

Criminal Justice

**INFORMATION
PACKAGE**

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**BURGLARY
STATISTICS**

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Introduction

Burglary may be one of the crimes most feared by the American public. A 1982 public opinion poll reported that 46 percent of those surveyed expressed concern that they would be a victim of a burglary, and 31 percent feared that they would be injured by a burglar at home.¹ To what extent are the public's perceptions about burglary substantiated? How often do burglaries occur in the United States? What is the likelihood of being victimized? How often is the victim present during the commission of a burglary?

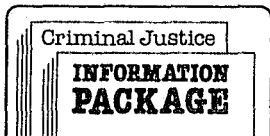
The following discussion will attempt to answer these questions, and will address other frequently asked questions concerning the crime of burglary. Drawing from two of the most reliable sources for national crime statistics, this report will also document the frequency of burglary in the United States. The information package will conclude with a listing of readings and contact referrals for further information on the crime of burglary. Two issues of the Bureau of Justice Statistics Bulletin related to this topic are also included in the package.

Data Sources

There are two primary sources of information on burglary in the United States. First, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) sponsors the Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) Program, which collects annual data on the number of residential and commercial burglaries reported to police.² In addition to offense counts, the UCR provides information on burglary clearances and persons arrested for burglary. These data are gathered from approximately 16,000 city, county, and State law enforcement agencies across the United States.

The other source for national statistics on burglary is the National Crime Survey (NCS), sponsored by the Bureau of Justice Statistics.³ The NCS differs from the UCR in that the data are obtained through interviews with nearly 135,000

1. The source of these findings is a 1982 ABC News Poll, reported in Edward J. Brown, Timothy J. Flanagan, and Maureen McLeod, Eds., Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics - 1983. U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Washington, D.C. U.S. Government Printing Office, 1984. p. 200.
2. The UCR also collects information on the reported number of murders and nonnegligent manslaughters, rapes, robberies, aggravated assaults, larcenies, motor vehicle thefts, and arsons. These crimes represent the Crime Index, as defined by the FBI.
3. The NCS also gathers data on the following criminal incidents: rape, robbery, assault, personal and household larceny, and motor vehicle theft.

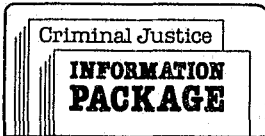


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members of 60,000 households annually, and reflect crimes as described by the victims, rather than by the police. Thus, the NCS captures information on burglaries reported and unreported to law enforcement agencies. Another difference between the two data sources is that, unlike the UCR which gathers data on both commercial and residential burglaries, the NCS only collects information on residential burglaries. However, the NCS does provide detailed information on the victim (e.g., age, sex, and race) and about the crime (e.g., time and place of occurrence).

The UCR and NCS provide an indication of the number of burglaries that occur annually in the United States. However, when using these data, it is important to be aware of the limitations of the UCR and NCS, and the differences that exist between them.⁴ With these caveats in mind, the Uniform Crime Reports and the National Crime Survey can serve to enhance understanding of crimes such as burglary, and the extent to which such crimes occur.

4. For a complete discussion of the differences and similarities between the UCR and NCS, see: Measuring Crime, Bureau of Justice Statistics (Washington: U.S. Department of Justice, February 1981).



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Questions About Burglary

1. How many burglaries occurred in 1984? What was the per capita volume of burglaries?

The FBI estimates that, in 1984, a total of 2,984,434 commercial and residential burglaries were reported to law enforcement agencies. This figure represents 25 percent of the crime index total. The per capita volume of burglaries was 1,264 per 100,000 inhabitants.

Data Source: Uniform Crime Reports

Bibliographic Citation: Crime in the United States, 1984, Federal Bureau of Investigation, U.S. Department of Justice (Washington: USGPO, p. 25).

Data from the 1984 National Crime Survey indicate that approximately 5,643,000 household burglaries occurred during the year (including those reported and not reported to police). The residential burglary rate was estimated at 64.1 per 1,000 households.

Data Source: National Crime Survey

Bibliographic Citation: Criminal Victimization 1984
Bureau of Justice Statistics (Washington: U.S. Department of Justice, October 1985), p. 2.

