U.S. Department of Justice
Office of Justice Programs
Bureau of Justice Statistics

Bureau of Justice Statistics Bulletin

Crime and the Nation's Households, 1991

By Lisa D. Bastian
BJS Statistician

Nearly 23 million American households, or 24%, were victimized by crime in 1991, the same proportion as in 1990. This percentage continues to be the lowest recorded since 1975, the first year that the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) produced this estimate. From 1985 through 1989 the proportion of households victimized had remained fairly constant, at about 25%.

Additional findings for 1991

The following was also found in 1991:

- Five percent of U.S. households had at least one member age 12 or older who was the victim of a violent crime.
- Black households were more likely to experience a crime than were white households.
- Thirty percent of Hispanic households, but only twenty-three percent of non-Hispanic households, sustained at least one crime last year.
- The likelihood of a personal theft victimization increased as household income increased. The percentage of households in the lowest income bracket victimized by personal theft was 7.9%; in the highest bracket, 14.3%.
- Households in urban areas were most likely, and households in rural areas least likely, to sustain a crime in 1991.

Households experiencing selected crimes of violence and theft, 1975-91

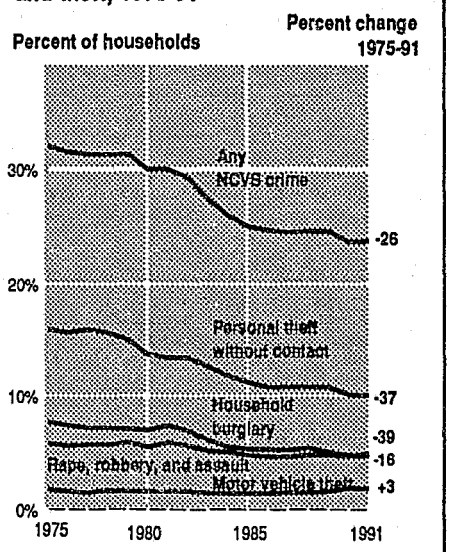

Figure 1

July 1992

For the second year in a row, the proportion of U.S. households victimized by crime reached a low of 24%, or nearly 23 million households. The Bureau of Justice Statistics has been reporting this estimate since 1975, when 32% of all households had experienced one or more crimes.

Drawing on data from the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), this households-victimized-by-crime indicator measures the dispersion of crime in our Nation. It also allows for comparisons of the proportions of households victimized among various demographic groups, household income levels, and geographic regions.

Steven D. Dillingham, Ph.D.
Director

Comparison of findings from the National Crime Victimization Survey and the Uniform Crime Reports

The U.S. Department of Justice administers two programs to measure the magnitude, nature, and impact of crime in the United States: the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), the source of this report, and the Uniform Crime Reporting Program (UCR).

Because of differences in methodology and crime coverage, the two programs examine the Nation's crime problem from somewhat different perspectives, and their results are not strictly comparable. The definitional and procedural differences can account for many of the apparent discrepancies in estimates from the two programs. The Department of Justice fact sheet *The Nation's Two Crime Measures* (NCJ-122705) contains a detailed description of the NCVS and UCR.

The National Crime Victimization Survey

The NCVS is an ongoing survey of victims of crime, which was first administered in 1972. The NCVS measures the personal crimes of rape, robbery, assault, and theft, as well as the household crimes of burglary, larceny, and motor vehicle theft. Since it is a survey of victims, the NCVS may obtain data on crimes reported to the police as well as those that were not reported but does not obtain information on homicides. Commercial crimes are also excluded from the survey. Over the past 16 years this indicator, which reports the proportion of households that experienced an attempted or completed crime, has been calculated to estimate the dispersion of crime (see *Methodology* on page 6 for further discussion of the indicator and of the NCVS).

A household refers both to a dwelling unit, like a house or apartment, and to the people who live in it. A household was counted as having experienced a crime during the year if it met one of these criteria:

- It fell victim to a burglary, motor vehicle theft, or household theft.
- A household member age 12 or older was raped, robbed, or assaulted.
- A household member age 12 or older experienced a personal theft.

