms used in crimes. Not all firearms used in crimes are recovered so that a trace could be done and, in some States and localities, the police agencies may be able to establish ownership locally without going to the ATF.

Most trace requests concern handguns

Over half of the guns that police agencies asked ATF to trace were pistols and another quarter were revolvers.

Type of gun	Percent of all 1994 traces
Total	100.0%
Handgun	79.1
Pistol	53.0
Pistol Revolver	24.7
Pistol Derringer	1.4
Rifle	11.1
Shotgun	9.7
Other including machinegun	0.1

While trace requests for all types of guns increased in recent years, the number of pistols traced increased the most, doubling from 1990 to 1994.

What are the countries of origin of the guns that are traced?

Traced guns come from many countries across the globe. However, 78% of the guns that were traced in 1994 originated in the United States and most of the rest were from —

- Brazil (5%)
- Germany (3%)
- China (3%)
- Austria (3%)
- Italy (2%)
- Spain (2%).

Almost a third of the guns traced by ATF in 1994 were 3 years old or less

Age of traced guns	Traces completed in 1994	
	Number	Percent
Total	83,362	100%
Less than 1 year	4,072	5
1 year	11,617	14
2 years	6,764	8
3 years	4,369	5

What crimes are most likely to result in a gun-tracing request?

Crime type	Percent of all 1994 traces	Percent of traces by crime type						
		Handgun					Rifle	Shotgun
		Total	Total	Pistol	Pistol Derringer	Pistol Revolver		
Weapons offenses	72%	100%	81%	55%	1%	25%	10%	9%
Drug offenses	12	100	75	50	2	23	14	11
Homicide	6	100	79	49	1	29	11	10
Assault	5	100	80	50	1	28	10	11
Burglary	2	100	57	34	1	22	24	19
Robbery	2	100	84	53	1	29	7	10
Other	2	100	76	54	1	21	14	10

Note: Detail may not add to total because of rounding.
Source: ATF, unpublished data, May 1995.

What guns are the most frequently traced?

The most frequently traced guns vary from year to year. The ATF publishes a list of the 10 specific guns most frequently traced annually. The total number of traced guns on the top 10 list was 18% of the total traced from 1991 to 1994. Most of the top 10 guns were pistols (over 30% were .25 caliber pistols), although a number of revolvers and a few shotguns and rifles were also included. The most frequently traced gun was a Smith and Wesson .38 caliber revolver in 1990, the Raven Arms P25 (a .25 caliber pistol) from 1991 through 1993, and the Lorcin P25 in 1994.

10 most frequently traced guns in 1994

Rank	Manufacturer	Model	Caliber	Type	Number traced
1	Lorcin	P25	.25	Pistol	3,223
2	Davis Industries	P380	.38	Pistol	2,454
3	Raven Arms	MP25	.25	Pistol	2,107
4	Lorcin	L25	.25	Pistol	1,258
5	Mossburg	500	12G	Shotgun	1,015
6	Phoenix Arms	Raven	.25	Pistol	959
7	Jennings	J22	.22	Pistol	929
8	Ruger	P89	9 mm	Pistol	895
9	Glock	17	9 mm	Pistol	843
10	Bryco	38	.38	Pistol	820

Source: ATF, May 1995.

What caliber guns do criminals prefer?

In their 1983 study, Wright, Rossi, and Daly asked a sample of felons about the handgun they had most recently acquired. Of the felons sampled—

- 29% had acquired a .38 caliber handgun
- 20% had acquired a .357 caliber handgun
- 16% had acquired a .22 caliber handgun.

Sheley and Wright found that the juvenile inmates in their 1991 sample in four States preferred large caliber, high quality handguns. Just prior to their confinement—

- 58% owned a revolver, usually a .38 or .357 caliber gun
- 55% owned a semiautomatic handgun, usually a 9 millimeter or .45 caliber gun
- 51% owned a sawed-off shotgun
- 35% owned a military-style automatic or semiautomatic rifle.

Do juvenile offenders use different types of guns than adult offenders?

A study of adult and juvenile offenders by the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services found that juvenile offenders were more likely than adults to have carried a semiautomatic pistol at the crime scene (18% versus 7%).

They were also more likely to have carried a revolver (10% versus 7%). The same proportion of adults and juveniles (3%) carried a shotgun or rifle at the crime scene.