2. Has the number of burglaries increased over the past 10 years?

Both the UCR and NCS show fluctuations in burglary rates from 1975 to 1984, with steady decreases over the past few years. The following tables illustrate the burglary rate trends since 1975, as reported by the two data sources. (Note that the rates of measurement used by the UCR and the NCS differ and therefore should not be compared.)

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Uniform Crime Reports Burglary Rates 1975-1984

<u>Year</u>	<u>Burglary Rate per 100,000 inhabitants</u>	<u>Percent change</u>
1975	1532.1	--
1976	1448.2	- 5.5
1977	1419.8	- 2.0
1978	1434.6	+ 1.0
1979	1511.9	+ 5.4
1980	1684.1	+11.4
1981	1649.5	- 2.1
1982	1488.8	- 9.7
1983	1337.7	-10.1
1984	1263.7	- 5.5

Source: Uniform Crime Reports

Bibliographic Citation: Crime in the United States, 1984, p. 41.

National Crime Survey: Household Burglary Rates 1975-1984

<u>Year</u>	<u>Burglary Rate per 1,000 Households</u>	<u>Percent Change</u>
1975	91.7	--
1976	88.9	- 3.1
1977	88.5	- 0.4
1978	86.0	- 2.8
1979	84.1	- 2.2
1980	84.3	+ 0.2
1981	87.9	+ 4.3
1982	78.2	-11.0
1983	70.0	-10.5
1984	64.1	- 8.4

Source: National Crime Survey

Bibliographic Citation: Criminal Victimization, 1984, p. 3.

3. What percent of the burglaries occur in urban, suburban, and rural areas?

The FBI estimated that 86 percent of all burglaries reported to police in 1984 occurred in metropolitan statistical areas (MSA's comprise core cities with populations of at least 50,000, suburban cities, and suburban counties). An estimated 7 percent of the burglaries in 1984 occurred in "other cities," which are those outside metropolitan areas. Finally, 7 percent of the burglaries in 1984 occurred in rural areas.

Data Source: Uniform Crime Reports

Bibliographic Citation: Crime in the United States, 1984, p. 42.

4. What is the percentage breakdown of burglaries that occur in residential and nonresidential properties?

Residential burglaries accounted for 67 percent of the reported burglaries during 1984. Nonresidential burglaries accounted for 33 percent of all burglaries reported to police.

Data Source: Uniform Crime Reports

Bibliographic Citation: Crime in the United States, 1984, p. 151.

5. When do most residential burglaries occur?

Of the total number of residential burglaries reported to police in 1984, 33 percent occurred during the night, 40 percent occurred during the day, and 27 percent were reported unknown.

Data Source: Uniform Crime Reports

Bibliographic Citation: Crime in the United States, 1984, p. 151.

The Bureau of Justice Statistics also gathers information on the time of occurrence of household burglaries. In 1983, the NCS reported that 33 percent of the residential burglaries occurred during the daytime (6 a.m. to 6 p.m.). Of the 37 percent of burglaries committed during the nighttime, 16 percent occurred between 6 p.m. and midnight, 13 percent occurred between midnight and 6 a.m., and 8 percent occurred during an unknown time at night. (For 30 percent of the residential burglaries, the time was not known or not available.)

Data Source: National Crime Survey

Bibliographic Citation: Criminal Victimization in the United States, 1983. Bureau of Justice Statistics (Washington: U.S. Department of Justice, August, 1985), p. 60.

6. What percentage of all residential burglaries results in completed crimes? What percentage of the completed burglaries results from forcible entry and unlawful entry?

The NCS reported that, in 1983, 74 percent of all burglaries were completed. Of the completed burglaries, 42 percent resulted from forcible entry (e.g., by breaking a window, picking a lock, or slashing a screen) and 58 percent involved unlawful entry (e.g., through an open door or window).

Data Source: National Crime Survey

Bibliographic Citation: Criminal Victimization in the United States, 1983, p. 12.

7. Do burglary victimization rates differ according to the race, age, and family income of the household?

Black households were more frequently victimized by household burglaries than any other households in 1983.