Table 1. Households experiencing crime in 1991, and relative percent change since 1990

Households	1990 Number of households	1990 Percent	1991 Number of households	1991 Percent	Relative percent change, 1990-91
Total	95,461,000	100.0%	96,561,000	100.0%	
Victimized by:					
Any NCVS crime	22,652,000	23.7%	22,855,000	23.7%	-.3%
Violent crime	4,478,000	4.7	4,711,000	4.9	4.0
Rape	104,000	.1	161,000	.2	53.2[b]
Robbery	967,000	1.0	951,000	1.0	-2.9
Assault	3,591,000	3.·	3,852,000	4.0	6.1
Aggravated	1,287,000	1.3	1,367,000	1.4	5.0
Simple	2,527,000	2.6	2,752,000	2.9	7.7
Total theft	15,905,000	16.7%	16,069,000	16.6%	-.1%
Personal	10,042,000	10.5	10,029,000	10.4	-1.3
With contact	548,000	.6	463,000	.5	-16.6
Without contact	9,592,000	10.0	9,655,000	10.0	-.5
Household	7,199,000	7.5	7,421,000	7.7	1.9
Burglary	4,557,000	4.8	4,554,000	4.7	-1.2
Motor vehicle theft	1,825,000	1.9	1,755,000	1.8	-5.0
Crimes of high concern (a rape, robbery, or assault by a stranger or a burglary)	6,854,000	7.2%	6,964,000	7.2%	.4%

Note: Detail does not add to total or crime subtotals because of overlap in households experiencing various crimes. Relative percent change is based on unrounded figures.
[a]Change was statistically significant at the 95% confidence level.
[b]Change was statistically significant at the 90% confidence level

Trends

Since the inception of the households-victimized-by-crime indicator in 1975, the proportion of U.S. households experiencing a crime of any type has never shown a significant year-to-year increase (table 2; figure 1). The proportion of households victimized declined by 22% between 1975 and 1985, with 32% of all households reporting at least one victimization in 1975 compared to 25% in 1985 (table 2). After a period of stability between 1985 and 1989, the proportion of households touched by crime decreased to 24% in 1990 and remained at this level through 1991.

Certain demographic groups have experienced trends that differed from this national trend: the percentage of urban households sustaining a crime rose to 31% between 1986 and 1989. Rural households experienced a decline in victimizations from 20% to 17% over this

Table 2. Percent of households experiencing crime, by type of crime, 1975-91

Type of crime	Percent of households experiencing crime																
	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989*	1990	1991
Any NCVS crime	32.1%	31.5%	31.3%	31.3%	31.3%	30.0%	30.0%	29.3%	27.4%	26.0%	25.0%	24.7%	24.5%	24.6%	24.6%	23.7%	23.7%
Violent crime	5.8	5.6	5.7	5.7	5.9	5.5	5.9	5.6	5.1	5.0	4.8	4.7	4.6	4.8	4.8	4.7	4.9
Rape	.2	.2	.2	.2	.2	.2	.2	.2	.1	.2	.1	.1	.1	.2	.1	.1	.2
Robbery	1.4	1.2	1.2	1.1	1.2	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.1	1.0	.9	.9	.1	.9	1.0	1.0	1.0
Assault	4.5	4.4	4.7	4.6	4.8	4.4	4.7	4.5	4.2	4.1	4.0	3.8	3.8	4.0	3.9	3.8	4.0
Personal theft	16.4	16.2	16.3	16.2	15.4	14.2	13.9	13.9	13.0	12.3	11.5	11.2	11.1	11.2	11.2	10.5	10.4
Household theft	10.2	10.3	10.2	9.9	10.8	10.4	10.2	9.6	8.9	8.5	8.1	8.0	8.0	7.7	8.0	7.5	7.7
Burglary	7.7	7.4	7.2	7.2	7.1	7.0	7.4	6.9	6.1	5.5	5.3	5.3	5.2	5.4	5.0	4.8	4.7
Motor vehicle theft	1.8	1.6	1.5	1.7	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.5	1.5	1.6	1.9	1.8
Households touched by crime (in millions)	23.377	23.540	23.741	24.277	24.730	24.222	24.863	24.989	23.621	22.806	22.191	22.201	22.404	22.844	23.221	22.652	22.855
Households in U.S. (in millions)	73.123	74.528	75.904	77.578	78.964	80.622	82.797	85.178	86.146	87.791	88.852	90.014	91.391	92.892	94.553	95.461	96.561

*Estimates for 1989 differ from those published in *Crime and the Nation's Households, 1989.* See *Methodology.*

same period and remained at this level through 1991. After four years of stability between 1985 and 1989, the percentage of white households victimized decreased to 23% in 1990.[1] Black households, however, experienced an increasing level of victimization during this period. The proportion of black households touched by crime has not changed significantly since 1989.