Some studies of guns used in homicides provide information about caliber

McGonigal and colleagues at the University of Pennsylvania Medical Center studied firearm homicides that occurred in Philadelphia: 145 in 1985 and 324 in 1990. Most of the firearms used in the homicides studied were handguns: 90% in 1985 and 95% in 1990. In both years, revolvers were the predominant type of handgun used; however, the use of semiautomatic pistols increased from 24% in 1985 to 38% in 1990. The caliber of the handguns used also changed:

In Philadelphia, handguns most often used:

In 1985, of 91 homicides	In 1990, of 204 homicides
44% .38 caliber revolver	23% 9 mm pistol
19% .25 caliber pistol	18% .38 caliber revolver
14% .22 caliber revolver	16% .357 caliber revolver
14% .32 caliber revolver	16% .22 caliber revolver
3% 9 mm pistol	10% .32 caliber revolver
2% .357 caliber revolver	6% .380 caliber pistol

The Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services studied 844 homicides that occurred in 18 jurisdictions

from 1989 through 1991. Firearms were identified as the murder weapon in 600 cases. Over 70% of the firearms used were handguns. Of those handguns for which the caliber and firing action could be identified, 19% were .38 caliber revolvers, 10% were .22 caliber revolvers, and 9% were 9 millimeter semiautomatic pistols.

The Hawaii Department of the Attorney General, Crime Prevention Division, studied 59 firearm-related homicides in Honolulu from 1988 to 1992. Handguns were used in 48 homicides (over 80%) including 11 handguns of 9 millimeter caliber, 10 of .357 caliber, 10 of .38 caliber, and 5 of .25 caliber.

What caliber guns are used in the killings of law enforcement officers?

From 1982 to 1993, of the 687 officers who were killed by firearms other than their own guns, more were killed by .38 caliber handguns than by any other type of weapon.

Type of firearm	Percent of law enforcement officers killed with a firearm
.38 caliber handgun	25.2%
.357 Magnum handgun	12.1
9 millimeter handgun	9.5
12 gauge shotgun	7.4
.22 caliber handgun	5.4
.22 caliber rifle	4.4

How often are assault weapons used in crime?

Little information exists about the use of assault weapons in crime. The information that does exist uses varying definitions of assault weapons that were developed before the Federal assault weapons ban was enacted.

In general, assault weapons are semiautomatic firearms with a large magazine of ammunition that were designed and configured for rapid fire and combat use. An assault weapon can be a pistol, a rifle, or a shotgun. The Federal Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 bans the manufacture and sale of 19 specific assault weapons identified by make and manufacturer. It also provides for a ban on those weapons that have a combination of features such as flash suppressors and grenade launchers. The ban does not cover those weapons legally possessed before the law was enacted. The National Institute of Justice will be evaluating the effect of the ban and reporting to Congress in 1997.

In 1993 prior to the passage of the assault weapons ban, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF), reported that about 1% of the estimated 200 million guns

in circulation were assault weapons. Of the gun-tracing requests received that year by ATF from law enforcement agencies, 8% involved assault weapons.

Assault weapons and homicide

A New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services study of homicides in 1993 in New York City found that assault weapons were involved in 16% of the homicides studied. The definition of assault weapons used was from proposed but not enacted State legislation that was more expansive than the Federal legislation. By matching ballistics records and homicide files, the study found information on 366 firearms recovered in the homicides of 271 victims. Assault weapons were linked to the deaths of 43 victims (16% of those studied).

A study by the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services reviewed the files of 600 firearm murders that occurred in 18 jurisdictions from 1989 to 1991. The study found that handguns were used in 72% of the murders (431 murders). Ten guns were identified as assault weapons, including five pistols, four rifles, and one shotgun.

Assault weapons and offenders

In the 1991 BJS Survey of State Inmates, about 8% of the inmates reported that they had owned a military-type weapon, such as an Uzi, AK-47, AR-15, or M-16. Less than 1% said that they carried such a weapon when they committed the incident for which they were incarcerated. A Virginia inmate survey conducted between November 1992 and May 1993 found similar results: About 10% of the adult inmates reported that they had ever possessed an assault rifle, but none had carried it at the scene of a crime.

