



CRIMINAL VICTIMIZATION, 2008

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In September 2009, the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) released the bulletin *Criminal Victimization, 2008*. Data come from the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), which collects data from a nationally representative sample of U.S. households on nonfatal crimes against persons 12 or older, reported and not reported to the police. The NCVS measures the violent crimes of rape or sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, and simple assault, personal theft, and the property crimes of household burglary, motor vehicle theft, and theft. A link to the full report can be found on the BJS website: <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/abstract/cv08.htm>

Victimization in 2008

- Violent and property crime rates in 2008 were at or near their lowest levels in over three decades. During the most recent decade from 1999 to 2008, every type of violent and property crime declined. The overall violent crime rate declined by 41 percent and the property crime rate fell by 32 percent during this time period. In 2008, the overall victimization rate for violent crimes was 19.3 per 1,000 persons. The property crime rate was 135 victimizations per 1,000 households.

Type of Crime	Rate per 1,000 Persons
Violent crime	19.3
Rape/sexual assault	0.8
Robbery	2.2
Assault	16.3
Aggravated assault	3.3
Simple assault	12.9
Personal theft	0.5
Property crime	134.7
Household burglary	26.3
Motor vehicle theft	6.6
Theft	101.8

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics Bulletin, *Criminal Victimization, 2008*.

- Approximately 20 percent of all violent crimes, and 40 percent of robberies in particular, were committed by an armed (i.e., firearm, knife, other weapon) offender. The presence of a firearm weapon was dependent upon the type of crime committed—24 percent of robberies involved the presence of a firearm, compared to five percent of simple and aggravated assaults.
- 70 percent of female victims and 49 percent of male violent crime victims were victimized by someone they knew. Intimate partners were responsible for three percent of all violence against males and 23 percent of all violence against females. Robbery was the crime most likely committed by a stranger.
- Property crime rates were higher in lower-income households than higher-income households. In general, larger households experienced higher rates of property crime than smaller households. Households with six or more persons were about 2.7 times more likely to be victims of property crime than single-person households.

Characteristics of Victims of Violent Crimes in 2008

- As with previous years, violent victimizations occurred at a higher rate for males, blacks, and persons ages 24 or younger than for females, whites, and persons ages 25 or older.
- Gender. Males were the victims of robbery and assault (simple and aggravated) at rates higher than females. Females were more likely than males to be victims of rape or sexual assault.
- Race and Ethnicity. Blacks had a higher rate of victimization than whites for every violent crime measured by the NCVS except for simple assault. Hispanics were more likely than non-Hispanics to be victims of robbery.
- Age. In general, crime victimization rates decreased as victims' ages increased. For violent crimes, persons from ages 12 to 24 were victimized at higher rates than persons in all other age groups.

Table 4. Rates of violent crime, by gender, race, Hispanic origin, and age of victim, 2008

Demographic characteristic of victim	Population	All	Violent victimizations per 1,000 persons age 12 or older				
			Rape/sexual assault	Robbery	All assault	Aggravated assault	Simple assault
Gender							
Male	123,071,020	21.3	0.3 ^A	2.7	18.3	3.9	14.5
Female	129,171,510	17.3	1.3	1.7	14.3	2.8	11.5
Race							
White	204,683,500	18.1	0.6	1.6	15.9	3.0	12.8
Black	30,709,860	25.9	1.9 ^A	5.5	18.5	5.2	13.3
Other race*	13,952,240	15.2	0.9 ^A	3.0 ^A	11.3	2.8	8.5
Two or more races	2,896,930	51.6	1.9 ^A	6.8	42.9	6.8	36.1
Hispanic origin							
Hispanic	34,506,680	16.4	0.6 ^A	3.4	12.4	3.5	8.9
Non-Hispanic	217,351,750	19.7	0.8	2.0	16.9	3.3	13.6
Age							
12-15	16,414,550	42.2	1.6 ^A	5.5	35.2	6.1	29.0
16-19	17,280,270	37.0	2.2	4.8	30.0	5.6	24.5
20-24	20,547,620	37.8	2.1	5.4	30.3	8.7	21.5
25-34	40,649,500	23.4	0.7	2.3	20.5	4.0	16.5
35-49	65,123,030	16.7	0.8	1.9	14.1	2.7	11.4
50-64	55,116,320	10.7	0.2 ^A	0.8	9.7	2.0	7.7
65 or older	37,111,240	3.1	0.2 ^A	0.2 ^A	2.7	0.4 ^A	2.3

Note: Violent crimes measured by the National Crime Victimization Survey include rape, sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated and simple assault. Because the NCVS interviews persons about their victimizations, murder and manslaughter cannot be included.

^ABased upon 10 or fewer sample cases.

*Includes American Indians, Alaska Natives, Asians, Native Hawaiians, and other Pacific Islanders.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics Bulletin, *Criminal Victimization, 2008*.

Reporting Crime to the Police

- In 2008, 47 percent of all violent victimizations and 40 percent of all property crimes were reported to the police.
- Aggravated assault and robbery were the violent crimes most frequently reported to the police (62% and 61% respectively), while rape/sexual assault and simple assault were the violent crimes least likely reported to the police (41% each). Motor vehicle theft was the property crime most frequently reported to the police (80%).
- Females were somewhat more likely to report violent victimizations to the police, whereas males and females were nearly equally likely to report property crimes to the police.