The proportions of black and white households experiencing crime in 1991 were well below the proportions for 1975. However, the decrease for black households over this period was smaller relative to white households. Between 1975 and 1991 the proportion of white households victimized declined by 27%; for black households the decline was only 19%.

1990-91 comparisons

The percentage of households touched by a crime of any type did not vary significantly between 1990 and 1991. Specifically, for the violent crimes of rape, robbery, and assault, there was evidence of an increase only in the proportion of households with at least one member who had been the victim of a rape.

All other crime categories remained unchanged between 1990 and 1991.

Among most demographic groups examined, the overall households-victimized-by-crime indicator changed little between 1990 and 1991. Households earning $50,000 or more were somewhat less likely to be victimized by crime in 1991. This can be attributed to a slight decrease last year in the proportion of these households that sustained a burglary. There was slightly more variation within specific crime categories:

The percentage of white households with a member who had suffered a rape increased somewhat in 1991, while the comparable proportion for black households and "other race" households — those with members of Asian or Native American descent — remained unchanged.

There was some evidence that Hispanic households were less likely to experience a motor vehicle theft in 1991 than in 1990.

The proportion of households in the highest income category ($50,000 or more) that were burglarized declined somewhat in 1991.

The proportion of households in the Northeast experiencing motor vehicle thefts showed evidence of a decrease last year; in the Midwest, South, and West, percentages remained the same.

[1]In the NCVS the race of the household is considered to be that of the household head.

Table 3. Percent of households experiencing crime, by race and ethnicity of household head, 1991

Percent of households experiencing:	Race of household head			Ethnicity of household head	
	White	Black	Other	Non-Hispanic	Hispanic
Any NCVS crime	23.2%	26.7%	24.3%	23.2%	30.4%
Violent crime	4.7%	5.7%	5.3%	4.8%	6.1%
Rape	.2	.2	.2	.2	.2
Robbery	.8	2.1	1.5	.9	2.0
Assault	4.0	3.8	3.7	4.0	4.3
Aggravated	1.4	1.7	1.2	1.4	2.0
Simple	2.9	2.3	2.8	2.9	2.5
Total theft	16.6%	16.7%	17.0%	16.4%	19.8%
Personal	10.5	9.5	11.3	10.3	11.4
Household	7.6	8.6	7.6	7.5	10.4
Burglary	4.4	6.8	4.8	4.6	6.8
Motor vehicle theft	1.6	3.3	2.4	1.7	3.5
Serious violent crime[a]	2.3%	3.8%	2.9%	2.3%	4.1%
Crimes of high concern[b]	6.9%	9.5%	8.2%	6.9%	10.9%

Note: Detail does not add to total or crime subtotals because of overlap in households experiencing various crimes.

[a]Rape, robbery, or aggravated assault.
[b]A rape, robbery, or assault by a stranger or a burglary.