<u>Race</u>	<u>Victimization Rate per 1,000 Households</u>
White	66.7
Black	97.9
Other Races	59.2

In 1983, burglary victimization rates were highest for households headed by the youngest people, and decreased as the age of the head of household increased.

<u>Age of Head of Household</u>	<u>Victimization Rate per 1,000,000 Households</u>
12-19	157.9
20-34	90.4
35-49	79.9
50-64	52.4
65 and over	42.2

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The annual family income level of those victimized by burglary was evenly distributed, except that those with family incomes of less than \$7,500 had a higher burglary victimization rate than any other family income category.

<u>Annual Family Income 1983</u>	<u>Victimization Rate per 1,000 Households</u>
Less than \$7,500	95.7
\$7,500-\$9,999	68.3
\$10,000-\$14,999	73.0
\$15,000-\$24,999	65.3
\$25,000-\$29,999	60.7
\$30,000-\$49,999	58.8
\$50,000 or more	65.8

Source: National Crime Survey

Bibliographic Citation: Criminal Victimization in the U.S., 1983,
 p. 36, 39, 40-41.

8. What is the average dollar loss in all burglaries? What is the average loss in residential burglaries?

Nationwide, victims of burglary lost an estimated \$2.7 billion in 1984. The average dollar loss was \$900.

For residential burglaries, the FBI reported that the average loss was \$927 in 1984.

Data Source: Uniform Crime Reports

Bibliographic Citation: Crime in the United States, 1984, p. 25.

The Bureau of Justice Statistics also collects data on losses resulting from residential burglaries. In 1983, almost 31 percent of these burglaries involved losses of \$250 or more.

Data Source: National Crime Survey

Bibliographic Citation: Criminal Victimization in the United States,
1983, p. 78.

9. In what percentage of the residential burglaries was the stolen property recovered?

In 1983, almost 78 percent of the burglary victims did not recover any property. Sixteen percent of the victims recovered some of their property, and 6 percent recovered all of their property.

Data Source: National Crime Survey

Bibliographic Citation: Criminal Victimization in the United States,
1983, p. 8.

10. To what extent are violent crimes committed during the commission of burglaries?

Analysis of the extent of violent crime that occurs during the commission of a burglary from the national crime data sources is difficult, primarily because of the manner in which the data are collected. In order to count each criminal incident only once, both the UCR and NCS classify crimes according to their most serious attributes. Thus, if a murder occurs during the commission of a burglary, the UCR would count this incident as a murder. Similarly, if an intruder confronts the victim and threatens him or her with force during the commission of a burglary, the incident would be classified as a robbery. Therefore, the burglary statistics collected annually by these sources will not reveal the extent of violence that occurs.

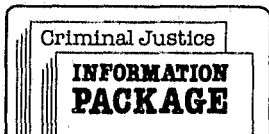
Fortunately, the 10-year study of burglary analyzed by the staff at the Bureau of Justice Statistics made possible the reclassification of each criminal incident that involved a burglary component and the retrieval of some information on the extent of violence. The following summarizes these findings:⁵

- The NCS data from 1973 to 1982 indicate that a household member was present during only 13 percent of all burglaries. However, a violent crime was committed in 30 percent of those burglaries where a household member was present.
- Of the 73 million household burglaries attempted or committed during the 10-year period, 4 percent (2.8 million) involved the commission of violent crimes.
- Of the 2.8 million violent crimes that occurred during the commission of burglaries from 1973 to 1982, 10 percent involved rape, 28 percent resulted in robberies, 23 percent involved aggravated assaults, and 39 percent involved simple assaults.

Data Source: National Crime Survey

Bibliographic Citation: Household Burglary. Bureau of Justice Statistics (Washington: U.S. Department of Justice, January 1985) p. 4.

5. The NCS definition of violent crimes includes the crimes of rape, robbery, aggravated assault, and simple assault. Since the NCS does not collect information on the crime of murder, it is impossible to determine from these data the number of murders that occurred during the commission of a burglary.



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11. What percentage of all residential burglaries is reported to police?

In 1983, the NCS found that 49 percent of all burglaries were reported to the police. Of the burglaries that involved forcible entries, 74 percent were reported to police. Thirty-nine percent of the burglaries resulting from unlawful entry and 34 percent of the attempted forcible entries were reported to police.