Two studies indicate higher proportions of juvenile offenders reporting possession and use of assault rifles. The Virginia inmate survey also covered 192 juvenile offenders. About 20% reported that they had possessed an assault rifle and 1% said that they had carried it at the scene of a crime. In 1991, Sheley and Wright surveyed 835 serious juvenile offenders incarcerated in 6 facilities in 4 States. In the Sheley and Wright study, 35% of the juvenile inmates reported that they had owned a military-style automatic or semiautomatic rifle just prior to confinement.

Sources

Assault Weapons and Homicide in New York City, Office of Justice Systems Analysis, New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services, May 1994.

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, *ATF Facts*, November 1994.

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, *Firearms & Explosives Tracing Guidebook*, September 1993.

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, unpublished data.

BJS, *Criminal Victimization 1993*, Bulletin, NCJ-151658, May 1995.

BJS, *Guns and Crime*, Crime Data Brief, NCJ-147003, April 1994.

BJS, National Crime Victimization Survey, 1992, unpublished data.

BJS, *Survey of State Prison Inmates, 1991*, NCJ-136949, March 1993.

"Crimes Committed with Firearms in the State of Hawaii, 1983-1992," *Crime Trends Series*, Department of the Attorney General, Crime Prevention Division, Vol. 2, Issue 1, April 1994.

Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Crime in the United States 1993*, October 4, 1994.

Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Law Enforcement Officers Killed and Assaulted*, annually 1987 to 1992.

Federal Bureau of Investigation, National Crime Information Center, unpublished data.

Giannelli, Paul C., "Ballistics Evidence: Firearms Identification," *Criminal Law Bulletin*, May-June 1991.

Guns and Violent Crime, Criminal Justice Research Center, Commonwealth of Virginia, Department of Criminal Justice Services, January 1994 with updated data for homicide study.

McGonigal, Michael D., MD, John Cole, BS, C. William Schwab, MD, Donald R. Kauder, MD, Michael R. Rotondo, MD, and Peter B. Angood, "Urban Firearm Deaths: A Five-year Perspective," *The Journal of Trauma*, Vol. 35, No. 4, October 1993, pp. 532-37.

Sheley, Joseph F., and James D. Wright, "Gun Acquisition and Possession in Selected Juvenile Samples," National Institute of Justice and Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, *Research in Brief*, NCJ-145326, December 1993.

Wright, James D., and Peter H. Rossi, *Armed and Considered Dangerous* (New York: Adline de Gruyter) 1986.

Wright, James D., Peter H. Rossi, and Kathleen Daly, *Under the Gun: Weapons, Crime, and Violence in America* (New York: Adline de Gruyter) 1983.

Note

Data in this report from the 1993 National Crime Victimization Survey are the first released on this topic since the survey was redesigned. Because of changes in the methodology, direct comparisons with BJS's victim survey data from prior years are not appropriate. Additional information about the survey's redesign can be obtained from the Bureau of Justice Statistics Clearinghouse at 1-800-732-3277.

The Bureau of Justice Statistics is the statistical arm of the U.S. Department of Justice. Jan M. Chaiken, Ph.D., is director.

BJS Selected Findings summarize statistics about a topic of current concern from both BJS and non-BJS datasets.

Substantial assistance in preparing this document was provided by Roy Weise and Gary Boatman of the Criminal Justice Information Systems Division of the FBI; Edward Troiano, Emmett Masterson, Gerald Nunziato, Gary Kirchoff, and Kris Denholm of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms; Jim McDonough of the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services; Henry Brownstein and Kelly Haskin-Tenenini of the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services; and Larry Greenfeld, Thomas Hester, and Michael Rand of the Bureau of Justice Statistics. Verification and publication review were provided by Yvonne Boston, Ida Hines, Rhonda Keith, and Priscilla Middleton of the Bureau of Justice Statistics.

July 1995, NCJ-148201

Guns Used in Crime is the first of a series of reports on firearms and crime that will become part of a longer document, *Firearms, Crime, and Criminal Justice*. Other topics to be covered in this series include weapons offenses and offenders, how criminals obtain guns, and intentional firearm injury. The full report will focus on the use of guns in crime, trends in gun crime, consequences of gun crimes, characteristics of offenders who use guns, and sanctions for offenders who use guns. This report will not cover the involvement of firearms in accidents or suicides.