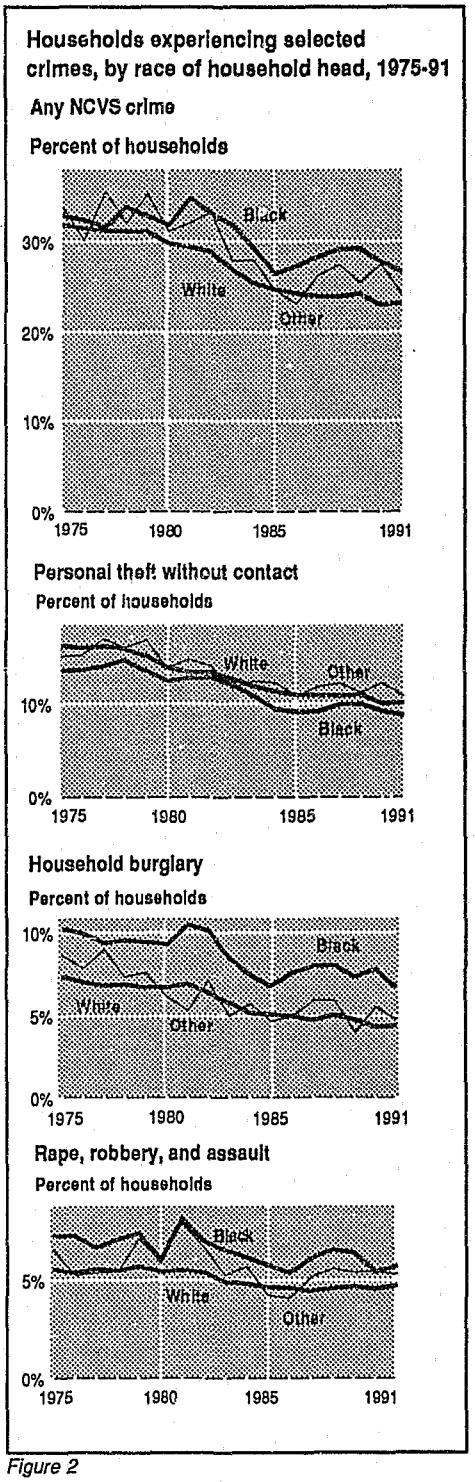

Figure 2

Burglaries of households with six or more members increased significantly between 1990 and 1991.

Race and ethnicity of household

Black households were generally more likely than white households to have been victimized in 1991 (table 3). Members of black households were 2.5 times more likely than members of white households to sustain a robbery (2.1% versus .8%). There was some evidence that the members of white households were more frequently victims of simple assaults. Whites were also more likely than blacks to fall victim to a personal theft without contact.

Black households were twice as likely as white households to experience a motor vehicle theft. These households were also significantly more likely than both white households and households of "other races" to be burglarized.

Larger proportions of Hispanic than non-Hispanic households were touched by most of the violent crimes and all the household crimes measured in the NCVS (table 3). There were no significant differences between Hispanic and non-Hispanic households for the crimes of assault and personal theft.

Family income

Generally, as household income increased so did the household's susceptibility to personal theft (table 4). For instance, households in the highest income bracket were twice as likely as households in the lowest income group to experience a theft. Only households earning under $7,500 annually and those earning between $7,500 and $14,999 a year were victimized in similar proportions.

Violent and household crimes did not present such a consistent pattern of victimization. Members of households in the lowest income category were more likely than members of households earning $15,000 or more annually to sustain a violent crime, excluding simple assaults. There was some evidence that members of households earning less than $7,500 a year were more likely to experience these crimes than members of households earning $50,000 or more, but there were no other significant differences among household income categories.

Similar proportions of households with annual incomes under $7,500 and those with incomes between $7,500 and $14,999 were victimized by violent crime. However, there was some evidence that members of households in the lowest income category were more frequently victims of aggravated assault.

Households in the lowest income group were the most likely to be burglarized; there were no significant differences among households earning at least $15,000 a year. Low income households were least likely to sustain a motor vehicle theft, and there were no significant differences among the proportions of households in each income group that had experienced a household larceny.

Place of residence

Urban households were the most likely and rural households the least likely to experience a crime, with a few exceptions (table 4): Although larger percentages of urban households sustained assaults and burglaries compared to suburban and rural households, suburban households were not more likely than rural households to experience these crimes. Members of households located in rural areas were less likely than members of both urban and suburban households to be victims of personal theft (7.2% versus 11.7% and 10.9%, respectively).

Region

As in previous years, Northeastern households experienced some of the lowest and Western households some of the highest rates of crime (table 4). The proportions of Midwestern and Southern households victimized tended to be similar. Some exceptions to this rule included:

The proportions of households in the Northeast whose members had experienced a simple or aggravated assault were lower than those of the remaining three regions. While households in the

Table 4. Percent of households experiencing crime, by selected characteristics, 1991

Percent of households experiencing:	Annual household income					Place of residence[a]			Region			
	Under $7,500	$7,500-$14,999	$15,000-$24,999	$25,000-$49,999	$50,000 or more	Urban	Suburban	Rural	North-east	Mid-west	South	West
Any NCVS crime	22.4%	22.4%	23.4%	24.8%	26.7%	29.1%	22.8%	17.4%	19.3%	23.5%	23.6%	28.8%
Violent crime	6.3%	5.7%	4.9%	4.7%	3.9%	6.2%	4.4%	3.8%	3.9%	5.1%	4.7%	6.0%
Rape	.2	.2	.2	.1	.2	.2	.1	.1	.1	.2	.2	.2
Robbery	1.3	1.3	.9	.8	.6	1.8	.7	.3	1.2	.8	.9	1.0
Assault	5.2	4.4	4.1	4.0	3.3	4.6	3.8	3.5	2.8	4.3	3.9	5.1
Aggravated	2.3	1.6	1.5	1.3	1.0	1.8	1.3	1.1	.9	1.4	1.6	1.7
Simple	3.3	3.2	2.8	3.0	2.6	3.1	2.8	2.7	2.1	3.2	2.6	3.7
Total theft	14.1%	14.7%	16.5%	17.9%	20.4%	20.0%	16.5%	11.9%	13.3%	16.5%	16.6%	20.6%
Personal	7.9	8.5	9.8	11.5	14.3	11.7	10.9	7.2	8.2	10.3	10.2	13.1
Household	7.3	7.8	7.9	7.8	7.9	10.1	7.0	5.4	6.1	7.5	7.7	9.6
Burglary	6.7	5.5	4.5	4.2	3.9	6.3	4.0	3.8	3.4	4.7	5.1	5.5
Motor vehicle theft	.9	1.7	1.7	1.9	2.3	2.9	1.6	.5	2.0	1.5	1.6	2.3
Serious violent crime[b]	3.7%	3.0%	2.4%	2.1%	1.6%	3.6%	2.1%	1.5%	2.1%	2.3%	2.6%	2.8%
Crimes of high concern[c]	9.6%	7.9%	7.0%	6.8%	6.1%	9.8%	6.3%	5.3%	5.5%	7.1%	7.4%	8.8%