Data Source: National Crime Survey

Bibliographic Citation: Criminal Victimization in the United States,
1983, p. 85.

12. What are the reasons cited for not reporting burglaries to police?

The following table illustrates the percent distribution of reasons for not reporting burglary victimizations in 1983.

<u>Reasons for Not Reporting to Police:</u>	<u>Percent of Incidents Not Reported</u>			
	Burglary Total	Forcible Entry	Unlawful Entry	Attempted Forcible Entry
Did not think it was important enough	19.4	15.7	19.0	21.6
Lack of proof	17.5	15.6	18.5	16.9
Not aware of crime occurring until later	11.6	8.1	14.4	9.0
Police wouldn't want to be bothered	8.1	7.1	7.8	9.2
Object recovered, offender unsuccessful	7.9	5.2	3.4	16.0
Private or personal matter	7.1	12.1	7.8	3.7
Reported to someone else	6.4	6.3	5.6	7.6
Police would be inefficient, ineffective, or insensitive	5.6	9.7	4.7	4.9
Unable to recover property because of no ID number	3.5	4.5	5.5	0.0a
Too inconvenient or time consuming	1.9	2.0	2.0	1.5
Fear of reprisal	0.7	2.1a	0.5a	0.2a
Other reasons or not given	10.4	11.5	10.7	9.5

a. Estimate, based on zero or on about 10 or fewer sample cases; is statistically unreliable.

Data Source: National Crime Survey

Bibliographic Citation: Criminal Victimization in the United States, 1983, p. 98-99.

13. How many burglaries were cleared by arrest?

Law enforcement agencies clear crimes by arrest, or in some circumstances by exceptional means (e.g., death of the offender, victim's refusal to testify). Of the reported burglaries in 1984, 14.5 percent were cleared by arrest or exceptional means.

Data Source: Uniform Crime Reports

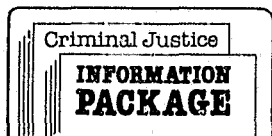
Bibliographic Citation: Crime in the United States, 1984, p. 154.

14. How many people were arrested for the crime of burglary in 1984?

In 1984, it was estimated that 433,600 arrests were made for burglary. This represented a 9-percent decrease compared to the 1983 figure.

Data Source: Uniform Crime Reports

Bibliographic Citation: Crime in the United States, 1984, p. 163.



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15. What are the demographic characteristics (age, sex, and race) of individuals arrested for burglary?

The FBI reported the following breakdown of burglary arrests by age, sex, and race in 1984:

<u>Age⁶</u>	<u>Number of Arrests</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
under 15	49,704	15
15-17	78,004	23
18-24	120,638	36
25-29	40,564	12
30-34	22,829	7
35-44	16,145	5
45-54	4,485	1
55 and over	2,030	1

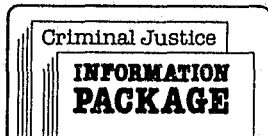
<u>Sex⁶</u>		
Male	309,807	93
Female	24,592	7

<u>Race⁷</u>	<u>Number of Arrests</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
White	234,423	70
Black	95,187	29
American Indian or Alaskan Native	2,556	1
Asian or Pacific Islander	1,688	1

Source of Data: Uniform Crime Reports

Bibliographic Citation: Crime in the United States, 1984, p. 172, 179, 180.

6. The arrest statistics presented for age and sex were obtained from 9,879 law enforcement agencies in the UCR Program, with an estimated population of 179,871,000.
7. The arrest statistics presented for race were obtained from 9,851 law enforcement agencies in the UCR Program, with an estimated population of 179,374,000.



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Availability of Source Documents

Crime in the United States, 1984. Availability: Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402. Order No. 027-001-00040-8 Price: \$13.00.

Criminal Victimization 1984. Availability: NCJRS, Box 6000, Rockville, MD 20850. NCJ 98904 (free hard copy document).

Criminal Victimization in the United States, 1983. Availability: NCJRS, Box 6000, Rockville, MD 20850. NCJ 96459 (free hard copy document).

Household Burglary. Availability: NCJRS, Box 6000, Rockville, MD 20850. NCJ 96021 (free hard copy document included in information package).