Note: Detail does not add to total because of overlap in households experiencing various crimes.
[a]These estimates are not comparable to estimates for place of residence prior to 1986 because of changes in geographic classification (see footnote 3).
[b]Rape, robbery, or aggravated assault.
[c]A rape, robbery, or assault by a stranger or a burglary.

Midwest and West had similar rates for simple assault — 3.2% and 3.7% — these percentages were higher than the 2.6% of households in the South that were affected by this crime.

Robberies were more frequently committed against members of households in the Northeast than in the Midwest. Motor vehicle theft rates did not vary significantly among households in the Northeast, Midwest, or South. The percentage of Western households that was a victim of this crime was higher than those for Midwestern and Southern households and similar to the proportion of Northeastern households victimized by this crime.

Size of household

Because more household members could potentially fall victim to crime, larger households may be viewed as being more susceptible to crime. The likelihood of personal crime victimization, however, does not increase at a rate proportional to increases in household size. For instance, the percentage of six-or-more person households experiencing a personal theft was 2.5 times that of one-person households (16.4% versus 6.3%) (table 5).

There are various reasons why this relationship is not directly proportional. For example, many households with two or more members include children under the age of 12, whose victimizations are not measured by the NCVS.[2] Differing demographic characteristics and lifestyles among households of various sizes are also likely to affect the probability that a household will be touched by crime.

In 1991, as in 1990, fewer than 1 in 5 single-person households were victimized by a crime, while 2 in 5 six-or-more person households sustained at least one victimization.

Households with six or more members were more than 4 times as likely as single-person households to be victimized by violent crime (12.2% versus 2.9%), 2.5 times more likely to experience a personal theft (16.4% versus 6.3%), and 3 times more likely to sustain a household theft (15.3% versus 5.1%).

Six-or-more person households were twice as likely as one-person households to be victims of burglary; this crime varied least of any of the measured crimes.

[2]Crimes against children under age 12 are excluded from the NCVS because asking sensitive questions about victimization might be stressful to the child or the parents, possibly discouraging adult participation in the survey.

Table 5. Percent of households touched by selected crimes, by size of household, 1991

Percent of households experiencing:	Number of persons in household			
	1	2-3	4-5	6+
Any NCVS crime	16.6%	23.1%	31.0%	40.0%
Violent crime	2.9%	4.5%	7.1%	12.2%
Total theft	10.8	16.4	22.6	28.2
Personal	6.3	10.2	14.8	16.4
Household	5.1	7.5	10.1	15.3
Burglary	4.2	4.5	5.2	9.2
Motor vehicle theft	1.2	1.8	2.2	3.6

Crimes of high concern

Of the crimes measured by the NCVS, many people find burglaries and violent crimes committed by strangers to be especially threatening. For the purposes of this report, these crimes have been termed *crimes of high concern.* Last year 1 in 14 households in the Nation were touched by a crime of high concern, the same ratio as in 1990.

Certain demographic groups were more likely than others to experience crimes of high concern: A higher percentage of black households than white households fell victim to a crime of high concern in 1991 (table 3). Hispanic households were more likely than non-Hispanic households to sustain these crimes, and households earning under $7,500 a year were more likely than households in any other income group to experience such crimes (table 4). A greater percentage of urban households than suburban or rural households was victimized by a crime of high concern last year. Households in the Northeast were least likely, and those in the West most likely, to sustain at least one of these crimes while similar proportions of Midwestern and Southern households were victimized by a crime of high concern.

From 1981 to 1984 the percentage of households victimized each year by a crime of high concern decreased from 11% to 8%. This percentage remained constant between 1985 and 1988 before declining in 1989 to 7%. The proportion of households touched by crimes of high concern remained at this level through 1990 and 1991.

Households experiencing crimes of high concern, by race of household head, 1981-91

(A rape, robbery, or assault by a stranger or a burglary)

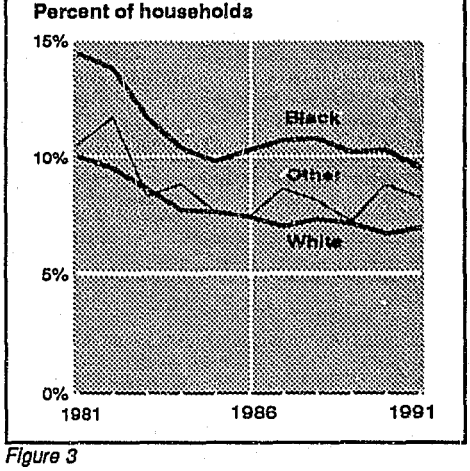

Figure 3

Race and crime seriousness

Along with crimes of high concern, black households were also more likely than white households to fall victim to a serious violent crime — rape, robbery, or aggravated assault. Of black households, 3.8% experienced a serious violent crime while 2.3% of white households experienced such crimes in 1991 (table 3). Crimes of high concern touched 9.5% of black households and 6.9% of white households.

Factors affecting trends

Over time, population shifts and changes in household composition have affected the overall downward trend that the households-victimized-by-crime indicator has shown since 1975.

The trend in population shifts throughout the country has been toward the South and West and away from the Northeast and Midwest. Urban residents have been moving to suburban and rural areas as well. In 1975, 50% of the U.S. population lived in the Northeast or Midwest, compared to 45% in 1991. Between 1975 and

1985 the percentage of households located in urban areas fell from 32% to 29% of all households, while suburban and rural households increased from 68% to 71%. After 1986 urban households continued to account for a declining percentage of all households, and suburban households, an increasing one.[3]

Household size fluctuates as people are constantly moving into and out of different households, creating new households, and merging existing ones. Between 1975 and 1991, the average size of the American household decreased. One-person households represented 21% of all households in 1975 but 25% in 1991. The percentage of households consisting of six or more persons fell from 7% to 3%.

The two population movements outlined above, changing household size and household location, have shifted population from households more likely to experience crime — larger ones and those in urban areas — to those less likely — smaller ones and those in suburban or rural areas. Another movement has shifted the population in the opposite direction, from the Northeast, a region with a lower likelihood of crime, to the West, where a higher proportion of households experience crime.

While current data do not permit measurement of the degree to which all population movements have affected the indicator, estimates can be made for the effect of changes in household size. If the size distribution of American households were the same in 1991 as in 1975, the estimate of households experiencing crime would have been 24.7% rather than 23.7%.[4] This adjusted estimate, however, is still significantly below the 1975 estimate of 32% of households victimized by crime.

[3]Places of residence for 1986 through 1991 are based on 1980 Census definitions, and earlier years are based on 1970 definitions. Hence, the places of residence and population distributions identified in the two periods 1975-85 and 1986-91 were not directly comparable.

[4]This analysis assumes that in each category of household size the percentage of households victimized by crime in 1991 would be unchanged, given the size distribution for all households that existed in 1975.

Methodology

The Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) developed the households-victimized-by-crime indicator in 1981 to improve our understanding of the impact of crime on our society.[5] The household was chosen as the unit of analysis because crimes such as burglary are crimes against an entire household and crimes against persons affect members of the victim's household.

Crimes not included in the NCVS

Households-victimized-by-crime estimates are derived from NCVS statistics on rape, personal robbery, assault, household burglary, and personal and household theft, and motor vehicle theft.[6] Because the NCVS counts only crimes for which the victim can be interviewed, homicide is not counted. Its exclusion does not noticeably affect the estimates. If each of the homicides during 1991 had occurred in a different household and if these households had been victimized by no other crime (the largest possible effect), then the inclusion of homicides in these findings would not have raised the overall percent of households victimized by crime (23.7%) by as much as 0.02%.[7]

Other crimes against persons or their households, such as fraud, confidence games, kidnaping, and arson are not included in this analysis because they are not measured by the NCVS. Commercial crimes, drug trafficking, and drug possession crimes also are not included.

Rates of crime — number of crimes per 1,000 persons or households

Traditional measures of crime are in the form of volumes or rates. Data on the volume of crime have limited usefulness because the size of the population is not taken into account. Rates — expressed in the NCVS as crimes per 1,000 households or per 1,000 persons — automatically correct for different population sizes. Rates based on the individual person and household, however, give only one measure of how common a crime is. Because crimes against individuals are likely to affect everyone with whom they reside, another estimate of whether crime is widely spread or highly concentrated is to measure its occurrence in households with different characteristics.

Households-victimized-by-crime indicator

For each type of crime examined, a household is counted only once, regardless of how many times that household was victimized. For example, if a household were burglarized twice and one of its members was robbed once during the year, it is counted once for households sustaining burglary even though it was victimized twice by burglary. It is also counted once for households victimized by robbery. Finally, it is counted once in the overall measure, households victimized by crime.

Consequently, the households-victimized-by-crime estimate for 1991 (23.7%) is less than the sum of the estimates for households victimized by personal crimes (14.0%) and those victimized by household crimes (13.0%) because 3.3% of U.S. households were victims of both personal and household crimes. Similarly, because about 1.2% of U.S. household experience both personal theft and violence, the sum of households victimized by personal theft (10.4%) and those victimized by violence (4.9%) exceeds the estimate of those victimized by personal crime (14.0%).

All data in this Bulletin are from the NCVS except those specifically attributed to other sources. The NCVS is an ongoing survey conducted for BJS by the Bureau of the Census. Interviews are conducted at 6-month intervals with all occupants age 12 or older in about 49,000 housing units (99,000 persons). Because the NCVS does not obtain information about crimes against persons under age 12, households experiencing only such crimes are not included in the estimate of households victimized by crime.

Revisions to prior year estimates

Estimates of the percentage of households affected by crime for 1987 and

[5]*The Prevalence of Crime,* BJS Bulletin, NCJ-75905, April 1981.

[6]These crimes are defined in *Measuring Crime,* BJS Bulletin, NCJ-75710, February 1981. As used in this report, the term "theft" is synonymous with the term "larceny" used in previous reports. The NCVS was formerly named the National Crime Survey (NCS).

[7]Preliminary estimates for 1991 indicate that homicides increased by 7% from the 23,438 reported in 1990 (Federal Bureau of Investigation, Uniform Crime Reports, 1992).

1989 vary from those published in *Households Touched by Crime, 1987* and *Crime and the Nation's Households, 1989*, respectively.

In 1987 the NCVS conducted a preliminary test on 5% of the sample using computer-assisted-telephone interviewing (CATI). In CATI an interviewer enters responses directly into a computer rather than on a printed form. Data from the CATI experiment were excluded from estimates until the effects of the change in procedure were known.

Subsequent to the publication of *Crime and the Nation's Households, 1989*, Census Bureau programmers discovered that a weighting adjustment was inadvertently omitted from the processing to produce the 1989 crime prevalence estimates. In general, the effect of the error was a slight overestimate of the percentage of households touched by crime for the Nation and for most population groups. Comparison of the corrected 1989 estimates with published estimates did not uncover any substantive change.

Estimates of standard errors

The estimates in this Bulletin are derived from sample survey data, and they are subject to sampling variation.[8] Because the procedure used to produce estimates of households sustaining crime differs from that for victimization rates, the households-victimized data have standard errors about 8% higher than those for victimization rates with the same population bases, even though they are derived from the same sample survey.

Comparisons presented in this report were determined to be statistically significant at the 95% confidence level, meaning that the estimated difference is greater than twice the standard error. Statements of comparison qualified by language such as "slightly," "somewhat," or "marginal" indicate statistical significance at the 90% level (1.6 standard errors). The estimates are also subject to response errors, including crimes that are forgotten or withheld from the interviewer. Such response errors tend to cause understated counts of households victimized by crime.[9]

[8]Details of the NCVS sample design, the standard error computation, and the customary estimation procedure for victimization rates and counts may be found in *Criminal Victimization in the United States, 1990*, NCJ-134126, February 1992, appendix III.

Crime and the Nation's Households, 1991
95 percent confidence intervals

	Number	95% confidence interval	Percent	95% confidence interval
Any crime	22,855,410	22,317,276 — 23,393,544	23.7	23.1 — 24.2
Violent crime	4,710,662	4,437,935 — 4,983,389	4.9	4.6 — 5.2
Rape	161,125	109,452 — 212,798	.2	.1 — .2
Robbery	950,521	825,529 — 1,075,513	1.0	.9 — 1.1
Assault	3,852,299	3,604,518 — 4,100,080	4.0	3.7 — 4.2
Aggravated	1,367,329	1,217,744 — 1,516,914	1.4	1.3 — 1.6
Simple	2,752,002	2,541,336 — 2,962,668	2.9	2.6 — 3.1
Personal theft	10,029,486	9,643,232 — 10,415,740	10.4	10.0 — 10.8
Burglary	4,554,070	4,285,686 — 4,822,454	4.7	4.4 — 5.0
Household theft	7,421,402	7,084,173 — 7,758,631	7.7	7.3 — 8.0
Motor vehicle theft	1,754,783	1,585,670 — 1,923,896	1.8	1.6 — 2.0

Estimates have been rounded to the nearest tenth.

Presented above are the 95% confidence intervals around the levels and proportions of the major crimes measured by this indicator.

The standard errors for the estimated percentages used in these calculations are computed using the following formula:

$$s.e.(p) = \sqrt{\left(\frac{b}{y}\right)(p(1.0-p))}$$

where

p = percentage or rate expressed in decimal form
y = base population or total number of crimes
b = a constant equal to 4321.

[9]A more detailed description of the procedures used to estimate households victimized by crime appears in an unpublished memorandum prepared by the U.S. Bureau of the Census. The memorandum is available from Lisa Bastian, c/o Bureau of Justice Statistics, 633 Indiana Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20531, (202) 307-0774.

The standard errors for the estimated levels used in these calculations are computed using the following formula:

$$s.e.(x) = \sqrt{ax^2+bx}$$

where

x = estimated number of personal or household victimizations
a = a constant equal to -0.00004475
b = a constant equal to 4321.

Bureau of Justice Statistics Bulletins are prepared by BJS staff. This report was written by Lisa Bastian and edited by Tom Hester. Tina Dorsey and Yvonne Boston administered production.

July 1992, NCJ-136950

☆ U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1992—312-318/60011

Please put me on the mailing list for—

- ☐ **Law enforcement reports**—national data on State and local police and sheriffs' departments, operations, equipment, personnel, salaries, spending, policies, programs
- ☐ **Federal statistics**—data describing Federal case processing, from investigation through prosecution, adjudication, and corrections
- ☐ **Drugs and crime**—sentencing and time served by drug offenders, drug use at time of crime by jail inmates and State prisoners, and other quality data on drugs, crime, and law enforcement
- ☐ **Justice expenditure & employment**—annual spending and staffing by Federal, State, and local governments and by function (police, courts, corrections, etc.)
- ☐ **Privacy and security of criminal history data and information policy**—new legislation; maintaining and releasing intelligence and investigative records; data quality issues
- ☐ **BJS bulletins and special reports**—timely reports of the most current justice data in all BJS data series
- ☐ **Prosecution and adjudication in State courts**—case processing from prosecution through court disposition, State felony laws, felony sentencing, public defenders, pretrial release
- ☐ **Corrections reports**—results of sample surveys and censuses of jails, prisons, parole, probation, and other corrections data
- ☐ **National Crime Victimization Survey**—the only ongoing national survey of crime victimization
- ☐ **Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics** (annual)—broad-based data from 150+ sources with addresses; 400+ tables, figures, index, annotated bibliography
- ☐ **BJS National Update**—a quarterly summary of new BJS data, programs, and information services and products
- ☐ Send me a signup form for *NIJ Catalog*, free 6 times a year, which abstracts private and government criminal justice publications

To be added to any BJS **mailing list,** please copy or cut out this page, fill in, fold, stamp, and mail to the Justice Statistics Clearinghouse/NCJRS.

You will receive an annual renewal card. If you do not return it, we must drop you from the mailing list.

To order copies of **recent BJS reports,** check here ☐ and circle items you want to receive on other side of this sheet.

Name: _____

Title: _____

Organization: _____

_____

Street or box: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Daytime phone number: ( ) _____

Criminal justice interest: _____

_____

Put your organization and title here if you used home address above: _____

_____

_____

U.S. Department of Justice
Office of Justice Programs
Bureau of Justice Statistics

Official Business
Penalty for Private Use $300

BULK RATE
POSTAGE & FEES PAID
DOJ/BJS
Permit No. G-91

Washington, D.C. 20531

Bulletin